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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION
TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE
REGIONS**

Policy Achievements in 2006

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Policy Achievements in 2006

1. TOWARDS A EUROPE OF RESULTS - A YEAR OF DELIVERY

The year 2006 saw the Commission moving into a new phase to deliver the objectives which it set out at the beginning of its mandate. On 10 May, the Commission proposed an ambitious programme of action setting out a series of concrete measures to benefit European citizens: a **Europe of results**. The programme was based on a **twin track approach** – demonstrating the Union's capacity to act while moving towards a settlement of institutional and constitutional issues.

At the European Council of June 2006, the Heads of State and Government of the EU agreed to pursue this twin track approach, and reached a consensus on a timetable for continuing the **institutional reform process**, including a political declaration to be adopted in Berlin on 25 March 2007 by the Member States, the European Parliament and the Commission, to mark the 50th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome.

Citizens want the Union to deliver policies which are relevant to their everyday lives. That is why the **EU sustainable development strategy** and the **Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs** are at the heart of Commission priorities, aiming to secure a prosperous, fair and environmentally sustainable future for Europe. Following the launch of the renewed Lisbon Strategy in 2005, the emphasis in 2006 was on implementation. The new partnership between Member States and the Commission started to bear fruit and contributed to improved economic performance across Europe.

The first half of the year was marked by the conclusion, in May, of negotiations with the European Parliament and the Council on the **Financial Framework for the Union for 2007-2013**. Following this agreement, the Commission presented a package of more than 30 revised proposals to enable the new generation of financing programmes to start on 1 January 2007. In addition, a final agreement was reached in November by the Council and Parliament to reform the **management of the EU budget** and to simplify access to EU funding. The new rules will help boost the delivery of the EU programmes under the 2007-2013 Multiannual Financial Framework.

In terms of **policy delivery**, the Commission has focused on implementing its Work Programme for 2006, with 74 headline Work Programme proposals presented over the year and one additional item at the start of 2007, leading to an implementation rate of almost 90%. This shows that the strategic planning and programming cycle, focused on a limited number of priorities, is now thoroughly embedded in the work of the Commission. However, this did not prevent the Commission from responding to a fast-moving political agenda, in which actions not envisaged at the beginning of the year have had to be delivered swiftly in response to pressing needs, for instance during the Lebanon crisis.

As a follow-up to the **European Transparency Initiative** launched in 2005, a Green Paper in 2006 prompted a broad public debate on how to improve the **openness and accessibility** of EU institutions. In the same context, the Commission has created a web portal providing single access to **information on beneficiaries** under the programmes it manages directly, and published links to those Member States which already provide information on end-beneficiaries of agricultural expenditure under shared management. The Commission continued to foster its **relations with National Parliaments** by forwarding all its new proposals and consultation documents directly to them, and inviting them to submit their comments so as to improve the process of policy formulation.

The Commission decided to make **communication** a central responsibility of the European Union by proposing, in a White Paper, that it becomes a fully-fledged policy of the EU, as a service to the citizen and an instrument of democracy. The public consultation on the White Paper ran successfully until September 2006, and has been complemented by four stakeholders' fora on specific themes.

As part of its **Plan D - Democracy, Dialogue and Debate**¹, launched in October 2005 and followed up in November 2006², the Commission organised a wide variety of meetings and activities in the Member States to engage in a genuine debate with Europe's citizens and to provide channels for citizens' concerns to be brought to the attention of European decision makers.

A key factor in bringing the Union closer to its citizens is its policy of **multilingualism**, guaranteeing cultural and linguistic diversity and the right to interact with EU institutions in any of its official languages. In 2006 the Commission made arrangements for the introduction of **three new official languages** (Bulgarian, Romanian and Irish) as of 1 January 2007.

2. PROSPERITY

The Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs

2006 was a year full of action for the Growth and Jobs Strategy. In early 2006, the Commission called on Member States to "move up a gear" – and this year's Annual Progress Report shows that there has been real progress. Over the year, there has been a **perceptible stepping up** of the work to translate policy action into actual results, to improve the environment for businesses to invest and for jobs to be created. There is growing evidence that past reforms are starting to deliver quantifiable benefits, and confirmation that the full implementation of the Lisbon strategy offers the potential for large gains in terms of jobs and growth.

