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Subject: Report of the Asia Oceania Working Group of 28 February 2002

Delegations will find attached the declassified version of the above document.

The text of this document is identical to the previous version.

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THE EUROPEAN UNION

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TRANSMISSION OF TEXT

from : Secretariat

Subject : Report of the Asia Oceania Working Group of 28 February 2002

Please find annexed the report of the Asia Oceania Working Group of 28 February 2002.

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ANNEX

AFGHANISTAN

- *Information on the experts' informal meeting in Brussels on 14 February and regarding the meeting of 8 March*

1. The Presidency briefed on preparations for the special COASI meeting on 8 March and explained the documents that were likely to be available for that meeting and that of the PSC. The Danish delegation expressed its concern over news that participation in the donor committee for the World Bank Trust Fund for Reconstruction could be restricted to the twelve largest donors. This could exclude a number of Member States. Apparently, the Commission had supported this idea in Washington. Other delegations shared Danish concerns. The Commission was not aware of the line taken by it in Washington. The Presidency suggested that this issue be considered further on 8 March.

2. The Dutch delegation asked if the Presidency could invite other Member States to indicate at what level, if any, they would be represented at the international women's day celebrations in Kabul.

NEPAL

- *Preparation of the EC-Nepal JCC, 19 March*

3. The Commission introduced its annotated agenda for the Joint Committee (meeting room document 35/02) and also distributed the minutes of last year's working groups on economic co-operation and trade co-operation. The Commission underlined in particular its attempts to re-orient its assistance in the light of the political violence in Nepal, so as to better address issues such as conflict prevention and governance. The Group welcomed the timely annotated agenda and the Commission presentation. It supported the Commission's plans to re-orient EC assistance. It welcomed the intention of the Commission to meet with EU HOMs, probably on 18 March on the eve of the Joint Committee. The Commission asked that HOMs offer their advice at that meeting on the security situation, especially for development co-operation projects. The Presidency asked if the Commission Delegation in New Delhi could also, in an informal manner, provide HOMs there with information on the Joint Committee, given the number of HOMs who were accredited to Kathmandu from Delhi.

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ASEM

AETTC

- *Assessment of the Results of the 9th PPGG Meeting (Doc. 32/02)*

4. The Group discussed the assessments of the AETTC following on the 9th PPGG meeting, on the basis of detailed views given by the Commission Services and a document circulated by the Netherlands (No. 32/02). The Commission considered that the EU needed to come to a common view soon on how to handle the question of AETTC's future. AETTC's record was an appalling one in terms of activities organized, results achieved, and employment of resources provided to it. Also, the Asians had given weak support to AETTC. The Commission Services therefore favoured discontinuing EC financing to AETTC because of these factors. However, it was always open to others, particularly the Asian countries to do more to maintain the AETTC in existence if they so wish.

5. The NL delegation recalled the summary of its views in document no 32/02, it shared the Commission's view on AETTC's record, however it wished to explore whether some solution could be found to maintain AETTC in some form but with substantial changes regarding its activities, organization, and with much greater Asian support. Some delegations (F,D) were favourable to these views expressed by the Netherlands. Other delegations were still considering the issues.

6. The Presidency noted the views expressed and recalled the need for the EU to come to an agreed position on this item which had political implications with a view to the ASEM SOM in Lanzarote. The Presidency, with the assistance of the Commission and Secretariat, would work to prepare a paper on this issue for further discussion.

- *Results of the Migration Experts' Meeting of 26 February (doc. 34/02)*

7. The Commission and the Council Secretariat briefed on the results of the above Migration Experts' Meeting which were circulated in Doc. 34/02 (Asia). They recalled that the draft conclusions for the Ministerial Meeting had been agreed only after difficult discussions especially with China and consequently one should not reopen this text. The Group was informed that the General Affairs' Council on March 11 will be invited to take note of an information note by the

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Secretariat on the state of preparation of the Lanzarote Ministerial Meeting as an "A" item.

8. The Presidency distributed documentation including the programme of the ASEM Meetings at Lanzarote.

- *Information on the ASEM Trust Fund (Doc. 28/02)*

9. The Commission invited delegations to communicate the contents of Doc. 28/02 to their Ministries interested in this matter. It indicated that the Seminar on 12/13 March in Bangkok aimed to lay the basis for the modalities for phase 2 of the Trust Fund based on the evaluation of phase 1, it would also allow the Asian beneficiaries to indicate their experiences of the Trust Fund to date. The Commission also wished to achieve greater visibility for the EU's contribution to the Fund. The Chairman invited delegations to indicate to the Presidency and the Commission their representatives to participate in the Seminar.

- *Preparation of the 7th ASEM/TFAP Meeting on Standards and Conformity Assessment, 10/11 April 2002, Beijing (Doc. 22/02)*

10. The Group took note of Doc. 22/02. The French delegation indicated that it had some reservations on aspects relating to the AEBF.

France introduced a document on its initiative with Thailand relating to TFAP (exchange of experience between customs and police experts (see doc. 36/02).

- ASEF

11. The Commission suggested that the problem of the replenishment of resources for ASEF should be discussed at a future COASI meeting with a view to examining ASEF's wish to become an independent foundation through an endowment fund.

- *Information on any new new ASEM Economic initiatives by Member States*

12. The Presidency invited the Commission to distribute a brief note on economic initiatives within ASEM with a view to discussion at the next COASI Pillar I meeting in preparation for the

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next Coordinators' and SOMTI Meetings, and the Economic Ministers' Meeting to be held before ASEM 4.

- *Progress report on ASEM-DUO Fellowship Programme*

13. The Commission undertook to distribute this progress report to delegations in Brussels .

- *Information on ASEM initiatives*

14. The Presidency invited delegations to inform it of any new initiatives which they are contemplating which they intend to present at the ASEM SOM in Lanzarote.

JAPAN

15. This item was withdrawn from the agenda since it will be discussed by COASI on 7 March.

AOB

- *Information on the EC-South Korea Ministerial Consultations*

16. The Group noted that the EC-South Korea Ministerial Consultations have been postponed to 4 June next.

- *Preparation for the Electoral Needs Assessment Mission to Pakistan*

17. The Commission briefed on the situation. The Group were favourable to the sending of the Mission. The Commission undertook to report back on the results of the mission by the end of March.

- *Information from the Commission on Commissioner Lamy's visit to S.E. Asia*

18. The Commission gave an extensive briefing on Commissioner Lamy's recent visit to a number of countries in South East Asia. As regards Singapore's proposal for a free trade agreement

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with the EU, Commissioner Lamy had taken note of this proposal and made it plain in Singapore that such a proposal would have to be carefully studied by the Commission. Any such proposal would have to take into account the need for it to be both WTO compatible and to be "Doha plus". The Singapore Press had given an excessively optimistic and misleading version of this position. The Commission intended to consult EU business circles on this proposal and envisaged having a position on it by the end of this year.

OTHER ITEMS

19. The Presidency recalled a number of documents recently distributed for example regarding Hong Kong, Macao, results of the China JCC, a Commission proposal on a Maritime Agreement with China etc. It also briefed on the Asian items likely to arise in the framework of preparation of the GAC on 11 March.