Ukraine: action plan

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OBJECTIVE: this document has two complementary objectives: to send the Ukrainian authorities a political message of increased support from the European Union and to improve existing Community assistance and aid synergisms between the Community and the Member States. CONTENT: as far as the political message is concerned, the Community is responding to the request by Ukraine for more visible EU aid. In the longer term, the Union is taking note of the request by the Ukrainian authorities to anchor their country firmly within Europe, with a view to possible accession. At the political level, Ukraine has faced serious challenges to its independence and integration in the global marketplace. It has laid the foundations for democracy, achieved real macro-economic stability, started transforming its economy and found a place in the international community. It now needs to restructure the energy sector and industry, implement the rule of law and a democratic society and improve the parameters of its independence (mainly by having the Russian mortgage lifted). The political question of the place of the Ukraine in Europe is not resolved in this document. However, the Commission suggests opening a discussion within the framework of the Community and the CFSP on the type of relations which should be established with this country. As far as European assistance is concerned: the document proposes 6 lines of approach to action by the Community and its Member States: - support for economic reform; - social transformation; - incorporation of Ukraine into the European security structure and strengthening of political dialogue; - support for regional cooperation; - more extensive contractual relations; - reform of the energy sector. Priority action in the short term is as follows: - ratification by the Member States and entry into force of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA); - decision on macro-financial assistance in 1997; - funding and implementation of the agreement between G7, the Community and the Ukraine on the closure of Chernobyl; - continuing work on bilateral trade; - implementation of a framework to foster private investment. These actions are not all decided and implemented in the same way: the Community alone is responsible for technical assistance (TACIS regulation); some actions are the responsibility of the Community but are implemented under the Interim Agreement; some actions are the joint responsibility of the EC and the Member States and will be implemented under the PCA once it has been ratified; some actions come under the CFSP (especially political dialogue) while others are the responsibility of the Member States alone. Finally, the Commission points out that the action plan as presented in this document has no budgetary implications, except for the Chernobyl file (for which Community financing has been planned for 1997 in order to respect the undertakings given within the framework of G7) and macro-financial assistance.