

**Question for oral answer O-000024/2012  
to the Commission**

Rule 115

**Emilio Menéndez del Valle, Vital Moreira**

on behalf of the Committee on International Trade

Subject: Proposal for a Council decision on the conclusion of the regional Convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin

The Regional Convention on pan-Euro-Mediterranean preferential rules of origin will be a major step forward towards a true Euromed Free Trade Area and towards the social and economic integration of the region.

1. How does the Commission foresee that the adoption of this new instrument will contribute effectively to the EU's response to the Arab Spring in the framework of the Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean and the new response to a changing neighbourhood?
2. The Convention does not include a Dispute Settlement Mechanism. In case of a dispute, parties have to fall back on the DSMs in the individual FTAs, where these exist. Can the Commission explain why this is so and how it foresees that disputes will be settled efficiently once the Convention is in force?
3. Can the Commission explain why the Convention does not include any review or revision clauses? Does the Commission envisage an impact assessment on the functioning of the Convention in the future? Would the Commission agree that a revision of this system is necessary? What aspects of the Convention can be improved?
4. Despite the EU-Israel Technical Arrangement, certain companies export goods originating in the occupied territories to the EU under the EU-Israel Association Agreement. EU Member States' customs services cannot possibly check each consignment, while the use of the postcode on customs documents coming from Israel still leaves obvious loopholes. How will the Commission ensure the effective implementation of the Convention in a manner that does not increase the risk of possible malpractices? Which additional steps does the Commission envisage, bilaterally or under the Convention, to ensure that Parties that have not concluded a similar technical arrangement with Israel enforce equivalent rules before cumulation? Does the Commission envisage coordinating with Member States' customs services to ensure that the Technical Arrangement is applied also to cumulated products?
5. Will the Commission consider elevating the Technical Arrangement to a binding agreement at a European level?

Tabled: 2.2.2012

Forwarded: 6.2.2012

Deadline for reply: 13.2.2012