Research RTD: cooperation with the world's emerging countries

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OBJECTIVE: The Communication addresses the 'Emerging Economies' (such as China, India, Brazil, certain states of south-east Asia and Latin America) and proposes a new framework for RTD cooperation with these countries to meet the global challenge posed by their rapid industrialization. SUBSTANCE: The Communication recommends that the current 'problem-solving' approach of the INCO-DC programme (Scientific and Technical Cooperation with the developing countries), launched in 1995, be complemented by a new 'opportunity-oriented' cooperation initiative aimed at high-technology sectors conducive to the promotion of European innovation on the new markets. The Communication proposes an action plan designed to exploit the whole range of opportunities offered by the existing institutional framework. This involves: - promotion of the participation of emerging countries' research institutions in specific programmes under the Fourth Framework Programme; - the identification of a hard core of narrowly defined topics, where RTD cooperation is expected to have clear potential industrial spin-offs; - the launch of an information campaign and a scientist exchange programme as well as the organization of a series of targeted scientific workshops; - whenever it proves necessary, and in the framework of the external relations policy and its instruments (Framework Agreement and Joint Committee), the conclusion of a complementary Science and Technology cooperation agreement with an emerging economy. The execution of the above plan will result in the creation of a web of scientific partnerships in targeted areas. It will also lay down the bases necessary to foster further collaborative ventures on a larger scale.