Research and technological development RTD: perspectives for international cooperation

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OBJECTIVE: to provide a general guideline for cooperation policies in the field of RDT over coming years in the light of the new framework for Community action set out in the TEU, changes in international relations and the development of RTD policies in the international context. CONTENT: the Commission considers in its communication that, following the geopolitical upheavals on the international stage, scientific cooperation is an important factor if the EU is to create a stable environment in an enlarged Europe. Against the backdrop of the global liberalization of trade, with new markets emerging, the key role of future international RDT policies is to achieve a balance between cooperation and competition. In addition, global cooperation on S&T, with shared risks and efforts, is also needed in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century. The main objectives pursued by the EU within the framework of international cooperation on RDT are as follows: - to strengthen European competitiveness and develop technologies for future markets; - to develop S&T partnerships with the neighbours of the European Union; - to share responsibilities and carry out RDT activities with a view to meeting global challenges; - to promote RDT in order to foster sustainable economic growth in developing countries; - to share S&T information and contribute to megascience and leading edge technologies and sciences. These objectives should be achieved by applying various complementary approaches: - a global approach with one-off participation in framework programmes to strengthen the competitiveness of the EU; - a regional approach in order to achieve targeted S&T improvements in selected regions; - a bilateral approach in order to develop S&T relations with certain countries; - a multilateral approach in order to step up the EU's RDT efforts at global level. The Commission intends to pursue eight actions in the immediate future: 1. dialogue between research and industry in order to increase industrial involvement within the framework of international S&T cooperation; 2. strengthening the external dimension of RDT policy; 3. promoting cooperation on global initiatives; 4. responding to the needs of less advanced countries; 5. strengthening the role of Community delegations in international RDT cooperation; 6. using financial resources outside the EU for RDT; 7. making provision for additional appropriations: for the Mediterranean zone, under the revised framework programme and 8. for central and eastern Europe with a view to supporting the pre-accession stage and research into nuclear safety, under the Euratom framework programme and the fourth revised framework programme.