

Proposal for a Council Decision on the Community position in relation to the establishment of a Joint Consultative Committee to be decided on by the Association Council established by the Europe Agreement between the European Communities and the Republic of Bulgaria

(2002/C 203 E/34)

COM(2002) 231 final — 2002/0107(ACC)

(Submitted by the Commission on 13 May 2002)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing a European Community, the Treaty establishing a European Coal and Steel Community and the Treaty establishing a European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom),

Having regard to Article 300(2), second and third subparagraphs, of the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Article 2(1) of the Council and Commission Decision of 19.12.1995 ⁽¹⁾ on conclusion of the Europe Agreement establishing an Association between the European Communities and their Member States, on the one hand, and the Republic of Bulgaria, on the other hand,

Having regard to the Commission proposal,

Whereas:

(1) Article 110 of the said Europe Agreement provides that the Association Council may decide to set up any special

committee or body that can assist it in carrying out its duties,

(2) Dialogues and cooperation between regional and local authorities in the European Union and the Republic of Bulgaria can make a major contribution to the full implementation of the Europe Agreement,

(3) It seems appropriate that such cooperation should be between the members of the Committee of the Regions of the European Communities and of the Bulgarian Liaison Committee for Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions of the European Communities,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

The position to be adopted by the Community within the Association Council established by Article 110 of the Europe Agreement establishing an Association between the European Communities and their Member States, on the one hand, and the Republic of Bulgaria, on the other hand, in relation to the establishment of a Joint Consultative Committee shall be based on the draft decision of the said Association Council which is annexed to the present decision.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 358, 31.12.1994, p. 1.

DRAFT DECISION No .../2002 OF THE ASSOCIATION COUNCIL**between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Bulgaria, of the other part**

amending, through the setting up of a Joint Consultative Committee between the Committee of the Regions and the Bulgarian Liaison Committee for Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, Decision No 1/95 ⁽¹⁾ adopting the rules of procedure of the Association Council

THE ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

Having regard to the Europe Agreement establishing an association between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Bulgaria, of the other part ⁽²⁾ and in particular Article 110 thereof;

Whereas dialogue and cooperation between the regional and local authorities in the European Community and those in the Republic of Bulgaria can make a major contribution to the development of their relations and to the integration of Europe;

Whereas it seems appropriate that such cooperation should be organised at the level of the Committee of the Regions of the one part, and of the Bulgarian Liaison Committee for Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, of the other part, by setting up of a Joint Consultative Committee;

Whereas this means that the rules of procedure of the Association Council, adopted by Decision No 1/95, need to be amended accordingly;

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The following Articles shall be added to the rules of procedure of the Association Council:

'Article 15

A Joint Consultative Committee (hereinafter referred to as "Committee") is hereby established with the task of assisting the Association Council with a view to promoting dialogue and cooperation between the regional and local authorities in the European Community and those in the Republic of Bulgaria. Such dialogue and cooperation shall be aimed in particular at:

1. preparing Bulgarian regions and local authorities for activity in the framework of future membership of the European Union;
2. preparing Bulgarian regions and local authorities for their participation in the work of the Committee of the Regions after accession of the Republic of Bulgaria;
3. exchanging information on current issues of mutual interest, in particular on up-to-date state of play

concerning EU regional policy and accession process as well as preparation of Bulgarian regions and local authorities for these policies;

4. encouraging multilateral structured dialogue between (a) Bulgarian regions and local authorities and (b) regions from EU Member States, including through networking in specific areas where direct contacts and cooperation between regions and local authorities from the Republic of Bulgaria and EU Member States might prove the most effective way of solving particular problems;
5. providing regular exchange of information on inter-regional cooperation between regional and local authorities from the Republic of Bulgaria and Member States;
6. encouraging exchange of experience and knowledge in the field of regional policy and structural interventions, between (a) Bulgarian regions and local authorities and (b) regions and local authorities from EU Member States, in particular know-how and techniques concerning preparation of regional and local development plans or strategies and most efficient use of Structural Funds;
7. assisting Bulgarian regional and local authorities by means of information exchange in practical implementation of the principle of subsidiarity in all aspects of life on regional and local level;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 255, 25.10.1995, p. 19.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 358, 31.12.1994, p. 3.

8. discussing any other relevant matters proposed by any side, as they can arise in the context of implementation of the Europe Agreement and in the framework of the Pre-accession Strategy.

Article 16

The Committee shall comprise eight representatives of the Committee of the Regions, on the one hand, and eight representatives of the Bulgarian Liaison Committee for Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, on the other hand. An equal number of alternate members shall be appointed.

The Committee shall carry out its activities on the basis of consultation by the Association Council or, as concerns the promotion of the dialogue between the regional and local authorities, on its own initiative.

The Committee may make recommendations to the Association Council.

Members shall be chosen to ensure that the Committee is as faithful a reflection as possible of the various levels of regional and local authorities in both the European Community and the Republic of Bulgaria.

The Committee shall adopt its own Rules of Procedure.

The Committee shall meet at intervals, which it shall itself determine in its Rules of Procedure.

The Committee shall be co-chaired by a member of the Committee of the Regions of the European Community and a member of the Bulgarian Liaison Committee for Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions.

Article 17

The Committee of the Regions, on the one hand, and the Bulgarian Liaison Committee for Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions, on the other hand, shall each defray the expenses they incur by reason of their participation in the meetings of the Committee with regard to staff, travel and subsistence expenditure and to postal and telecommunications expenditure.

Expenditure in connection with interpreting at meetings, translation and reproduction of documents shall be borne by the Committee of the Regions, with the exception of expenditure in connection with interpreting or translation into or from Bulgarian, which shall be borne by the Bulgarian Liaison Committee for Cooperation with the Committee of the Regions.

Other expenditure relating to the material organisation of meetings shall be borne by the Party which hosts the meetings.'

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the first day of the second month following the date of its adoption.
