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**Declaration by the Presidency of the European Union
on the entry into force of the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement
establishing an Association with the Republic of Tunisia**

The Presidency of the European Union welcomes the entry into force of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement with the Republic of Tunisia on 1 March 1998. This is the first agreement to enter into force in the series of new agreements due to be concluded as part of the drive which began in Barcelona in November 1995 to strengthen the Union's Mediterranean policy.

The entry into force of the Agreement, signed in Brussels on 17 July 1995, is an historic event which marks a qualitatively new stage in relations between the European Union and the Republic of Tunisia. The Agreement provides for the gradual liberalization of trade between the European Union and Tunisia, together with increased cooperation in various fields, and establishes a political dialogue which will enable both parties to discuss a whole range of issues, including human rights.

The Presidency hopes that the first meeting of the Association Council can be held this year.