Outermost regions: implementation of Article 299 (2) of the EC Treaty. Report

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The European Commission has presented its report on the implementation of Article 299(2) of the EC Treaty: measures to assist the outermost regions. It should be made clear that this report is not the general report updating the one adopted in March 2000 as suggested by the Seville European Council but the six-monthly report reviewing the measures adopted under the various Community policies during the second half of 2002. Reporting on these measures remains essential because the development of the outermost regions is still lagging behind, even though these measures have undoubtedly helped reduce the gap. Moreover, at the end of 2003, this report will be supplemented by a general report as proposed at the Seville European Council. More specifically, the report deals with issues such as the recent developments in agriculture and in particular the impact of the reform process on the outermost regions, the fisheries sector, instruments to support economic development, regional policy which according to the report makes a very substantial contribution to the socio-economic development of the outermost regions. To conclude the main feature of 2002-2003 has been the particularly major and sensitive challenges facing the outermost regions. Furthermore, the general promotion of sustainable development in these regions requires a variety of responses with contributions from several Community policies. The common aim of these measures must be to assess the specific needs of these regions adequately and provide corresponding responses in line with Community law and resources. The Commission is aware of what is at stake and has already developed a panoply of initiatives to this end; it will continue the general strategy to be implemented with regard to these regions.