

## 2282. Council - GENERAL AFFAIRS

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### **Association with Romania – Extension for State aid**

The Council adopted a Decision on the position to be taken by the Community within the Association Council established by the Europe Agreement signed on 1 February 1994 between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and Romania, of the other part, with regard to the extension for a further period of five years in accordance with the provisions of Article 64(4)(a) of the Europe Agreement concluded with Romania, with regard to State aid.

That provision states that, for the purpose of assessing public aid granted by Romania, that country will, for the first five years after the entry into force of the Agreement, be regarded as an area identical to those areas of the Community covered by Article 92 (now Article 87) (3)(a) of the EC Treaty (i.e. areas where the standard of living is abnormally low or where there is serious under-employment). The Europe Agreement also provides for that period to be extended every five years by decision of the Association Council.

As the first period has expired, Romania is requesting a five-year extension. The Commission considers that Romania fulfils the criteria used to determine eligibility of a region for the aid referred to in Article 87(3)(a) TEC (including per capita GDP less than 75% of the average GDP of the Community). The Council therefore proposes that the Association Council grant the requested extension.

### **Association with Lithuania – Extension for State aid**

The Council adopted a Decision on the position to be taken by the Community within the Association Council established by the Europe Agreement signed on 12 June 1995 between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Lithuania, of the other part, with regard to the extension for a further period of five years in accordance with the provisions of Article 64(4)(a) of the Europe Agreement concluded with the Republic of Lithuania, with regard to State aid.

That provision states that, for the purpose of assessing public aid granted by Lithuania, that country will, for the first five years after the entry into force of the Agreement, be regarded as an area identical to those areas of the Community covered by Article 92 (now Article 87) (3)(a) of the EC Treaty (i.e. areas where the standard of living is abnormally low or where there is serious under-employment). The Europe Agreement also provides for that period to be extended every five years by decision of the Association Council.

As the first period has expired, Lithuania is requesting a five-year extension. The Commission considers that Lithuania fulfils the criteria used to determine eligibility of a region for the aid referred to in Article 87(3)(a) TEC (including per capita GDP less than 75% of the average GDP of the Community). The Council therefore proposes that the Association Council grant the requested extension.