

ISRAEL



Decision of 19.4.2000
[OJ L 147/1 of 21.6.2000](#)

Agreement: art. 49
[OJ L 147/12](#)

Protocol No 5
[OJ L 147/154](#)

II

(Acts whose publication is not obligatory)

COUNCIL AND COMMISSION

DECISION OF THE COUNCIL AND THE COMMISSION

of 19 April 2000

on the conclusion of a Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part and the State of Israel, of the other part

(2000/384/EC, ECSC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,
THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

HAVE DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community and in particular Article 95 thereof,

Article 1

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 310 in conjunction with the second sentence of the first subparagraph of Article 300(2), and the second subparagraph of Article 310(3) thereof,

The Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part and the State of Israel, of the other part, the Protocols annexed thereto and the Declaration attached to the Final Act are hereby approved on behalf of the European Community and the European Coal and Steel Community.

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

The texts referred to in the first paragraph are attached to this Decision.

After consultation of the Consultative Committee and the unanimous agreement of the Council,

Having regard to the assent of the European Parliament⁽¹⁾,

Article 2

Whereas:

The Euro-Mediterranean Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the State of Israel, of the other part, signed in Brussels, on 20 November 1995, should be approved,

1. The position to be adopted by the Community within the Association Council and the Association Committee shall be laid down by the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, or, where appropriate, by the Commission, each in accordance with the corresponding provisions of the Treaties establishing the European Community and the European Coal and Steel Community.

2. The President of the Council shall, in accordance with Article 68 of the Agreement, preside over the Association

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 78, 18.3.1996, p. 12.

Council and present the position of the Community. A representative of the Presidency of the Council shall preside over the Association Committee, in accordance with Article 71 of the Agreement, and present the position of the Community.

European Community. The President of the Commission shall give such notification on behalf of the European Coal and Steel Community.

Done at Brussels, 19 April 2000.

Article 3

The President of the Council shall give the notification provided for in Article 85 of the Agreement on behalf of the

For the Council
The President
L. CAPOULAS SANTOS

For the Commission
The President
R. PRODI

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN AGREEMENT**establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the State of Israel, of the other part**

THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM,

THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK,

THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY,

THE HELLENIC REPUBLIC,

THE KINGDOM OF SPAIN,

THE FRENCH REPUBLIC,

IRELAND,

THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC,

THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG,

THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS,

THE REPUBLIC OF AUSTRIA,

THE PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC,

THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND,

THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN,

THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND,

Contracting Parties to the Treaty establishing the European Community and the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community, hereinafter referred to as the 'Member States', and

THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY,

THE EUROPEAN COAL AND STEEL COMMUNITY,

hereinafter referred to as 'the Community', of the one part, and

THE STATE OF ISRAEL,

hereinafter referred to as 'Israel', of the other part,

CONSIDERING the importance of the existing traditional links between the Community, its Member States and Israel, and the common values that they share;

CONSIDERING that the Community, its Member States and Israel wish to strengthen those links and to establish lasting relations, based on reciprocity and partnership, and promote a further integration of Israel's economy into the European economy;

CONSIDERING the importance which the Parties attach to the principle of economic freedom and to the principles of the United Nations Charter, particularly the observance of human rights and democracy, which form the very basis of the Association;

- diversification of industrial output in Israel,
- cooperation between small and medium-sized enterprises in the Community and Israel,
- easier access to investment finance,
- information and support services,
- stimulation of innovation.

Article 46

Agriculture

The Parties shall focus cooperation in particular on:

- support for policies implemented by them to diversify production,
- promotion of environment-friendly agriculture,
- closer relations between businesses, groups and organisations representing trades and professions in Israel and in the Community on a voluntary basis,
- technical assistance and training,
- harmonisation of phytosanitary and veterinary standards,
- integrated rural development, including improvement in basic services and development of associated economic activities,
- cooperation among rural regions, exchange of experience and know-how concerning rural development.

Article 47

Standards

The Parties shall aim to reduce differences in standardisation and conformity assessment. To this end the Parties shall conclude where appropriate agreements on mutual recognition in the field of conformity assessment.

Article 48

Financial services

The Parties shall cooperate, where appropriate through the conclusion of agreements, on the adoption of common rules

and standards, *inter alia*, for accounting and for supervisory and regulatory systems of banking, insurance and other financial sectors.

Article 49

Customs

1. The Parties commit themselves to developing customs cooperation to ensure that the provisions on trade are observed. For this purpose they shall establish a dialogue on customs matters.

2. Cooperation shall focus on the simplification and computerisation of customs procedures, which shall, in particular, take the form of exchange of information among experts and vocational training.

