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- Report

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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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

from : the Asia Oceania Working Group

dated: 16 December 1999

Subject: Meeting of the Asia/Oceania Working Group, Brussels, 16 December 1999. Report

I. OPERATIONAL CONCLUSIONS

1. CHINA

The Presidency will circulate, by coreu, possible terms of reference for a Troika demarche in Beijing, to be made as soon as possible, which would raise EU concern at respect for basic individual human rights, including but not restricted to the cases of those who are followers of the Falun Gong.

2. SRI LANKA/AFGHANISTAN: EU ACTION PLANS AGAINST ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

Partners are invited to offer, by Coreu, their views on how to implement the recommended foreign policy measures included in the Asylum and Migration HLWG Action Plans adopted by GAC and the European Council (Council Docs 11424/99 and 11428/99). The Group will revert to this issue at one of its next meetings.

3. AFGHANISTAN: REVIEW OF THE COMMON POSITION

Partners are invited to circulate, before 6 January 2000, any comments on and/or suggestions for amendments to the Common Position, which the Group will examine at its next meeting.

4. PHILIPPINES

EU HOMs in Manila are invited to identify priorities among the ideas set out in their report on strengthening the EU presence in the Philippines (coreu HEL/1410/99), the Group having taken note of the intention of the Commission to take account of the HOMs' ideas in that report in its forthcoming EC co-operation strategy.

5. LAOS

EU HOMs in Ventiane are requested to make a demarche to their host Government regarding the human rights situation, especially the fate of those arrested on 26 October, and partners are invited to offer as soon as possible and by coreu the names of those whom they believe may have been arrested on that occasion. The Group will consider further the situation in Laos, including the other proposals made by EU HOMs (see coreus HEL/1484/99 and HEL/1546/99), in the light of the reaction to the demarche.

II. OTHER POINTS

6. ASEM

- *China's investment symposium initiative*

The Group was not prepared to endorse the Chinese initiative; it was suggested that China should consider organising such a symposium outside the ASEM framework.

- *Preparation of SOMTI-6: follow-up to TFAPA and IPAP letter sent to the Asian co-ordinators*

The Commission invited partners to complete a questionnaire on trade barriers and return it by 21 January 2000. Ireland offered to host the next Young Leaders Symposium in June or September 2000. The Commission suggested that the Group discuss a number of current initiatives on education at one of its future meetings.

7. DPRK

The Group noted the Secretariat report (coreu SEC/1885/99) of the EU-DPRK Political Dialogue meeting held in Brussels on 24 November 1999. It agreed to keep the situation in the DPRK under review. The Commission briefed on the visit of former Japanese PM Murayama to the DPRK (1-3 December 1999) and Japan's announcement, following that visit, that it intends shortly to take a number of steps towards the normalisation of its relations with the DPRK. The Commission also drew attention to the signature of the KEDO turn-key contract on 14 December 1999.

8. SECURITY IN NORTH EAST ASIA

Following the invitation offered by the Political Committee in its conclusions of 5 December 1999 (SEC/1936/99) the Group took note of the COPLA paper (HEL/1443/99). A number of partners considered that some recommendations in the paper should be borne in mind in the ongoing debate in the AOWG on the Korean peninsula.

9. INDIA

The Presidency and the Commission debriefed delegations on further details of the EU-India SOM and Ministerial Meeting of 2-3 December, and, in particular, on the practical follow-up to be

given to the agreed initiatives (Think tank network and the EU-Indian Round table, Consular WG, and high level economic dialogue). The Commission briefed delegations on the short bilateral talks held between Commissioner Patten and FM Singh. The Group agreed to come back to New Delhi EU HOMs recommendations for further EU action (cf. Coreu HEL 1200/99) when preparing for the next round of EU-India contacts during the Portuguese Presidency.

10. AFGHANISTAN

Italy debriefed the Group on further details of the Rome meeting and on the short-term follow-up agreed among the participants. Italy indicated that the Italian Government would provide further assistance and that the UN was prepared to support the Loya Jirgah initiative.

11. EC-ASEAN

The Group welcomed the results of the first EC-ASEAN sub-committee on the environment which took place in Brussels from 23-24 November upon which they were briefed by the Commission, which noted, in particular, that, despite a thin attendance on the part of some ASEAN members, agreement had been reached on a number of follow-up meetings at expert level. The Presidency also drew attention to the decision by Coreper to extend, for another year, the arrangements for the participation of non-signatories to the EC-ASEAN Co-operation Agreement in the sub-committees of the JCC.

12. THAILAND

The Commission briefed the group on the results of the sixth EC-Thailand SOM that took place in Brussels from 16-17 November, drawing particular attention to the worrying situation of Karin refugees in camps in Northern Thailand.

13. PHILIPPINES

The Commission briefed the group on the results of the second EC-Philippines SOM held in Brussels from 22-23 November and noted, in particular, the request from the Philippines for EU co-operation in judicial matters regarding the death penalty.

14. EAST TIMOR

The Group received an information note from the Commission services on the visit of Commissioner Nielson to East and West Timor as well as Jakarta. It was also briefed by Portugal on FM Gama's visit to East Timor as well as their concerns at continued militia activity and possible mining of the land border between East Timor and Indonesia. The Commission noted that it hoped to come forward with a programme of reconstruction assistance for East Timor in the light of the Tokyo donors' conference (16-17 December).

15. ARF

The Group endorsed the Presidency paper on EU policy towards the ARF (coreu HEL/1360/99) and welcomed the intention of the incoming Presidency to prepare, in co-operation with the Commission and Council Secretariat, a "brainstorming" session on the basis of the policy set out in that paper.

16. MALAYSIA

The Group welcomed the intention of EU HOMs to prepare a common response to the note verbale from the Malaysian MFA accusing EU (and other Western missions) of interference in Malaysia's internal affairs through support of Malaysian political parties and NGOs.

17. AOB

BURMA/MYANMAR : The Group considered COREU HAG/622/99 and invited EU Ambassadors accredited to Rangoon/Yangon to follow the practice regarding attendance at Burma/Myanmar's national day, as set out in coreu PRES/DUB/1014/96, for the forthcoming national day celebrations in January 2000.
