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Press release

Commission outlines new partnership with Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)

The European Commission envisages a more reciprocal relationship between the EU and the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) in a Communication approved after a public consultation.

In its Communication "Elements for a new partnership between the EU and the overseas countries and territories (OCTs)", the European Commission sets out its standpoint on essential elements for a new partnership between the EU and the OCTs.

The Commission believes that the future relationship should be more reciprocal and based on mutual interests. Three central objectives tailored to the OCTs' specificities were identified:

- enhancing competitiveness,
- strengthening resilience,
- promoting regional cooperation.

The Communication constitutes one step towards the definition of a new EU strategy for the OCTs that shall be presented in 2011 and should be implemented as of 2014. It has been approved on 6 November 2009 following a broad public consultation from 1 July to the 17 October 2008.

Background:

Because of their special relations with Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, OCTs are closely associated with the EU. For historic reason, this relationship was very much modelled on the relationship with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP). Based on a classic development approach, the EU has focused on fighting poverty. But the economic situation in the OCTs has changed. The future relationship needs to take account of this new reality, and it should also better reflect the OCTs' specific status: The micro-island economies are very vulnerable given their dependence on very few sectors and there are considerable differences between the islands themselves. Also OCTs, as outposts of Europe all over the world, should be seen as assets for the EU and not as a burden.

The Communication "Elements for a new partnership between the EU and the overseas countries and territories (OCTs)"

http://ec.europa.eu/development/geographical/regionscountries/regionscountriesocts_en.cfm