

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(81) 248 final

Brussels, 2nd June 1981

COMMISSION EXTERNAL DELEGATIONS

ACTION PROGRAMME FOR 1982

(Commission Communication to the Council)

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In its communication of 22 July, 1977 (COM(77) 368 final) the Commission informed the Council of its medium term priorities concerning the opening of new external delegations. In accordance with this programme, the present communication is intended to explain to the Council the Commission's priorities, established in the context of the budget exercise for 1982, for the strengthening of its external representation, namely the opening of Delegations in India (New Delhi) and Brazil (Brasilia).

Commission Delegation in New Delhi

1. The countries of South and South-East Asia have for several years, and especially since the first enlargement in 1973, urged the Community to fortify its links with them by the establishment of a permanent Commission Delegation in the area. The Commission responded to this request when it decided in 1979 to open a delegation in Bangkok to cover both South and South East Asia. After a two years' experience, it has been proven that the geographical distance between Bangkok and South Asia does not permit the Bangkok delegation to cover the Indian sub-continent.

Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

2. India is the largest country in the South Asia region and has an influential role in the group of developing countries. From the very beginning of the Community, India has been prominent among those developing countries seeking the establishment of a close relationship with the Community. On the basis of these considerations and bearing in mind that India will also be the first South Asian country to conclude a new cooperation agreement with the Community, it seems appropriate to site the delegation in New Delhi. In addition, there is no doubt that New Delhi offers the easiest communication facilities to the other South Asian countries. A delegation in this region would cover the six countries - India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

It should be recalled that President Jenkins - during his visit to India in May 1980 - announced the opening of a Commission representation in New Delhi in 1982.

The European Parliament has endorsed this idea since in the draft interim report of the Committee on External Economic Relations of the European Parliament (rapporteur Dr Barry H. Seal) on a commercial and economic cooperation agreement between the EEC and India, it "calls for steps to be taken to establish a Commission office in New Delhi". (Doc. PE 63.149 of 6.3.1980)

3. The negotiations between India and the Community for a new Commercial and Economic Cooperation Agreement, replacing the more limited Commercial Cooperation Agreement of 1974, were completed on 14 April 1981 and signature of the agreement is expected in early Summer. The opening of a new delegation will greatly facilitate the realisation of broader cooperation provided for in the new agreement. It would at the same time facilitate the implementation of the new cooperation agreement and other new agreements or additional protocols which other countries in the area might wish to negotiate with the Community once the Indian Agreement enters into effect.

In view of the Community's increasing development assistance in South Asia (concentrated on Sri Lanka in 1980 and on Pakistan and Bangladesh in 1981) a delegation in the area would also have a valuable role in connection with the planning and implementation of the Community's development assistance. In effect, the Indian sub-continent is the principal beneficiary of Community aids to non-associated developing countries. In addition, the opening of a delegation in the region would enable a positive information programme to improve the knowledge and image of the Community which is necessary but impossible to carry out from the Delegation in Bangkok.

Commission Delegation in Brazilia

1. By its communication of 22 July 1977 (COM(77)368 final) the Commission informed the Council of its medium-term priorities as to the opening of external Delegations. In accordance with this programme the present communication sets out for the Council the priorities as to the strengthening of its external Representation which the Commission has adopted for the 1981 budgetary exercise: that is, the opening of Delegations in India (New Delhi) and Brazil (Brazilia).

In the case of Latin America, a regional approach was decided upon when in 1964 the High Authority established an office in Santiago. This approach was retained when in 1978 the office, which had meanwhile become the Delegation for Latin America, was transferred to Caracas, Santiago then becoming a sub-office.

Nevertheless, since 1977 the Commission has also stressed that the regional approach could not be applied to those countries with whom the Community had cooperation agreements, given that these agreements require closer relations. The Council's RELEX group has followed the Commission's views on this point, since, in its conclusions of July 1978, it approved the creation of regional representations subject to any specific problems that might be raised by cooperation agreements.

2. In the medium-term programme of opening delegations which was included in its 1977 communication, the Commission drew attention to the foreseeable necessity to open a delegation in Brazil, given the expected development of cooperation with that country.

A commercial and economic cooperation agreement with Brazil was signed in September 1980: following ratification and its taking effect, it will replace the more limited commercial agreement of 1974.

But in the case of Brazil it is not simply a question of the existence of an economic and commercial cooperation agreement. Brazil is a sub-continent of itself covering half of the territory of the Latin American sub-continent, its area being similar to that of the United States and almost twice that of Europe (Russia excluded). Brazil's resources are extremely varied. It is an important economic partner and the investments of Member States of the Community are greater than those of the United States, its potential market is considerable and the political and economic dynamism of the country despite present difficulties make it the principal Latin American partner of the Community.

The particular characteristics of Brazil therefore favour the opening of a delegation in that country. There is also the fact that the language of Brazil is Portuguese and not Spanish as in the rest of Latin America and its interests and needs are not necessarily those of the other countries of Latin America. Moreover, the Community's relations with Brazil are at a quite different level and are often closer to those between industrialised countries. The broad character of Brazil necessitates a distinct information approach. A special effort is needed to improve knowledge of the Community and its policies; this effort cannot be efficiently undertaken from Caracas.

3. On 16/1/81 the Parliament adopted a resolution on the subject of the framework cooperation agreement between the Community and Brazil, in which it "considers it important that, provided Brazil agrees, a permanent delegation from the Commission should be established in Brazil so as to contribute in a practical way to the implementation of the cooperation agreement".

The conference of the European and Latin-American Parliaments, held in Bogota in January 1981, also pronounced in favour of an extension of the representation of the Commission in Latin America.

4. In order that this delegation may play its proper role and be accepted by the government of Brazil it will need to be established in Brasilia, the official and administrative capital of Brazil. For all the reasons stated above and for reasons of geography and politics the responsibilities of this delegation would cover principally Brazil. Its creation, however, would considerably ease the burden of work of the Commission's Delegation for Latin America in Caracas, and in the framework of multilateral relations between the Community and Latin America the Delegation in Brasilia would of course cooperate with the Delegation for Latin America.