EU/SAR Macao relations: consolidation beyond 2000

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PURPOSE : to present the Communication on the relation,s between European Union and Macau after year 2000. CONTENT : on the 20/12/1999 Macau was to revert to China after more than four centuries under Portuguese administration. The EU, as one of Macau's major international partners, has a key role to play in contributing to a smooth handover and a stable, prosperous development of the territory thereafter. The links that exist between Europe and Macau - a similar legal system, common rights, liberties and values, and vibrant trade and investment and, in particular, the extremely solid relationship in terms of culture and civilisation - make Europe uniquely placed to fulfil this role. The European Union considers that Macau has a vital role as a bridge between Asia and Europe, notably in the following areas: - democracy and human rights, individual freedoms and related issues; - economic and trade issues, including WTO; - cultural issues, as a regional hub for training and exchange. The European Union looks forward to maintaining and developing its friendly relations with Macau before and after the transfer of sovereignty. The EU believes it has an important and distinct role to play in helping Macau to fully implement the Basic Law, thereby securing a prosperous and stable future for the territory after the handover. With this in mind, the EU will: - continue to deal directly with Macau in areas stipulated by the Basic Law; - closely monitor and promote the implementation of the "one country, two systems" in order to fully support Macau's political, economic and cultural autonomy, and the preservation of the rights and freedoms set out in the Sino-Portuguese Joint Declaration; - ensure full implementation of the bilateral EC-Macau trade ad co-operation Agreement as an instrument through which to reinforce bilateral relations; - deal directly with Macau as an international partner, and maintain regular support and close contact; - facilitate European Investment in the territory, in particular in the field of services, by using existing or future Community instruments, and by promoting direct dialogue between business representatives; - welcome the accreditation to the European Communities of a Trade and Economic Office of Macau as a means of ensuring a regular dialogue in trade, economic and co-operation issues; - encourage Macau to impart its experience of WTO membership to China as and when the latter accedes to the WTO; - following the implementation of those international conventions of which Macau is a member and encourage it to broaden its participation in other conventions; - help reinforce Macau's regional role in the field of human resources through training, information activities and exchange, in particular involving media, cultural exchanges, civil society entities and higher education institutions. This aim should be fulfilled through actions involving directly the authorities of the SAR and the EU and through theinclusion of the SAR in regional projects.