Resolution on the Commission's annual legislative programme for 2000

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PURPOSE: Communication from the Commission outlining its work programme for 2000. CONTENT: In its Communication on strategic objectives between 2000 and 2005 (see procedure RSP2000/2514), the Commission has identified four central issues which will transform our political project over the life of this Commission and far beyond, namely: - promoting new forms of European governance, - a stable Europe with a stronger voice in the world, - a new economic and social agenda, - a higher quality of life for all. The Work Programme for 2000 identifies the first steps which will be taken over the months ahead to transform the strategic objectives for the next 5 years into reality. It is accompanied by an indicative list setting out the legislative and policy initiatives currently foreseen for this year. As in previous years, this Work Programme focuses on new legislative and policy proposals. It falls into four sections: - Europe, its neighbours and the World; - The economic and social agenda; - Working for the citizen; and - Reform and Reshaping the way Europe works. 1) Europe, its neighbours and the world: - in the context of foreign and security policy, the Union must be active on the regional and the world stage if it is to contribute to stabilising our continent and to securing strategic European objectives. The decision taken at the Helsinki European Council to develop the common European Security and Defence Policy requires increased coherence of Community and CFSP action. Attention will focus on developing a non-military crisis management capability and a proposal will be made to create a Rapid Reaction Facility. The Commission will seek greater coherence in its human rights and democratisation activity by setting out a new human rights strategy. In preparation for enlargement of the Union, distinctive strategic partnerships will be developed with neighbouring countries and regions. In particular, the Commission will pursue its strategy for stabilisation and association in the Balkans and, with the Stability Pact, seek to strengthen and focus the international effort to assist the countries of this Region. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreements and the Common Strategies provide a basis for developing relations with Russia and the Ukraine. Closer cooperation will also be sought with the countries of the Caucasus. A conference to be held in 2000 between the EU and Mediterranean countries should reinforce and reinvigorate the Barcelona Process developing, over time, partnerships based on the rule of law and sustainable development. This will allow Europe to strengthen its contribution to the Middle East Peace Process, and through the revitalised Euro-Mediterranean partnership, the Union will also seek to give fuller expression to its historical and political ties with the Magreb countries. With regard to the US, an effort will be made to reduce and eliminate as far as possible the disputes in trans-Atlantictrade and to build on a broad basis of shared values and common interests to forge a true partnership so as to achieve jointly our economic, political and security objectives around the world. In Asia, the Union will contribute to stability and security and support economic reforms. The Commission will try to deepen the relations with Latin America and to negotiate association agreements with Mercosur and Chile. To improve the effectiveness of the Union's voice around the globe, its external services will be reorganised. In the field of trade relations, the main objectives remain seeking further trade liberalisation as a stimulus to growth and development, strengthening the rules-based trading system so as to better harness the challenge of globalisation, and addressing the specific issues of developing countries. Accession negotiations with 6 further countries open in February 2000 and will proceed in step with the state of preparation of the candidates. For Turkey, the Commission will implement a pre-accession strategy, including an accession partership. 2000 will also see enhanced financial support for the candidate countries through Phare, ISPA and SAPARD. The Commission will also present its communication strategy to ensure a broad understanding and acceptance of enlargement both within the Member States and in the candidate countries. 2) Economic and social agenda: The key objective is to develop a long-term strategy to build a competitive, innovative and inclusive knowledge-based economy to promote strong and sustained growth achieved through policies

