A new Asia strategy

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The purpose of this Commission communication is to define the scope of future European policy on Asia. According to this communication, 400 million Asians will have at least the same, if not more purchasing power than Europeans or Americans by the year 2000. This proves that the Union urgently needs to amend its policy on this part of the world and, more importantly, to strengthen its economic profile in Asia if it is to maintain a dominant position in the world economy. The Union must also endeavour, in the current political context (end of the Cold War etc.), to develop political dialogue with Asia and find ways of involving it in the management of international affairs (especially by monitoring regional conflicts such as Korea and Kashmir). As regards trade, this document proves that it is in the Union's interest to continue to open up markets for goods and services and overcome obstacles to European trade and investment. However, these aspects should not obscure the development aspect, which will continue to characterize European policy on southern Asia beyond the year 2000. The communication therefore proposes implementing a coordinated programme to take account of these different aspects.