The Commission proposed for 2006 a set of firm commitments to strengthen reform in **four priority action areas**: knowledge (education, R&D and innovation); unlocking business potential, especially for SMEs; getting more people into work, in particular young people – in line with the European Youth Pact – and older workers; and energy. Those commitments were agreed by the Heads of State and Government at the European Council in March. 2006 has

¹ The Commission's contribution to the period of reflection and beyond: Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate - COM(2005) 494.

² The Commission's Information note from Vice President Wallström to the Commission - SEC(2006) 1553: Plan D – Wider and Deeper Debate on Europe.

shown a perceptible shift in **national commitment to implementing the Lisbon strategy**, particularly in the four areas defined by the European Council as priorities. Member States are increasingly exchanging experiences and good ideas. However, while all have moved forward, there remain big differences between Member States in terms of the depth and speed of reform.

Reforms at European level under the **Community Lisbon Programme (CLP)** are making good progress. To date, the Commission has delivered over 75% of all the actions announced in the CLP. **Cohesion policy** has confirmed its role as the principal financial European instrument to deliver the Growth and Jobs Agenda on the ground. Through the National Strategic Reference Frameworks negotiated with the Member States, it is expected that the 'earmarked' investment for 'Growth and Jobs' will be worth up to €200 billion under the Structural Funds. Other Community instruments, such as the rural development policy, were also targeted to contribute to the Strategy for growth and jobs. Overall, the new partnership for growth and jobs is beginning to prove its worth as a vehicle for driving economic reform in Europe.

Innovation

Responding to a call from the 2006 Spring European Council, the Commission presented a **broad-based innovation strategy** that points the way forward to a more operational phase in European innovation policy. This programme was supported by European leaders at their informal Summit in Lahti, Finland, on 20 October 2006.

A major highlight of the year was the adoption of the **7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP7)** by the Council and Parliament and the adoption of the **7th Euratom Framework Programme for Nuclear Research and Training Activities** by the Council. FP7 will increase R&D spending between 2007 and 2013 by 41% (in current prices). The newly established **European Research Council** will channel funds at EU level towards the best frontier research. For the first time ever, it is expected that the EU will adopt in 2007 a new method of financing key technological research by launching the first **Joint Technology Initiatives (JTIs)** – long-term public-private partnerships to promote Europe's position in strategic technology areas.

In order to support innovation, the newly adopted **Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP)** aims to achieve a 60% increase in the financial instruments supporting entrepreneurship and innovation. The Communication on "**Financing SME Growth**" pointed to further actions to improve access to finance, which could lead to the tripling of EU early-stage risk/venture capital investment by 2013. The Commission also put forward ideas on how **tax incentives** could act as an important policy instrument that Member States can use to stimulate more business research.

2006 paved the way for the establishment of a **European Institute of Technology (EIT)**, as a new pole of excellence in innovation, research and higher education in Europe. Following wide-ranging consultations with the Member States and stakeholders, a formal proposal was presented at the end of 2006.

Another clear highlight was the conclusion of **ITER** (International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor) negotiations which culminated in seven parties³ signing the ITER Agreement in November. The ITER project, which aims to demonstrate the potential of fusion as an energy source, will be the world's biggest scientific collaboration of its kind and involve countries representing over half the world's population.

The global navigation satellite system **Galileo** received its first test signals from space in January 2006. In order to make maximum use of Galileo's potential, a Green Paper launched a debate on what the public sector can do to create an appropriate framework for the development of satellite navigation applications.

The Single Market

As part of the wide-ranging **review of the Single Market**, the Commission launched in April a consultation on the future Single Market policy. This consultation showed that EU citizens, businesses and governments believe that the Single Market plays a crucial role in meeting Europe's current challenges, but also that it can be improved and demands a clear vision to meet new challenges. The consultation will feed into ideas for improving the functioning of the Single Market policy that will be presented in 2007.

One of the most significant events of 2006 was the adoption of the **Services Directive**. The Services Directive is a key tool for unleashing the full potential of the European services sector and help achieving a genuine Internal Market in services. The freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide cross-border services will be facilitated and the rights of consumers as users of services will be strengthened through the introduction of a general non-discrimination clause and information rights.

