Resolution on the Commission's 5-year strategic programme

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PURPOSE: to communicate to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions the Commission's strategic objectives for the period 2000 to 2005. CONTENT: this communication lays down the 4 main strategic objectives highlighted by the Prodi Commission for the next 5 years. Several milestones along this road are already in place. The Inter-Governmental Conference is due for completion by the end of this year. Euro notes and coins are to be introduced in January 2002, and the Union will be in a position to welcome new members by the end of that year. Elections to the European Parliament will be held in June 2004. Preparing for enlargement and its consequences will also lay the foundations for a revision of the European Union's financial perspectives in 2006 at the latest. According to the Commission, the next decade will give shape to a new political Europe in which the main topics for discussion will be : - to achieve full economic co-operation ; - to establish an area of freedom, security and justice ; - to develop common foreign, security and defence policies ; - to promote (through shared policies and institutions) shared values of liberty, peace and stability, democracy, human rights, tolerance, gender,equality, solidarity and non-discrimination ; - the importance of a European Charter of Fundamental Human Rights. Only a Europe which shares fundamental values and political objectives, and which can pursue them effectively, will be able to meet the huge challenge of the new millennium. In addition, political integration must be pursued taking full account of our national and regional identities, cultures and traditions. In order to make this possible, the Commission intends to go further to find a new synergy between all the European Union's democratic bodies, as part of a broader improvement of European governance. The Commission wants to strike a new balance between action by the Commission, the other institutions, the Member States and civil society in order to bring Europe much closer to the people it exists to serve. Furthermore, the Commission wants to reinforce that Europe can show genuine leadership on the world stage and that it shall be able to heed the warnings off globalisation, not least from those who feel disenfranchised from it. It aims to create a new kind of global governance to manage the global economy and environment. On the political front, an overriding priority of this Commission will be to advance the process of enlargement so as to stabilise our continent and secure peace, democracy and respect for human rights throughout Europe. Bosnia and Kosovo, so close to our borders, reveal how essential this is. The Commission aims to achieve this stability not only by enlarging the Union but also by building a co-ordinated foreign and security policy anddeveloping a coherent policy of co-operation with our neighbours. More importantly, enlargement means reforming the European institutions and treaties a task to be undertaken this year by the Inter-Governmental Conference. On the economic and social front, the Commission's priority is to tackle unemployment. This means taking advantage of economic upturn to implement structural reforms, to make European research more efficient, to modernise the working environment, to promote investment in modern infrastructure and to create a well-trained and digitally-literate workforce whose ideas reach the market place quickly. The goal must be long-term growth and competitiveness. In addition, the Union must also respond to people who are increasing looking to Europe for action to improve their environment, their safety and quality of life. Therefore, the Commission will pursue 4 strategic objectives in the 5 years ahead. These 4 objectives are: - promoting new forms of European governance : this means giving people a greater say in the way Europe is run ; - - making the institutions work more effectively and transparently, notably by reforming the Commission and setting an example for other bodies ; - adapting the institutions to the needs of enlargement ; - building new forms of partnership between the different levels of governance in Europe ; - and ensuring an active and distinctive European contribution to the development of global governance. Furthermore, Governments and Parliaments, regional and local authorities are an integral part of European governance. They all have a responsibility in shaping, implementing and presenting policy; a stable Europe with a stronger voice in the world : as a top priority the Commission will work to make a success of enlargement, and to build a real policy of co-operation

with our new neighbours. It also aims at closer co-operation between European institutions and amongst the Member States and at enabling Europe to take lead in building the new global economy. Globalisation opens up new prospects for trade, investment and technological development. However, the globalisation process must be made compatible with the common interest of society; a new economic and social agenda : this means modernising our economy for the digital age in a manner which promotes employment and sustainable development, whilst re-modelling our systems of social protection in order to build a fair and caring society. The aim for full employment is a very important objective of economic and social policy as it is the main source of poverty and social exclusion. Moreover, energy will be an essential factor for Europe's competitiveness and economic development, there will also be the debate on the creation of the much needed European Research Area; a better quality of life : here the Commission must provide effective answers to the issues which affect thedaily lives of the EU's citizens, notably the environment, food safety, consumer rights, transport, justice and security against crime. The Commission is ready for action, and it is willing to be judged on its performance over the next five years, in particular its success in implementing the priorities set out in this programme. The Commission will: - make a success of internal reforms, placing greater emphasis on core tasks; - vigorously conduct the enlargement negotiations and help develop effective co-operation our immediate neighbours; - work to ensure, through the launching of a comprehensive Millennium Round, that the forces of globalisation are harnessed to the needs of the world and that sustainability is secures; - help make Europe a better and safer place to live by taking action on the environment, and by implementing the Tampere agenda and the measures set out in the Food Safety White Paper; - play a leading role in the debate over how an enlarged Europe should be governed so as to reconcile diversity and decentralisation with the need for strong institutions and co-ordinated action.