aimed at restoring full employment and supporting social cohesion. The Lisbon Summit in March will set much of the economic and social agenda for the next few years. The Commission is to propose an Action Plan on future priorities to ensure that full use is made of new technologies in education and, in particular, to set out a strategy ensuring that Internet access, multimedia material and suitably trained teachers is a reality in all classrooms by 2002. A Communication on making Europe an area of lifelong learning will be also be presented. In preparation for the introduction of euro coins and noted in 2002, a strengthened information strategy to prepare business and consumers, as well as a proposal for a regulation on combating counterfeiting will be presented. In the social affairs field, a new Social Action Programme will be presented. The Commission will launch the first stage consultation of the social partners on adaptability and modernisation of work organisation and working conditions. The Commission will strengthen cooperation between Member States on the issue of the modernisation and sustainability of social protection systems, including pensions. A Fifth Framework Programme on gender equality will also be published in 2000. Under the heading of economic and social cohesion, the first decisions will be taken on the new generation of economic development programmes co-financed by the Structural Funds and the Second Cohesion Report will be published. The Commission will continue to benchmark progress andencourage the sharing of best practice and peer review in terms of the Single Market. Particular attention will be paid to the public procurement rules and to postal services in 2000. An assessment will be made of whether further adaptation of single market rules may be needed to meet the challenge of electronic commerce. Under the Financial Services Action Plan, priorities will include the development of a framework for securities markets and investment services and to ensure effective safeguards for consumers and investors. Legislative activity will focus on establishing a legal framework for supplementary pensions, amending existing legislation on insurance brokers (insurance intermediaries) and reviewing the Prospectuses Directive with a view to making it easier for companies to raise capital Europe-wide. Other non-legislative initiatives will address retail payments, accounting rules, the adaptation of financial regulation in the light of e-commerce and the possible overhaul of the Investment Services Directive. The Commission will seek further progress in the coordination of tax policy. It will propose Communications on its future strategy on taxation and on the customs union. It will also bring forward amendments to current VAT legislation to adapt it to e-commerce. A new strategy for enterprise and competitiveness will be set out in a Communication on enterprise, together with a new Multi-annual programme on Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. A review of current financing instruments for innovation and venture capital will be completed. In the field of competition and state aids, the following are planned: review of the treatment of horizontal cooperation agreements; guidance to companies on how new rules on vertical agreements will be applied; guidance on different aspects of the merger control rules; an evaluation report regarding the group exemption regulation on car distribution and a regulation renewing the block exemption for liner shipping consortia; block exemption rules on aids for SMEs, training and employment; rules for aid to the cinema and TV sectors and for car manufacturing. In the area of the Information Society, a legislative package covering licensing, universal service, interconnection and access and data protection measures is planned. With regard to agriculture and fisheries, within the EU action will focus on the implementation of the programmes and changes introduced by Agenda 2000. Externally, there is the need to safeguard the European agricultural model within international trade negotiations, to conclude a number of bilateral agreements, and to support the process of enlargement. 3) Working for the citizen: Actions fall under 5 main headings. - Environment: development of a 6th Environmental Action Programme and the integration of environmental considerations in other sectors and Community policies; improvement of the legal framework for genetically modified organisms and the completion of legislation on water and air quality; publication of a White Paper on environmental liability; presentation of strategies for the future treatment of PVC and for the chemical industry. - Food safety, public health and consumer confidence: WhitePaper on food safety; a Communication on a heath strategy for the EU suggesting how effect can be given to health and health-related Treaty provisions; safety aspects of products and services, mis-leading advertising, consumer credit and mortgages, improving cooperation between national administrations and issues of access to utility and other general interest services. - Transport and energy: a strategy document on different energy sources (in particular, security of supply); revision of the TENs guidelines; updating of guidelines on the future development of EU transport policy; setting up of a joint venture to bring about the GALILEO European satellite navigation

system project; a framework to create a Single European Airspace; strengthening of safety standards and improvement of training in the maritime sector; a Green Paper on the role of public transport and of private cars in cities; a Communication to propose that a technology strategy for climate change must be adopted. - An area of freedom, security and justice: establishment of a Scoreboard as a mechanism to monitor progress in the measures taken in the creation of the area of freedom, security and justice; procedures related to asylum applications; combating organised crime through enhanced police cooperation, the further development with Member States of a European Charter of Fundamental Rights. - Education, culture, sport and audio-visual: adoption and implementation of programmes against doping in sport and MEDIA Plus; examination of the impact of existing recommendations regarding the protection of minors from harmful audio-visual content; launch of the new Culture and Jeunesse programmes. 4) Reform and reshaping the way in which Europe works: There are three main headings in this chapter: - internal reform of the Commission (White Paper) and improved working methods, as well as a new financial management and audit structure within the Commission; - communication on a new communications strategy and reinforced partnership between the Community and NGOs; - Intergovernmental Conference: the Commission will continue to argue that its agenda must take a broad view of the changes needed to accommodate enlargement.