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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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TRANSMISSION OF TEXT

from : Secretariat

Subject : Report of the Asia Oceania Working Group of 24 January 2002

Please find annexed the report of the Asia Oceania Working Group of 24 January 2002.

1. Priorities and calendar of the Spanish Presidency (Doc. 8/02)

The Presidency briefed on its priorities in Asia and circulated a list of meetings (doc. 8/02). The dates of meetings should be considered as only "possible" at this stage depending on the eventual work on Commission proposals on a successor to the present ALA regulation.

2. ASEM

(i) *Report on the ASEM Ministerial on the Environment (Beijing, 16/18 January)*

The Presidency and Commission briefed on the ASEM Environment Ministerial. The Commission indicated that it had been a successful meeting from the EU standpoint. The meeting had noted convergence on such issues as sustainable development, threats to the environment, climate change and ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.

However, participation at Ministerial level had been rather unbalanced, with eight Asian and two Europeans Ministers.

(ii) *Information on the ASEM Coordinators' Meeting (Madrid) February 1/2*

The Presidency drew attention to the agenda and programme (see doc. 6/02).

The Commission indicated that the Coordinators would discuss such issues as the EU paper elaborated by Denmark, the enlargement issue, the Vademecum and the management of the ASEM process. Regarding enlargement, the EU hoped to obtain Asian agreement that the substantial discussion be put back to the ASEM 5 Summit in Hanoi in 2004. As regards Russia, the Asians, at their recent SOM, seemed ready to accept Russian participation in ASEM provided it came in on the European side.

(iii) *Information regarding the preparation of the Lanzarote Ministerial on Migratory Flows*

The Presidency distributed for information a note on the arrangements and programme (already transmitted to the ASEM contact officials). ⁽¹⁾

The Presidency indicated that the European officials responsible for ASEM on the COASI side would meet on April 2 both in the EU and EU-Asia format, it would be desirable if the COASI officials could stay on after April 2 in view of the importance of the Ministerial Meeting in the Presidency's overall programme itself and in the context of later ASEM Meetings, in particular ASEM 4.

The Presidency noted that SCIFA would discuss the item on January 28th.

The Commission indicated that the Asians wished for further information on the meeting especially the nature and purpose of the meetings of Senior Officials of Home and Foreign Affairs. The EU could clarify how it sees this Ministerial in the overall context of the

⁽¹⁾ An updated version of this note was circulated subsequently in doc. 16/02.

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ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting and the ASEM 4 Summit. It would be useful if a draft agenda and possible statement of the Ministerial could be elaborated soon. ⁽¹⁾

The Commission circulated a note on the Agenda and programme of the migration experts' meeting on February 25/26 in Beijing.

(iv) *AEBF VII: Draft letter to the President of the Forum (doc. 4/02)*

Denmark indicated that the Danish head of its ASEM Secretariat would meet with the AEBF Chairman shortly. Denmark would have some reservations to express on the present draft letter in doc. 4/02.

In view of the above, the Group agreed to return to this item at its next meeting.

(v) *Preparations for PPGG, Bangkok, 30/31 January 2002*

The Commission indicated that it would propose a common line to take at the above meeting in Bangkok. Clearly, the review of the AETTC indicated that there was much room for improvement if the AETTC were to continue. The future tasks of the AETTC should be made clearer: there were two schools of thought, either the Centre could do more work in regard to technology (including technology transfer) or else it should be focussing on dialogue and conferences open to civil society; some compromise was needed between these two approaches, the second was more in the ASEM spirit. If it were decided to maintain the AETTC (after the pilot phase ended in October) we would have to agree on financing. The Presidency noted that, at this stage, there was no need for the meeting in Bangkok to propose solutions, it could rather be devoted to brainstorming. EU Coordination would be arranged in Bangkok and, on this basis, the Commission could put forward the EU's viewpoint.

(vi) *Japanese Seminar on ASEM and changing world economy, Tokyo, 15/16 March: Information from the Commission*

The Commission noted that this Seminar was not, strictly speaking, an ASEM meeting; however if Member States indicated the names of their representatives, the Commission Services would pass them to Japan. The Presidency noted that the light of information for Member States on their attendance at the Seminar, the Group on February 20 could discuss further the preparation of this meeting including on a speaker for the EU and how best to coordinate an EU position in Tokyo.

(vii) *ASEM Calendar of ASEM Events 2002 - 2004 (Doc. 13/02)*

The Group noted the calendar of events distributed in the above document.

(viii) *Vietnam's proposal to host ASEM 5 (Docs. 5 and 9/02 (Asie))*

The Presidency drew attention to the two above letters from Vietnam, the second letter confirming that the Asian side supports Vietnam's candidacy to host ASEM 5 in late 2004. The Presidency suggested that the EU at the Coordinators' meeting on February 1 could indicate a positive view on Vietnam's proposal: should delegations have any problem in this

⁽¹⁾ The Presidency has circulated a draft Statement in doc. SN 1183/02.

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regard they were invited to inform the Presidency within a day or so.

