3. Any Contracting Party that does not join the consensus in relation to paragraph 2 shall present to the Commission in writing its reasons for not doing so.

4. Instruments of accession shall be deposited with the Depositary. The Depositary shall inform all Signatories and all Contracting Parties of all accessions.

Article 25
Entry into Force

1. This Convention shall enter into force one hundred and eighty (180) days from the date of receipt by the Depositary of the fourth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

2. For Contracting Parties that have deposited an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession in respect of this Convention after the requirements for entry into force have been met but prior to the date of entry into force, the ratification, acceptance, approval or accession shall take effect on the date of entry into force of this Convention or thirty (30) days after the date of deposit of the instrument, whichever is the later date.

3. For Contracting Parties that have deposited an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession after the date on which this Convention entered into force, this Convention shall become effective thirty (30) days after the date of deposit of the instrument.

Article 26
Reservations and Exceptions

No reservations or exceptions may be made to this Convention.

Article 27
Declarations and Statements

Article 26 does not preclude a State or regional economic integration organization, when signing, ratifying, accepting, approving or acceding to this Convention, from making declarations or statements, however phrased or named, with a view, *inter alia*, to the harmonization of its laws and regulations with the provisions of this Convention, provided that such declarations or statements do not purport to exclude or to modify the legal effect of the provisions of this Convention in their application to that State or regional economic integration organization.

Article 28
Relation to Other Agreements

1. This Convention shall not alter the rights and obligations of Contracting Parties that arise from other agreements compatible with this Convention and that do not affect the enjoyment by other Contracting Parties of their rights or the performance of their obligations under this Convention.

2. Nothing in this Convention shall prejudice the rights, jurisdiction and duties of Contracting Parties under the 1982 Convention or the 1995 Agreement. This Convention shall be interpreted and applied in the context of and in a manner consistent with the 1982 Convention and the 1995 Agreement.

Article 29
Amendments

1. Any proposal to amend this Convention shall be sent in writing to the Chairperson of the Commission at least ninety (90) days prior to the meeting at which it is proposed to be considered, and the Chairperson of the Commission shall promptly transmit the proposal to all members of the Commission. Proposed amendments to this Convention shall be considered at the regular meeting of the Commission, unless a majority of the members of the Commission requests a special meeting to discuss the proposed amendment. A special meeting may be convened with not less than ninety (90) days notice.

2. Amendments to this Convention by the Commission shall be adopted by the Contracting Parties by consensus. The text of any amendments so adopted shall be transmitted by the Depositary to all Contracting Parties.

3. An amendment shall take effect for all Contracting Parties one hundred and twenty (120) days after the date of transmittal specified in the notification by the Depositary of receipt of written notification of approval by all Contracting Parties.

4. Any State or regional economic integration organization that becomes a Contracting Party to this Convention after an amendment has been adopted in accordance with paragraph 2 shall be deemed to have approved that amendment.

Article 30
Annex

The Annex shall form an integral part of this Convention and, unless expressly provided otherwise, a reference to this Convention includes a reference to the Annex.

Article 31
Withdrawal

1. Any Contracting Party may withdraw from the Convention on 31 December of any year by giving notice on or before the preceding 30 June to the Depositary, which shall communicate copies of such notice to other Contracting Parties.