

# What is DCFTA

ALECA is an acronym for the French “Accord de Libre Échange Complet et Approfondi” translated into Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA). This DCFTA is part of an agreement project between Tunisia and the European Union to enlarge and consolidate their economic cooperation. As it concretizes a major objective of the Privileged Partnership negotiated by Tunisia and the EU in November 2012, this draft agreement is an instrument for integrating the Tunisian economy into the internal market of the European Union. Thus, it is not a mere new additional trade agreement but rather an attempt to deeply integrate the Tunisian economy into the Euro-Mediterranean economic space. A better integration of the Tunisian economy into the European economic space would only be possible when:

- the commercial, economic and legal environments are progressively harmonised,
- non-tariff barriers are reduced,
- the customs procedures are simplified and facilitated and when
- access conditions for products and services to both markets are improved.

More specifically, this draft agreement aims to extend and enlarge the free trade zone for manufactured industrial products set up in 2008 under the 1995 Association Agreement. The 1995 Association Agreement provided only the elimination of tariffs for industrial products and a quota-regulated exchange of concessions for a list of agricultural, agri-food and fisheries products. Beyond being an agreement with the EU, this DCFTA is part of a national reform strategy initiated by the Tunisia state to establish a progressive integration of the country in its regional, Maghreb, Arab, Euro-Mediterranean and international contexts. For the country, this agreement will represent a real “accelerator” of national reforms decided and planned in total sovereignty.

Apart from the agreement with the EU, this DCFTA tallies with the national strategy of reforms introduced by Tunisia to ensure the country’s gradual integration in its regional, North-African, Arab, Euro-Mediterranean and international contexts. For Tunisia, this DCFTA represents a real “accelerator” of reforms that are decided and planned in full sovereignty. When this DCFTA is finalized, its benefits for Tunisia will be the following:

- The Tunisian products and services will, in the long run, have an easier access to a 500 million consumer European market.
- The investment conditions and the business climate will be upgraded thanks to a more predictable and closely similar to the EU regulatory framework.
- The gradual adjustment of the Tunisian economy to the European standards should also contribute to improving the quality of Tunisian products and services, which will have beneficial consequences for Tunisian consumers and will improve their access to other markets.

These services will respect the international, social and environmental standards. Once the agreement is signed and ratified, the implementation of the DCFTA's commitments will gradually be outlined in a fully negotiated calendar.