3. CHINA

The Group welcomed the annotated agenda (doc 07/02) for the **EC-China Joint Committee** (30-31 January), which the Commission had prepared. A number of Member States drew attention to their particular concerns (including in regard to Gallileo, insurance and banking, IPR, rare earths, and technical assistance). The Commission took note of these and underlined the importance of the decision to be taken the next day by the SVC regarding EU imports of animal products from China. This could overshadow the Joint Committee. The Commission explained that there would be a series of side meetings with Commissioners and that the Ministerial portion of the Joint Committee would pick up the most important points from the earlier discussion at senior official level. The meeting would begin at 1030. Member States were welcome. The Commission saw no problem in principle with a brief co-ordination meeting at 0915 on 30 January, should it prove necessary (not least in the light of the SVC decision).

The Commission expressed its concern that bilateral agreements on **Agreed Destination Status** (ADS) between Member States and China could be incompatible with EU law. On the Chinese side the agreements could be incompatible with her WTO obligations. The Commission noted that it was not yet ready to propose that it be granted a mandate to negotiate an EC agreement with China. Views of delegations differed, but a number of delegations noted that they were already negotiating ADS agreements with China. Others expressed a preference for an EC-China agreement. The Presidency noted the importance of the subject, recalled previous discussion (both in the 133 Committee and JHA fora) and undertook to seek the views of the chairman of COREPER as to where further discussion should take place. It suggested that the Commission might produce a "think piece" paper on the substantive issue.

The Commission also briefed on its negotiation of **readmission agreements with the SARs of Hong Kong and Macao**. The agreement with Hong Kong had been initialled on 22 November. It was being translated. The proposal should come quickly to the Council. In the case of the agreement with Macao, the SAR authorities would not agree to the inclusion of the UK and Ireland in the agreement until those two Member States granted visa free access to citizens of Macao.

4. SOUTH KOREA

- *Information from the Commission on the EC/South Korea economic consultations (Brussels, 12 February)*

The Commission representative distributed the draft agenda of the above meetings (both at Ministerial and at Senior Official level), and outlined the position that the Commission would take on various items of the agenda. In reply to questions, he indicated that the Commission would, in particular, press the Korean side for more movement to phase out the subsidies given to Korean shipbuilders. The Presidency noted that Member States could communicate further remarks bilaterally to the Commission which would take account of them. The Commission would also inform the Group later on the results of the meetings.

5. NEPAL

The Commission informed the Group on the preparation of the forthcoming international donors conference, which will take place in Kathmandu and Pokhara from 04-08 February 2002. The Commission pointed to the risk that the GoN, given the significant increases in its defence budget, would want the donors to step up their development efforts.

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Given the political interest of the conference, the Presidency suggested that HoMs in New Delhi should hold a first co-ordination meeting; EU delegations would liaise further in Kathmandu. The Group invited the Commission to circulate the relevant documents, including the draft EC statement, in Brussels and/or New Delhi as soon as possible.

6. SRI LANKA

The Group noted the updated HoMs assessment, the Presidency's draft report to the HLWG Asylum and Migration, and some comments by the Netherlands.

In the absence of further comments before 30 January, the Presidency draft and the suggestions submitted by the Commission in Coreu COM 0011/02 will be deemed agreed.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

Japan

- *Follow-up to the Summit (Brussels, 8 December) and the Action Plan*

The Commission indicated that Commissioner Patten, on a recent visit to Japan, had recalled the need to proceed vigorously to implement the Action Plan agreed at the EU-Japan Summit in December last, the Commission and the Presidency intended to visit Japan in February and have contacts with the Foreign Ministry to pass on the same message.

- *Information regarding negotiation of an EC-Japan Agreement on Science and Technology*

The Commission representative indicated that his services were working on a possible S&T Agreement but that it was not likely that the Commission would be in a position to propose to the Council a mandate for negotiation in the coming months.

India

- *Follow up to the Summit (New Delhi, 23 November) and the Agenda for Action*

The Commission briefed on the state of play concerning the implementation of the action points agreed at the last EU-India Summit; the Commission will resume the main points in a non-paper for delegations. The Group welcomed the overview and agreed to come back to this point when necessary.

Bangladesh

The Commission recalled the recent political evolution and the background for its programming mission to the Chittagong Hills and confirmed that local HoMs would be fully debriefed of the results of the mission.

Afghanistan

The Group noted the report of the Tokyo donors conference on reconstruction (Coreu MAD 0117/02) and the Presidency's intention to hold a full discussion on the results and the way ahead at the next COASI WG meeting. The Presidency and the Commission will in advance circulate the full results of Tokyo.

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The Commission recalled worries that the EU pledges, which covered 23% of the reconstruction needs for 2002-2006, amounted to 45% of the total international pledges; some hard lobbying will be necessary to agree with other donors on a fair burden sharing.

Some delegations recalled earlier worries over the future financing of the EC pledges.

Election monitoring

The Group noted DS 12/2002. The Commission confirmed that the results of the Exploratory Missions to East Timor and to PNG would be made available soon.

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