Central and Eastern countries CEECs: industrial cooperation

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This Commission document summarises the main cooperation objectives in relation to the pre-accession of central and eastern European counties (CEECs) to the Community and studies the industrial implications of the gradual integration of these countries into the European economy. This communication focuses on the CEECs which have already concluded or are due shortly to conclude Europe agreements with the Union (Poland, Hungary, Czech and Slovak Republics, Romania, Bulgaria, Baltic states, Slovenia). According to the Commission, the rate of progress of industrial privatisation varies considerably from one country to another but, as a whole, industry in eastern Europe is in dire need of restructuring and renovation and this cannot be achieved without foreign investment and transfers of technology and know-how. For its part, the Union has already made a huge contribution to the transition process as the result of: - the Europe agreements, the aim of which is to guarantee free trade and provide a broad cooperation platform in all sectors of the economy; - the decisions of the Essen Council encouraging regional cooperation and stimulating commercial cooperation; - assistance and cooperation in the industrial and R&D sectors in order to help these countries increase their industrial potential. The future strategy should pursue three priority objectives: - to improve general conditions for industrial growth; - to privatise, restructure and modernise enterprises; - to promote investment (by working with other entities such as the EBRD and the EIB). Three types of instrument should be implemented as a matter of priority in order to achieve these objectives: - the Europe agreements are the basic guide to Union policy on assistance, with PHARE playing an increasingly important role in paving the way for cooperation and then integration. Within this framework, action is planned in the following main areas: . exploiting the institutional structure of the Europe agreements (joint committees), . white paper on preparing associated countries for integration into the internal market, . quality management (standards /certification), . regulatory and administrative framework for investments, . aid for privatising, restructuring and modernising industry, . promoting trade relations and cross-border and interregional cooperation, . competition, trade, environmental and training policy; - scientific and technological cooperation should be reinforced and geared to the information society; - industry in the Union should be mobilised more strongly.