PHARE. Annual reports 1994 et 1995

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OBJECTIVE: the present report summarizes the actions financed under the PHARE programme in 1995, emphasizing the "pre-accession" aspect of the initiatives taken in the recipient states. CONTENT: the Commission focuses in its 1995 report on the main objective of the PHARE programme on the eve of the new millennium: to help recipient states become members of the Community. In the Commission's view, PHARE has become the financial instrument of the pre- accession strategy of the CEECs. In practical terms, this has meant that the lion's share of the programme's funds have been used for joint financing of new infrastructure projects in connection with the trans-European networks and that cross-border cooperation has increased significantly. PHARE has also endeavoured to support recipient states in their efforts to bring their legislation, standards and practices into line with those of the European Union with a view to preparing themselves for the single market. As far as the actions themselves are concerned, the report demonstrates that efforts under PHARE concentrated on two approaches: continuing the initiatives started in 1994, especially with regard to infrastructures, and implementing the pre-accession strategy: - concentrating on infrastructure investments: PHARE served mainly to revitalize a number of projects by acting as a financial bridge between international financial institutions, private investors and governments in the partner countries. Most joint financing was directed towards transport infrastructures, the environment, energy, telecommunications and developing the private sector. Particular attention was paid to trans-European networks and projects designed to help these countries with the process of economic reform; - cross-border cooperation: all the initiatives started in 1994 were strengthened in 1995. Cross-border cooperation played a major role in terms of the pre-accession strategy: in close collaboration with the INTERREG II programme, the actions implemented related mainly to developing transport infrastructures, telecommunications and energy and a so-called series of "soft" actions relating to tourism, human resources and culture. Inter-regional cooperation programmes were also launched (ECOS and Ouverture) in order to finance cooperation projects between towns and regions in the partner counties; - at the same time, initiatives were implemented following the extension of Community programmes to the CEECs (SOCRATES, LEONARDO and Youth for Europe III). A budget of some ECU 10 million in 1995 enabled these countries to implement joint preparatory actions in this direction (study visits, seminars etc.). In addition, actions were carried out under PHARE in order to improve coordination between Community aid programmes and assistance from other donors (World Bank, EBRD, EIB, OECD). Initiatives such as SIGMA (PHARE-OECD) helped some public institutions in the CEECs to reform. Finally, PHARE started actions as part of the reconstruction process in the countries of former Yugoslavia (mainly Bosnia and Herzegovina).