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LEGISLATIVE ACTS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS

Subject: COUNCIL DECISION on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union within the Joint Committee established by the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on trade and cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part, as regards the extension of the temporary amendments provided for by Point A of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union, of the one part, and the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part, providing further liberalisation of agricultural products, processed agricultural products and fish and fishery products

COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2021/...

of ...

on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union within the Joint Committee established by the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on trade and cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part, as regards the extension of the temporary amendments provided for by Point A of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union, of the one part, and the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part, providing further liberalisation of agricultural products, processed agricultural products and fish and fishery products

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 207(4), first subparagraph, in conjunction with Article 218(9) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

Whereas:

- (1) The Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on trade and cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part (the 'Interim Association Agreement') was concluded by the Union by Council Decision 97/430/EC¹ and entered into force on 1 July 1997.
- (2) Article 63(1) of the Interim Association Agreement established a Joint Committee for European Union-Palestinian Authority trade and cooperation (the 'Joint Committee') with the power to take decisions in the cases provided for in the Interim Association Agreement.

¹ Council Decision 97/430/EC of 2 June 1997 concerning the conclusion of the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on trade and cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (OJ L 187, 16.7.1997, p. 1).

- (3) The Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union, of the one part, and the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part, providing further liberalisation of agricultural products, processed agricultural products and fish and fishery products and amending the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on trade and cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part (the ‘Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters’) was concluded by the Union by Council Decision 2011/824/EU¹ and entered into force on 1 January 2012. The temporary amendments to the Interim Association Agreement provided for by the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters (the ‘temporary amendments’) will cease to apply on 31 December 2021.
- (4) Pursuant to Point C, paragraph 1(a) of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters, the Joint Committee may take a decision on an extension of the temporary amendments.

¹ Council Decision 2011/824/EU of 20 October 2011 on the conclusion of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union, of the one part, and the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part, providing further liberalisation of agricultural products, processed agricultural products and fish and fishery products and amending the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on trade and cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part (OJ L 328, 10.12.2011, p. 2).

- (5) The need to promote economic and social development in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip continues to exist. This is particularly the case following recent violence in and around Gaza. Promoting economic and social development in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip could contribute to enhancing political stability in the region. The Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters was originally concluded for a period of 10 years. In view of the persisting economic hardship in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and in order to maximise stability and planning reliability, an extension of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters by another 10 years would be most effective. It is therefore appropriate to extend the temporary amendments for an additional period of 10 years.
- (6) The Joint Committee is to take a decision on the extension of the temporary amendments by 10 years.
- (7) It is appropriate to establish the position to be taken on the Union's behalf in the Joint Committee, as the decision of the Joint Committee on the extension of the temporary amendments will be binding for the Union.
- (8) The position of the Union within the Joint Committee should therefore be based on the draft Decision of the Joint Committee,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The position to be taken on the Union's behalf within the Joint Committee established by the Euro-Mediterranean Interim Association Agreement on trade and cooperation between the European Community, of the one part, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part, as regards the extension of the temporary amendments provided for by Point A of the Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union, of the one part, and the Palestinian Authority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, of the other part, providing further liberalisation of agricultural products, processed agricultural products and fish and fishery products shall be based on the draft decision of the Joint Committee¹.

Article 2

This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council

The President

¹ See document ST 14502/21 on <http://register.consilium.europa.eu>.