European Commission: external service, development

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PURPOSE : to set out proposals for a further development of the External Service. CONTENT : the communication makes the case - subject to budgetary resources - for: - strengthening of delegations to achieve priority objectives and in particular the objectives of the reform of external assistance management; -the adjustment of the network of delegations, including the possibility of opening up certain new delegations. In order to pay for the desirable objectives, the communication considers possibilities for savings through: - changing of staff balance within some delegations between officials and local staff; - further regionalisation of the Commission's external representation by the creation of of some additional delegations accredited to several countries, and consequent redeployment of posts; - reduction in size or even closure of some delegations. The Commission's aim is to create an integrated External Service comprising the staff delegations and in all the RELEX Directorates General and Services. This will imply a collegiate management structure for headquarters and delegation personnel, as recommended in the proposals on the reform of the EU's External Assistance. It will make it easier to arrange the return of officials to headquarters after a period abroad. And it will thus promote the potential for proper career planning within the External Service in conformity with the Commission's reform proposals.