Energy: Europe and Asia cooperation strategy

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OBJECTIVE: The Commission communication proposes a strategy for strengthening energy cooperation between Europe and Asia. It follows the line taken at the Essen Summit (December 1994), which invited the Commission to propose concrete initiatives to this effect, within the framework of the new Asia strategy, and is a follow-up to the White Paper entitled 'An Energy Policy for the European Union' introduced by the Commission in December 1995. SUBSTANCE: The strategy proposed by the Commission is based on the following observation: given the demographic growth taking place in Asia, demand for energy could double by 2005. This will have repercussions for Europe in three areas: on security of supply (Europe will be dependent on the outside world for 55% of tis requirements in 2005 and 75% in 2015); on the European energy industry (Asia currently represents half the world market); and on the global environment (protective measures implemented in Europe will have only limited effect unless action is taken simultaneously in Asia). On the basis of this observation, the Commission has set three objectives: 1) strengthening the security of supplies of Asia and Europe; 2) participating in Asia's energy markets; 3) protecting the global environment. The implementation of this strategy will first require the creation of an ongoing dialogue on energy policies with the Asian authorities. The Community would intervene on several different levels: information on European solutions; (b) assistance for adaptation of institutional frameworks; (c) assistance to companies and energy operators. Priority will be given to the electricity, natural gas and coal sectors, energy efficiency and the energy supply of rural areas, in particular by an increase of new/renewable energies.