

No. 34344

**EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
and
LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

**Cooperation Agreement (with annexes and joint declaration
on the readmission of citizens). Signed at Luxembourg
on 29 April 1997**

*Authentic texts: Spanish, Danish, German, Greek, English, French, Italian,
Dutch, Portuguese, Finnish, Swedish and Lao.*

Registered by the European Community on 9 February 1998.

**COMMUNAUTÉ EUROPÉENNE
et
RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE POPULAIRE LAO**

**Accord de coopération (avec annexes et déclaration conjointe
concernant la réadmission des ressortissants). Signé à
Luxembourg le 29 avril 1997**

*Textes authentiques : espagnol, danois, allemand, grec, anglais, français,
italien, néerlandais, portugais, finnois, suédois et laotien.*

Enregistré par la Communauté européenne le 9 février 1998.

COOPERATION AGREEMENT¹ BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

of the one part, and

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC,

of the other part,

hereinafter referred to as "the Parties",

WELCOMING the increase in trade and cooperation which has taken place between the European Community, hereinafter referred to as "the Community", and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, hereinafter referred to as "Lao PDR";

RECOGNIZING the excellent relations and ties of friendship and cooperation between the Community and the Lao PDR;

REAFFIRMING the importance of further strengthening ties between the Community and the Lao PDR;

RECOGNIZING the importance the Parties attach to the principles of the United Nations Charter, to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,² to the 1993 Vienna Declaration and the Plan of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights, to the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the associated plan of action, and to the 1995 Beijing Declaration and the plan of action of the Fourth World Conference on Women;

REAFFIRMING the Parties' common will to consolidate, deepen and diversify their relations in areas of mutual interest on a footing of equality, non-discrimination, mutual benefit and reciprocity;

¹ Came into force on 1 December 1997 by notification, in accordance with article 21.

² United Nations, *Official Records of the General Assembly, Third Session, Part I*, p. 71.

DESIROUS OF creating favourable conditions for the development of trade and investment between the Community and the Lao PDR, and the need to adhere to the principles of international trade, the purpose of which is to promote trade liberalization in a stable, transparent and non-discriminatory manner which takes account of the Parties' economic differences;

RECOGNIZING the need to support the current process of economic reform in order to guarantee the Lao PDR's transition to a market economy, with due regard for the importance of the social development which should go hand in hand with economic development and the common commitment to respecting social rights;

RECOGNIZING the need to support the Laotian government's efforts to improve the living conditions of the poorest and most disadvantaged sections of the population, with a special emphasis on the status of women;

CONSIDERING the importance accorded by the Parties to the protection of the environment at all levels and to the sustainable management of natural resources, taking account of the links between the environment and development;

HAVE DECIDED TO CONCLUDE this Agreement and to this end have designated as their Plenipotentiaries:

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

Hans VAN MIERLO

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands,
President-in-Office of the Council of the European Union

Manuel MARÍN

Vice-President of the Commission of the European Communities

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC:

Somsavat LENGSAVAD

Minister of Foreign Affairs

WHO, having exchanged their Full Powers, found in good and due form,

HAVE AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

ARTICLE 1

Basis

Respect for the democratic principles and fundamental human rights established by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights inspires the internal and international policies of the Community and of the Lao PDR and constitutes an essential element of this Agreement.

ARTICLE 2

Objectives

The main objective of this Agreement is to provide a framework for enhancing cooperation between the Parties, within their respective areas of jurisdiction, with the following aims:

- (a) to accord each other most-favoured-nation treatment on trade in goods in all areas specifically covered by the Agreement, save as regards advantages accorded by either Party within the context of customs unions or free trade areas, trade arrangements with neighbouring countries or specific obligations under international commodity agreements;
- (b) to promote and intensify trade between the Parties, and to encourage the steady expansion of sustainable economic cooperation, in accordance with the principles of equality and mutual advantage;
- (c) to strengthen cooperation in fields closely related to economic progress and benefiting both Parties;
- (d) to develop lasting trade relations and diversify trade between the Community and the Lao PDR, to achieve a lasting opening-up of markets to a degree which is compatible with the Parties' economic situations and the assistance which the Lao PDR will need in the light of its application to join the WTO;

- (e) to contribute to the Lao PDR's efforts to improve the quality of life and standards of living of the poorest sections of its population, together with measures using rural development to combat poverty in the countryside and assistance with achieving the transition to a market economy and developing human resources in a number of sectors of the economy;
- (f) to encourage job creation in both the Community and the Lao PDR, with priority being accorded to programmes and operations which could have a favourable effect in this respect. The Parties shall also exchange views and information on their respective initiatives in this field, step up and diversify their economic links and establish conditions conducive to job creation;
- (g) to take the requisite measures to protect and conserve the world, regional, national and local environments and manage natural resources sustainably, taking account of the link between the environment and development.

ARTICLE 3

Development cooperation

The Community recognizes the Lao PDR's need for development assistance and is prepared to step up its cooperation in order to contribute to that country's own efforts to achieve sustainable economic development and the social progress of its people through concrete projects and programmes in accordance with the priorities set out in Council Regulation (EEC) No 443/92 of 25 February 1992 on financial and technical assistance to, and economic cooperation with, the developing countries in Asia and Latin America.

In accordance with the abovementioned Regulation, assistance will be targeted mainly at the poorest sections of the population. In cooperation, priority will be given to schemes aimed at alleviating poverty, and in particular those likely to create jobs, foster development at grassroots level and promote the role of women in development. The Parties will also encourage the adoption of appropriate measures to prevent and combat AIDS and take steps to increase grassroots development and education on AIDS and the operational capacity of the health services.