3. Without prejudice to other forms of cooperation envisaged in this agreement, notably for the fight against drugs and money laundering, the Parties' administrations shall provide mutual assistance in accordance with the provisions of Protocol 5.

Article 50

Environment

1. The Parties shall promote cooperation in the tasks of preventing deterioration of the environment, controlling pollution and ensuring the rational use of natural resources, with a view to ensuring sustainable development and promoting regional environmental projects.

2. Cooperation shall focus, in particular, on:

- desertification,
- the quality of Mediterranean water and the control and prevention of marine pollution,
- waste management,
- salinisation,
- environmental management of sensitive coastal areas,
- environmental education and awareness,
- the use of advanced tools of environmental management, environmental monitoring methods and surveillance, including the use of environmental information systems (EIS) and environmental impact assessment,

PROTOCOL 5

on mutual assistance between administrative authorities in customs matters

Article 1

Definitions

For the purposes of this Protocol:

- (a) 'customs legislation' shall mean provisions adopted by the Parties and governing the import, export, transit of goods and their placing under any customs procedure, including measures of prohibition, restriction and control;
- (b) 'customs duties' shall mean all duties, taxes, fees or other charges which are levied and collected in the territories of the Parties, in application of customs legislation, but not including fees and charges which are limited in amount to the approximate costs of services rendered;
- (c) 'applicant authority' shall mean a competent administrative authority which has been appointed by a Party for this purpose and which makes a request for assistance in customs matters;
- (d) 'requested authority' shall mean a competent administrative authority which has been appointed by a Party for this purpose and which receives a request for assistance in customs matters;
- (e) 'personal data' shall mean all information relating to an identified or identifiable individual.

Article 2

Scope

1. The Parties shall assist each other, within their competences, in the manner and under the conditions laid down in this Protocol, in ensuring that customs legislation is correctly applied, in particular by the prevention, detection and investigation of operations in breach of that legislation.

2. Assistance in customs matters, as provided for in this Protocol, shall apply to any administrative authority of the Parties which is competent for the application of this Protocol. It shall not prejudice the rules governing mutual assistance in criminal matters. Nor shall it cover information obtained under powers exercised at the request of the judicial authorities, unless those authorities so agree.

Article 3

Assistance on request

1. At the request of the applicant authority, the requested authority shall furnish it with all relevant information which

may enable it to ensure that customs legislation is correctly applied, including information regarding operations noted or planned which are or could be in breach of such legislation.

2. At the request of the applicant authority, the requested authority shall inform it whether goods exported from the territory of one of the Parties have been properly imported into the territory of the other Party, specifying, where appropriate, the customs procedure applied to the goods.

3. At the request of the applicant authority, the requested authority shall take the necessary steps to ensure that a special watch is kept on:

- (a) natural or legal persons of whom there are reasonable grounds for believing that they are breaching or have breached customs legislation;
- (b) places where goods are stored in a way that gives grounds for suspecting that they are intended to supply operations contrary to customs legislation;
- (c) movements of goods notified as possibly giving rise to breaches of customs legislation;
- (d) means of transport for which there are reasonable grounds for believing that they have been, are or may be used in operations in breach of customs legislation.

Article 4

Spontaneous assistance

The Parties shall provide each other, in accordance with their laws, rules and other legal instruments, with assistance if they consider that to be necessary for the correct application of customs legislation, particularly when they obtain information pertaining to:

- operations which constitute, or appear to them to constitute breaches of such legislation and which may be of interest to other Parties,
- new means or methods employed in realising such operations,
- goods known to be subject to breaches of customs legislation.

*Article 5***Delivery/notification**

At the request of the applicant authority, the requested authority shall in accordance with its legislation take all necessary measures in order:

- to deliver all documents,
- to notify all decisions,

falling within the scope of this Protocol to an addressee, residing or established in its territory. In such a case Article 6(3) shall apply.

*Article 6***Form and substance of requests for assistance**

1. Requests pursuant to this Protocol shall be made in writing. Documents necessary for the execution of such requests shall accompany the request. When required because of the urgency of the situation, oral requests may be accepted, but must be confirmed in writing immediately.

2. Requests pursuant to paragraph 1 shall include the following information:

- (a) the applicant authority making the request;
- (b) the actions to be undertaken;
- (c) the object of and the reason for the request;
- (d) the laws, rules and other legal elements involved;
- (e) indications as exact and comprehensive as possible on the natural or legal persons being the target of the investigations;
- (f) a summary of the relevant facts and of the enquiries already carried out, except in cases provided for in Article 5.

3. Requests shall be submitted in an official language of the requested authority or in a language acceptable to such authority.

