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ANNEX

ANNEX

to the PROPOSAL for a COUNCIL DECISION No X/2023

on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union concerning a Decision of the EU - Albania Stabilisation and Association Council amending its Rules of Procedure

ANNEX

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 (hereinafter referred to as "Albania"), of the other part, and in particular Article 120 (4) thereof,

Whereas:

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

(2) It seems appropriate that such cooperation should 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;

(b) and the second 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) It follows that the rules of procedure of the Stabilisation and Association Council, adopted by Decision No 1/2009, need to be amended accordingly.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Decision No 1/2009 shall be amended by adding the following Articles:

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, entrusted 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 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 issues of mutual interest, in particular on up-to-date state of play on the accession process as well as preparation of Albanian employers, workers and other civil society organisations for this process;

(d) Encouraging exchanges of experience and structured dialogue between A) Albanian employers, workers and other civil society organisations and B) employers, workers and other civil society organisations from Member States, including through networking in specific areas where direct contacts and cooperation might prove 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 EU 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 can 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 to ensure 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 Albania. Official nominations of Albanian members shall be made by the government of Albania based on 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 those in Albania. 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 after the accession of Albania;

(c) Exchanging information on current issues of mutual interest, in particular on up-to-date state of play concerning European regional policy and accession process as well as preparation of Albanian local and regional authorities for these policies;

(d) Encouraging multilateral structured dialogue between A) Albanian local and regional authorities and B) local and regional authorities from 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 the most effective way of addressing specific topics of mutual interest;

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

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

(g) Assisting Albanian local and regional authorities by means of information exchange in particular implementation of the principle of subsidiarity in all aspects of life on local and regional level;

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

(2) The Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union shall initially comprise eight representatives of the Committee of the Regions, on the one hand, and eight elected representatives of the local and regional authorities of Albania, on the other hand. The Joint Consultative Committee can decide with 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 respectively. An equal number of alternate members shall be appointed.

(3) The Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union shall carry out its activities on the basis of consultation by the Stabilisation and Association Council or, as concerns the promotion of the dialogue between the local and regional authorities, on its own initiative.

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

(5) Members shall be chosen to ensure that the Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions is a faithful reflection of the various levels of local and regional authorities in both the European Union and Albania. Official nominations of Albanian members shall be made by the government of Albania based on 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 of the European Union shall adopt its own Rules of Procedure.

(7) The Joint Consultative Committee with the Committee of the Regions of the European Union 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 incurred 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 of the European Union, 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 Chairman