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Libya: Commission proposes negotiating mandate for a Framework Agreement

The European Commission has proposed that the EU should start negotiations for a Framework Agreement with Libya in 2008. Once the Council has approved the mandate, the Commission will negotiate the Agreement with the Libyan Government, with the objective of strengthening the political, social, economic, commercial and cultural relations between both parties.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, European Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy, said: *"This is a historic decision. Libya is an important player in the Mediterranean region and in Africa, and so far has no framework for relations with the EU. The launching of negotiations for a new agreement is the successful result of the reciprocal dialogue and engagement started in 2004. I am confident that the agreement will create solid and long lasting relations between Libya and the EU".*

Peter Mandelson, European Commissioner for Trade, said: *"An ambitious Free Trade Agreement would intensify cooperation between the EU and Libya on trade and economic issues and would further strengthen and deepen our relationship. Together with our support for Libya's bid to join the World Trade Organisation, these negotiations represent a vital first push forward in Libya's re-integration into the world trading system".*

By entering into contractual negotiations with Libya, the Commission aims to:

- establish fruitful dialogue and co-operation on political issues of common interest in the bilateral relations and at regional level, including important subjects such as international security, development and human rights;
- contribute to the economic and social reforms being undertaken in the country;
- further develop trade and economic relations, notably by establishing a Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Libya and accompanying its integration into the international trade and economic framework;
- co-operate in many areas of common interest such as migrations, energy, transports, education, environment and culture.

The objective of a framework for relations with Libya was set out in the Council's Conclusions of 15 October 2007 whereby the Commission was requested to draft and submit negotiating directives for a future agreement with Libya. This was the acknowledgement of the substantial progress made in EU-Libya relations in the latest years.

Additional information at:

http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/libya/index_en.htm