4. If a request does not meet the formal requirements, its correction or completion may be demanded; the ordering of precautionary measures may, however, take place.

*Article 7***Execution of requests**

1. 1. In order to comply with a request for assistance, the requested authority or, when the latter cannot act on its own, the administrative department to which the request has been

addressed by this authority, shall proceed, within its competence and available resources, as though it were acting on its own account or at the request of other authorities of that same Party, by supplying information already possessed, by carrying out appropriate enquiries or by arranging for them to be carried out.

2. Requests for assistance will be executed in accordance with the laws, rules and other legal instruments of the requested Party.

3. Officials of the requesting Party, authorised to investigate breaches of customs legislation may, in particular cases and with the agreement of the requested Party, be present respectively in the Community or in Israel, when its officials are investigating breaches which are of concern to the requesting Party and may ask that the requested Party review relevant books, registers and other documents or data-media and supply copies thereof or provide any information relating to the breach.

*Article 8***Form in which information is to be communicated**

1. The requested authority shall communicate results of enquiries to the applicant authority in the form of documents, certified copies of documents, reports and the like.

2. The documents provided for in paragraph 1 may be replaced by computerised information produced in any form for the same purpose.

*Article 9***Exceptions to the obligation to provide assistance**

1. The Parties may refuse to give assistance as provided for in this Protocol, where to do so would:

- (a) be likely to prejudice the sovereignty of a Member State of the Community or of Israel which has been asked for assistance under this Protocol; or
- (b) be likely to prejudice public policy, security or other essential interests; or
- (c) involve currency or tax regulations other than regulations concerning customs duties; or
- (d) violate an industrial, commercial or professional secret.

2. Where the applicant authority asks for assistance which it would itself be unable to provide if so asked, it shall draw attention to that fact in its request. It shall then be left to the requested authority to decide how to respond to such a request.

3. If assistance is withheld or denied, the decision and the reasons therefore must be notified to the applicant authority without delay.

Article 10

Obligation to observe confidentiality

1. Any information communicated in whatsoever form pursuant to this Protocol shall be of a confidential nature. It shall be covered by the obligation of official secrecy and shall enjoy the protection extended to like information under the relevant laws of the Party which received it and the corresponding provisions applying to the Community authorities.

2. Personal data may only be transmitted if the level of personal protection afforded by the legislations of the Parties is equivalent. The Parties shall ensure at least a level of protection based on the principles of Council of Europe Convention No 108 of 28 January 1981 for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data.

Article 11

Use of information

1. Information obtained shall be used solely for the purposes of this Protocol and may be used within each Party for other purposes only with the prior written consent of the administrative authority which furnished the information and shall be subject to any restrictions laid down by that authority.

2. Paragraph 1 shall not impede the use of information in any judicial or administrative proceedings subsequently instituted for failure to comply with customs legislation.

3. The Parties may, in their records of evidence, reports and testimonies and in proceedings and charges brought before the courts, use as evidence information obtained and documents consulted in accordance with the provisions of this Protocol.

Article 12

Experts and witnesses

An official of a requested authority may be authorised to appear, within the limitations of the authorisation granted, as expert or witness in judicial or administrative proceedings regarding the matters covered by this Protocol in the

jurisdiction of another Party, and produce such objects, documents or authenticated copies thereof, as may be needed for the proceedings. The request for an appearance must indicate specifically on what matters and by virtue of what title or qualification the official will be questioned.

Article 13

Assistance expenses

The Parties shall waive all claims on each other for the reimbursement of expenses incurred pursuant to this Protocol, except, as appropriate, for expenses to experts and witnesses and to interpreters and translators who are not public service employees.

Article 14

Implementation

1. The application of this Protocol shall be entrusted to the competent services of the Commission of the European Communities and, where appropriate, the customs authorities of the Member States of the Community on the one hand and to the central customs authorities of Israel on the other hand. They shall decide on all practical measures and arrangements necessary for its application, taking into consideration rules in the field of data protection. They may recommend to the competent bodies amendments which they consider be made to this Protocol.

2. The Parties shall consult each other and subsequently keep each other informed of the detailed rules of implementation which are adopted in accordance with the provisions of this Protocol.

Article 15

Complementarity

1. This Protocol shall complement and not impede the application of any agreements on mutual assistance which have been concluded or may be concluded between individual or several Member States of the Community and Israel. Nor shall it preclude more extensive mutual assistance granted under such agreements.

2. Without prejudice to Article 11, these agreements do not prejudice Community provisions governing the communication between the competent services of the Commission and the customs authorities of the Member States of any information obtained in customs matters which could be of Community interest.