

EEC-TUNISIA
CO-OPERATION COUNCIL

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On 2 March 1992 the EEC-Tunisia Co-operation Council held its fifth meeting at ministerial level under the chairmanship of Mr João de Deus PINHEIRO, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Portuguese Republic and President-in-Office of the Council of the European Communities.

The Tunisian delegation was led by Mr Habib BEN YAHIA, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Commission was represented by Mr Abel MATUTES, Member of the Commission, and the European Investment Bank by Mr Alain PRATE, Vice-President.

The meeting enabled both parties to take stock of their relations under the Co-operation Agreement since the previous meeting (20 February 1989) and to consider the prospects for future co-operation. They noted that the entry into force of the new EEC-Tunisia Financial Protocol on 1 February 1992 practically coincided with the launching of the eighth Tunisian Development Plan, the principal aim of which was to open up the Tunisian economy to the outside world in order to modernize it and make it more competitive and to improve the living standards of the people of Tunisia.

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The Co-operation Council also noted with satisfaction that co-operation between Tunisian and Community undertakings, already well under way, was being stepped up owing in particular to the enhanced opportunities for partnership for small and medium-sized undertakings and that scientific and technical co-operation was being extended to other areas, especially telecommunications, energy, tourism and the environment.

The meeting further provided the Tunisian Minister for Foreign Affairs with an opportunity to set out the broad lines of the new policy approach advocated by his Government with regard to relations between Tunisia and Europe, notably following recent events on the international stage, and in particular in the Mediterranean region. In the perspective of joint development and in the framework of partnership with the Community, this approach is designed to make it possible for Tunisia to continue to progress along the path it has chosen: to pursue the democratic process, guarantee respect for human rights and basic freedoms and ensure the emancipation of women, while at the same time pursuing an economic policy open to the outside world.

Finally, in the evening, the Ministers of the Twelve and the Tunisian Minister exchanged views in an informal framework on political questions of common interest.