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LEGISLATIVE ACTS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTS

Subject:	Draft DECISION OF THE EU - ALBANIA STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION COUNCIL setting up Joint Consultative Committees with the European Economic and Social Committee and with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union, respectively, and amending the Rules of Procedure of the Stabilisation and Association Council

DRAFT

DECISION No …/…
OF THE EU - ALBANIA STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION COUNCIL

of …

setting up Joint Consultative Committees
with the European Economic and Social Committee
and with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union, respectively,
and amending the Rules of Procedure of the Stabilisation and Association Council

THE STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION COUNCIL,

Having regard to the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States, of the one part, and the Republic of Albania, of the other part (the 'Agreement'), and in particular Article 120(4) thereof,

Whereas:

(1) Dialogue and cooperation between social partners and other civil society organisations as well as between local and regional authorities in the European Union and those in the Republic of Albania (hereinafter referred to as 'Albania') can provide a major contribution to the development of their relations and the integration of Europe.

(2) It is appropriate that such cooperation be organised by setting up two Joint Consultative Committees:

(a) one between the European Economic and Social Committee, of the one part, and the Albanian social partners and other civil society organisations, of the other part; and

(b) one between the Committee of the Regions of the European Union, of the one part, and the elected representatives of local and regional authorities of Albania, of the other part.

(3) The Rules of Procedure of the Stabilisation and Association Council, adopted by means of Decision No 1/2009, should therefore be amended in order to set up, pursuant to Article 120(4) of the Agreement, the envisaged Joint Consultative Committee with the European Economic and Social Committee and the envisaged Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

In Decision No 1/2009, the following Articles are added:

‘*Article 14*

Joint Consultative Committee with the European Economic and Social Committee

1. A Joint Consultative Committee with the European Economic and Social Committee is hereby established, with the task of assisting the Stabilisation and Association Council with a view to promoting dialogue and cooperation between the social partners and other civil society organisations in the European Union and in Albania. Such dialogue and cooperation shall encompass all relevant aspects of relations between the European Union and Albania, as they arise in the context of the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. Such dialogue and cooperation shall be aimed in particular at:

   (a) preparing Albanian employers, workers and other civil society organisations for activity in the framework of future membership of the European Union;

   (b) preparing Albanian employers, workers and other civil society organisations for their participation in the work of the European Economic and Social Committee after the accession of Albania;

(c) exchanging information on current issues of mutual interest, in particular on the state of play of the accession process, as well as the preparation of Albanian employers, workers and other civil society organisations for that process;

(d) encouraging exchanges of experience and structured dialogue between Albanian employers, workers and other civil society organisations and employers, workers and other civil society organisations from Member States, including through networking in specific areas where direct contacts and cooperation might prove to be the most effective way of solving particular problems;

(e) discussing any other matters arising in the context of implementing the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, including in relation to the accession process of Albania.

2. The Joint Consultative Committee with the European Economic and Social Committee shall comprise six representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee and six representatives of Albania's social partners and other civil society organisations. Observers may be also invited to participate.

3. The Joint Consultative Committee with the European Economic and Social Committee shall carry out its tasks on the basis of consultation by the Stabilisation and Association Council or, with regard to promoting dialogue between economic and social circles, on its own initiative.

4. Members shall be chosen with a view to ensuring that the Joint Consultative Committee with the European Economic and Social Committee is as faithful a reflection as possible of the various social partners and other civil society organisations in both the European Union and in Albania. Official nominations of Albanian members shall be made by the Government of Albania on the basis of proposals from social partners and other civil society organisations. Those proposals shall be based on inclusive and transparent selection procedures among social partners and other civil society organisations.

5. The Joint Consultative Committee with the European Economic and Social Committee shall be co-chaired by a member of the European Economic and Social Committee and a representative of Albania's social partners and other civil society organisations.

6. The Joint Consultative Committee with the European Economic and Social Committee shall adopt its own Rules of Procedure.

7. The European Economic and Social Committee, on the one hand, and the Albanian Government, on the other hand, shall each defray the expenses they incur by reason of the participation of their delegates in the meetings of the Joint Consultative Committee and of its working groups with regard to staff, travel and subsistence expenditure.

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

Article 15

Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union

1. A Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union is hereby established, with the task of assisting the Stabilisation and Association Council with a view to promoting dialogue and cooperation between the local and regional authorities in the European Union and in Albania. Such dialogue and cooperation shall encompass all relevant aspects of relations between the European Union and Albania, as they arise in the context of the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement. Such dialogue and cooperation shall be aimed in particular at:

   (a) preparing Albanian local and regional authorities for activity in the framework of future membership of the European Union;

   (b) preparing Albanian local and regional authorities for their participation in the work of the Committee of the Regions of the European Union (the 'Committee of the Regions') after the accession of Albania;

   (c) exchanging information on current issues of mutual interest, in particular on the state of play of European regional policy and of the accession process, as well as the preparation of Albanian local and regional authorities for that policy and that process;

(d) encouraging multilateral structured dialogue between Albanian local and regional authorities and local and regional authorities from the Member States of the European Union (the 'Member States'), including through networking in specific areas where direct contacts and cooperation between Albanian local and regional authorities and the local and regional authorities from Member States might prove to be the most effective way of addressing specific topics of mutual interest;

(e) providing regular exchanges of information on inter-regional cooperation between Albanian local and regional authorities and local and regional authorities from Member States;

(f) encouraging exchanges of experience and knowledge in the field of regional policy and structural interventions between Albanian local and regional authorities and local and regional authorities from Member States, in particular know-how and techniques concerning the preparation of local and regional development plans or strategies and the most efficient use of the pre-accession and Structural Funds;

(g) assisting Albanian local and regional authorities by means of information exchanges in particular on the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity in all aspects of life at local and regional levels;

(h) discussing any other matters arising in the context of implementing the Stabilisation and Association Agreement, including in relation to the accession process of Albania.

2. The Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions shall initially comprise eight representatives of the Committee of the Regions, on the one hand, and eight elected representatives of local and regional authorities of Albania, on the other hand. The Joint Consultative Committee may decide by a majority of its members from the Committee of Regions and a majority of its members from Albania to change the number of representatives. The number of representatives from the Committee of Regions and from Albania shall remain equal and not exceed thirteen members, respectively. An equal number of alternate members shall be appointed.

3. The Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions shall carry out its activities on the basis of consultation by the Stabilisation and Association Council or, with regard to promoting dialogue between local and regional authorities, on its own initiative.

4. The Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions may make recommendations to the Stabilisation and Association Council.

5. Members shall be chosen with a view to ensuring that the Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions is as faithful a reflection of the various levels of local and regional authorities in both the European Union and in Albania. Official nominations of Albanian members shall be made by the Government of Albania on the basis of proposals from organisations representing local and regional authorities in Albania, and ensuring political plurality and gender balance. Those proposals shall be based on inclusive and transparent selection procedures among representatives holding local or regional electoral mandates.

6. The Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions shall adopt its own Rules of Procedure.

7. The Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions shall be co-chaired by a member of the Committee of the Regions and a representative of the local and regional authorities of Albania.

8. The Committee of the Regions, on the one hand, and the Government of Albania, on the other hand, shall each defray the expenses they incur by reason of the participation of their delegates and supporting staff in the meetings of the Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions, in particular with regard to travel and subsistence expenditure.

9. 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.

Done at …

For the Stabilisation and Association Council
The President