EC/China relations: implementing the 1998 communication, measures to strenghten the Community policy

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PURPOSE : to present a communication on the Implementation of the 1998 Communication and Future Steps for a more Effective EU Policy. CONTENT : The Communication suggests ways of developing EU-China relations by defining concrete and practical short and medium term action points for EU policy to progress more effectively towards the long term aims defined in 1998. Action points are intended to be as operational as possible. They should help set the agenda for focussed EU-China relations. Key suggestions include: 1) Engaging China further in the international community through a continued strengthening of the political dialogue by: - ensuring greater coherence and continuity in scheduling agreed talks at all levels, - targeted reinforcement of the expert level dialogue on specific issues of particular interest, - a commitment to ensure a better preparation of, and a link between, the dialogue at all levels, - better integration of interrelated global issues, and the consideration of producing occasional joint EU-China texts on issues of common concern in the margins of Summit meetings, - codifying the framework for the EU-China political dialogue. 2) Supporting China's transition to an open society through: - a more focussed and results-oriented human rights dialogue, taking full account of the conclusions of the January 2001 General Affairs Council; - working with China to support relevant reforms under way; - implementing and preparing human rights-related assistance programmes in support of the rule of law and legal reform, economic, social, cultural as well as civil and political rights, and democracy; - programming and identifying new areas for EU assistance, such as the prevention of torture. 3) Integrating China further in the world economy through: - the finalisation of China's WTO accession, - close monitoring of the correct implementation of China's WTO commitments, - implementing EU assistance programmes to make WTO accession a success, - strengthening existing sectoral dialogues and agreements in key areas (information society, environment, energy, science and technology) and develop new ones (enterprise policy, industrial standards and certification, customs, maritime transport, securities and competition policy), - strengthening EU-China business-to-business dialogue, - reinforcing efforts to deal with bilateral trade disputes. 4) Making better use of EU co-operation programmes with China by: - reinforced long-term programming, - agreeing on a Country Strategy Paper, - focussing EC assistance activities in three main areas: promotion of sustainable development, encouragement of good governance initiatives and promotion of the rule of law, and support for economic and social reform with a view to supporting the efforts by China to ensure regional and social cohesion, the fight against poverty and the promotion of equal rights between men and women. 5) Raising the EU's profile in China by strengthening all aspectsof EU information policy vis-à-vis China. The action points proposed are not exhaustive. They are intended as pointers for what could be undertaken over the coming years, building on what has been achieved so far.