EC/Lao agreement: cooperation agreement

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The transition to a market economy laid down in the 1991 Constitution heralded a new stage in the development of Laos. The Committee in adopting the report by Bernard CASTAGN·DE (ERA, F), gave its backing to the conclusion of a cooperation agreement between the EU and Laos. The agreement reiterates the need to observe human rights and consolidate democracy. It covers trade, commerce, development cooperation, with the emphasis on fighting poverty, and measures to create jobs, boost local development and enhance the role of women. The agreement also contains clauses designed to combat opium production, with crop-substitution programmes for small farmers alongside traditional development programmes.