Environment: Europe-Asia cooperation strategy

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EU companies must comply with a high level of environmental standards in Asia as well as Europe, the Committee said when it unanimously adopted a report on environmental cooperation between Europe and Asia. The non-legislative report drafted by Mrs Lone DYBKJAER (ELDR, Dk) in response to a Commission communication on the subject called, in a resolution, for a code of conduct setting out the environmental standards which EU undertakings should uphold when operating in Asia. While welcoming the communication, the resolution regretted that the Commission had focused on the export-led industrializing countries of Asia and took the view that a cooperation strategy should concentrate more on developing countries in the south of Asia and should lead to sustainable development. It noted that whereas most of the environment problems in the EU were caused by a high level of consumption, in Asia many environmental problems were caused by poverty. Specific initiatives were needed for the poorest sectors. The resolution stressed that EU/Asia cooperaton should help Asian countries fulfil their obligations under international agreements such as Agenda 21, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Montreal Protocol, etc. In its financial agreements with Asian countries, the EU should impose conditions relating to environmental management. The European Investment Bank should have clear policies concerning the environmental impact of its operations.