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**COMMISSION PROPOSES BROAD LINES  
OF A COMMUNITY EXTERNAL POLICY  
IN THE FIELD OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION**

In a Community that has opened its doors to the rest of the world and is especially sensitive to recent developments in Europe, science and technology (ST) represents a particularly important and promising area of cooperation with third countries.

In order to ensure that such cooperation is based on an overall approach and with a view to proposing the broad lines that it should follow, the Commission, acting on an initiative by Vice-Chairman F.M. Pandolfi, has simultaneously adopted, for transmission to the Council and Parliament, three communications on cooperation in the field of science and technology with the Central and East European countries, in particular, and on cooperation in the specific area of telecommunications with the East European countries.

**THIRD COUNTRIES IN GENERAL**

Three horizontal principles, i.e., principles that apply irrespective of the forms of cooperation employed or of the geographical location of the countries in question, would constitute the guidelines for Community action.

In the first instance, there is the matter of support for global initiatives, so as to ensure that the Community discharges its share of responsibility for resolving the problems common to our planet as a whole, e.g., the greenhouse effect and its implications for the environment.

Secondly, the Community needs to play its part in contributing to the development of the international scientific community. As a tangible step in this direction, consideration could be given to extending the specific programme on Human Capital and Mobility under the 3rd Framework Programme on R&D to include exchanges of scientific personnel with third countries.

Thirdly, the emphasis is placed on the participation of the Community in selective cooperative activities in the field of international science and technology. In view of the influence of technological development on the level of competitiveness in international trade, this form of cooperation will need to be based, above all, on the laws of the market and on equal access thereto.

These three horizontal principles should be combined with criteria of a vertical nature, i.e., linked to the characteristics and geographical situation of the third countries, so as to enable the Community action to be geared to the three main categories of country: neighbouring Community countries (with two subcategories having highly specific needs and prospects, namely the EFTA countries and the Central and East European countries); developed countries outside the Community (e.g., USA, Japan, Canada) and the newly industrialized or developing countries.

#### CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

The special circumstances of the situation of the Central and East European countries in the wake of recent events have prompted the Commission to issue a separate communication on questions relating to cooperation with this part of Europe in the field of science and technology.

These countries recently undertook major economic reforms to facilitate the transition of their centralized economies to market economies. Cooperation in the field of science and technology is one of the principal tools that should be used in order to help them along this difficult and virtually unknown path. The highly specific nature of the needs resulting from such a situation makes it impossible to conceive of cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe as a mere extension of traditional cooperation models. Not only are the measures to be taken exceptional by their very nature but they also need to be highly specific in terms of their objectives, methods and implementation.

The ongoing analysis (nearing completion) of the specific needs of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the scientific and technological sector reveals the existence of a considerable technological gap between the industrialized west and the countries of this other Europe. In order to cope with this situation, a transfer of technologies is urgently needed. The technologies thus transferred should be targeted rather than advanced. In particular, they should provide a means of tackling the current unsatisfactory situation regarding the demand for consumer goods as well as the far from optimum use of energy resources and the economic and environmental consequences arising therefrom.

Against this background, Community action will be based on the following main options.

Firstly, the Community will need to develop research activities that focus on the introduction and adaptation of technologies rather than activities geared to technological advance. Existing methods will need to be adapted to the extent that the Community's research and development programmes are targeted on progress and not (at least directly) on the preparation and encouragement of technology transfer. In particular, the key question of choosing between the revamping of existing capacities and the construction of completely new structures will have to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Secondly, such activities will be incorporated in the framework of traditional cooperation in the field of science and technology, with a view to promoting collaboration between Community centres of excellence and scientific personnel in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Cooperation of this kind will benefit the various parties involved, given the high degree of scientific competence that these countries possess in a number of sectors. In the main, it could take the form of involvement in Community research programmes - participation in an entire programme or participation on a project-by-project basis within the same programme - and involvement in bilateral and multilateral cooperation agreements in the field of science and technology.

Lastly, cooperation is also envisaged in the area of human resources. Considerable needs exist with regard to the training of R&D managers and the fostering of an awareness in responsible industrial circles of the importance of science and technology for industrial innovation. The specific programme on Human Capital and Mobility proposed under the 3rd Framework Programme and the TEMPUS programme (cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe in systems of higher education), suitably extended and modified, and also the newly created European Training Foundation could provide a framework for Community action in this area.

In particular, Community action in the field of science and technology could be implemented through programmes of coordinated general assistance such as the PHARE project being conducted by the Group of 24, while at the same time keeping open the possibility of developing specific instruments.

#### CENTRAL AND EAST EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: TELECOMMUNICATIONS

In the crucially important telecommunications sector, the weak position of the Central and East European countries, both in terms of quality and distribution levels, could prove a considerable stumbling-block to the efforts of these countries to promote the transition of their economies to market economies.

Certain countries such as Hungary and Poland have already drawn up investment and modernization plans, while others are in the process of doing so or are contemplating such action. All of them are already coming under pressure - or soon will be - from foreign suppliers. Consequently, the risk that inconsistent purchasing policies will develop and that technical options will be determined by commercial expediency is high. One area where the stakes are particularly high is in the field of technical standards, which forms a crucial part of the Community's internal market policy.

The main lines of action proposed by the Commission are as follows.

The first line of action is aimed at actively promoting exchanges of information, notably through the immediate provision of assistance with regard to information sources, services and methods of access to information.

The second line of action consists of increased integration of the telecommunications networks and services of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the trans-European telecommunications system. To this end, it is suggested that consideration be given to opening up the Tedis II programme (Trade Electronic Data Interchange Systems) to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and to extending, to these same countries, trans-European telecommunications services of a general nature in such areas as transport, health, distance teaching and libraries.

The third line of action seeks to promote trade and technology transfer, notably through the creation in the Central and East European capitals of "Houses of Europe", i.e., centres for the promotion of these countries' knowledge and use of Community experience in the telecommunications sector.

Lastly, the Community action could include a study, to be conducted jointly with the Central and East European countries, of programmes and projects that are potentially eligible for financial aid from the Community and the Group of 24. This aid programme could help to trigger developments calculated to meet with the active approval of such bodies as the IBRD, ERDB or the EIB.