Strategy for partnership EU/India

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OBJECTIVE: The subject of this communication is to suggest ways of enhancing relations between the EU and India. SUBSTANCE: The Commission takes the view that the current agreement between the EU and India provides an opportunity for attaining the objective which the Union has set itself - to strengthen and deepen the partnership between the two partners - and it draws up suggestions in that respect, without excluding the possibility of a new agreement, should the opportunity present itself. The communication emphasizes the mutual interests of the EU and India and the challenge to be taken up by the EU with regard to that country with an emerging economy which constitutes an enormous potential market. It intends to step up relations on the political, commercial and economic level within the framework of the existing agreement and of the broader framework of its new strategy for Asia. With a view to stepping up partnership between the EU and India, the Commission proposes to: 1. intensify the political dialogue by increasing the number of contacts within its working parties with a view to arriving at arrangements and sectoral agreements concerning, for example, dual-use products, drug precursors and money laundering and to looking more closely at issues such as climate change and the cultural dimension; 2. facilitate trade and investment by negotiating the elimination of existing barriers on the basis of the most-favoured nation clause and by the promotion of contacts between undertakings. Priority should be given to the maritime transport, telecommunications, energy and agriculture sectors; 3. help India to cushion the impact of its structural adjustment on the poorest part of the Indian population while continuing to support health and education, especially for women. The Commission emphasizes that undertakings will be able to put forward their points of view at the forum on investment in trade and cooperation scheduled to be held in November 1996. The EU/India Joint Commission (scheduled to meet in December 1996) will then be able to validate a list of priority measures and determine a detailed activity programme.