Energy sector: Euro-Mediterranean partnership

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OBJECTIVE: the aim of this communication is to give effect to one aspect of the overall partnership called for in the conclusions of the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Conference held on 27 and 28 November 1995. The main objective is to strengthen cooperation, intensify dialogue in the energy policy sphere, and foster a favourable climate for investment and the operations of energy companies.
SUBSTANCE: on the strength of an analysis of the energy situation in the region, the Commission takes the view that, given the strategic importance of the energy sector, an energy partnership would benefit both the European Union and the Mediterranean countries. Cooperation in the field of energy should be pursued: a) in the field of energy policy, with a view to establishing a framework for discussion so as to formulate coherent energy policies, develop energy planning tools, increase trade in energy products, provide greater security for private investment in energy resources and networks and, finally, to combat the greenhouse effect and climate change; b) with regard to infrastructures and networks, to develop and link up the energy networks in the various regions around the Mediterranean; c) in the field of industrial cooperation and RTD (renewable energy sources and energy efficiency; water treatment and management; oil prospecting, production, refining and distribution, and electricity generation, transmission and distribution). On the basis of these considerations, the Commission puts forward a number of proposals for priority action with special emphasis on: - setting up a Euro-Mediterranean Energy Forum for the joint management of energy cooperation through the establishment of a framework for meeting and information exchange among the members of the partnership; - opening consultations with the Mediterranean partner countries on their possible participation as observers in the work of the European Energy Charter Conference, if they are not already members; - study of mechanisms capable of promoting investment in energy in the Mediterranean regions; - cooperation with the countries concerned, under the partnership agreements, on the implementation of projects of common interest in the field of trans-European networks, taking account of the measures to combat climate change; - facilitation of measures to coordinate and deal with energy projects, in accordance with the objectives and procedures for MEDA.