Research and technological development (RTD): cooperation with developing countries

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The Committee repeats Parliament·s call for the establishment of a European Foundation for the long-term support of research laboratories in developing countries and considers that it is desirable to strengthen the specific programme for cooperation with developing countries under the 5th RTD Framework Programme. The committee adopted the report drafted by Mr WEBER (ARE,L) on the Commission Communication concerning the Community·s strategy for supporting research in developing countries against the background of the agreement reached on the 5th RTD Framework Programme and the on-going discussions on the 5th Lomé Convention. The committee considers that emphasis should be placed on technologies (e.g. in the areas of hygiene, water and waste treatment) that enable people to escape from poverty and move towards sustainable wealth creation. The Commission is called upon to apply, if necessary, the principle of differentiation by drawing up, together with local and regional partners, differentiated rules and priorities for the various fields and geographic regions. For the committee, support should be provided on a long-term basis rather than for ad hoc projects. The aim of research cooperation must, in any case, be to help build local research capacities and make it more attractive for researchers to stay in their country of origin. The committee stresses, finally, the importance of scientific research and technological innovation for the sustainable management of resources and the reduction of environmental damage caused by unsustainable industrialisation processes.