Another important milestone was the agreement between the Council and the European Parliament on the **REACH** Regulation (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of CHemicals), which will enter into force in June 2007. The REACH Regulation involves a comprehensive reform of manufacturing, marketing, import and use of chemical substances. It will improve health and environment while safeguarding innovation and competitiveness.

The new draft Directive proposing full opening up of the market in **postal services** by 2009 would be a further step towards unlocking the full potential of an important sector of the EU economy. The proposal would have a direct impact on the fostering of competition, consumer choice and sustainable employment, while still preserving a high-quality universal service.

In the financial sector an important legislative proposal was put forward that sets out clear criteria for Member States' supervisory authorities to assess proposed **mergers and acquisitions** between financial institutions. A **White Paper on investment funds** set out possible improvements that should benefit both investors and the industry, focusing on cost-effectiveness and disclosure of information. A Communication on **deposit guarantees** proposed a series of self-regulatory steps for banks designed to protect consumers in the event of a bank's failure. The Commission also backed a self-regulatory initiative by the securities industry to develop a Code of Conduct that will allow for efficient cross-border **clearing and settlement**.

³ China, European Union, India, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States.

Initial steps were taken to create open and fair markets for **defence procurement** by adopting guidelines to bring clarity to the award of defence contracts under EU rules. In addition, a proposal amending the **Remedies Directives** was tabled with a view to strengthening the efficiency of review mechanisms made available to aggrieved economic operators in procurement procedures. This should create greater incentives for businesses to make cross-border bids for contracts.

The increased litigation brought by taxpayers over the last few years has demonstrated that tax barriers to cross-border movement and investment remain commonplace. As a result, the Commission proposed a co-ordinated EU approach to **national direct tax systems**. Consultations have started with all the parties concerned on how to step up the fight against **tax fraud**, and a new generation of **customs and tax programmes** was presented to improve cooperation between national systems and to simplify their operation. As regards **indirect taxation**, the Commission proposed to abolish capital duty on the raising of capital in order to support the development of EU companies.

The Commission continued firm and consistent application of Community rules on **cartels, restrictive business practices, mergers and state aids**. In the fight against cartels and abuses of dominant position, the Commission imposed fines over €2 billion. The revised **Guidelines for setting fines** for antitrust infringements and the revised **Leniency Notice** will strengthen the effectiveness of the Commission's action and offer clearer guidance for business. The newly adopted **State aid** guidelines on R&D and Innovation, Risk Capital and *de minimis* aid constitute an important progress in delivering a framework for "less and better targeted" aid. Also in the agricultural sector new state aid rules were adopted at the end of 2006.

The "**i2010 initiative**" – powering Information Society Technologies to help achieve the Lisbon goals – is in full action. In a drive to make public services more efficient, an action plan for the IT-based modernisation of the Member States' **administrative systems** by 2010 was presented. Consultations were launched to review the regulatory framework for **electronic communications**. In the telecommunications sector, the Commission's initiative to reduce excessive **roaming charges** for mobile communications received widespread support in an area of direct benefit for citizens.

Education and Lifelong Learning

The final step was taken in the legislative process to adopt the '**Lifelong Learning Programme**' 2007-2013. For the first time, a single programme covers learning opportunities from childhood to old age. The successful implementation of the **current lifelong learning programmes** continued with some 280 000 grants awarded in 2006.

In response to the request made at the informal European Council at Hampton Court in October 2005, the Commission set out its views on approaches to **modernising European universities**, making them motors of innovation. The Commission also issued a Recommendation on the establishment of the **European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF)** to help Member States, employers and individuals compare qualifications across the EU's diverse education and training systems. The Commission also highlighted the key issues for effectively combining **efficiency and equity** in European education and training systems and the essential contribution of **adult learning** to employability, mobility and social inclusion. There was also agreement on the proposed Recommendation on **key competences for lifelong learning**, which establishes a European

reference tool for the basic skills to be provided through lifelong learning, and on the Recommendation establishing a **European Quality Charter for Mobility**.

Energy and Transport

Major progress was achieved in 2006 on forging an integrated **European energy policy**, in response to the call made by the Heads of State or Government at their informal meeting at Hampton Court in October 2005. Based on the Green Paper presented by the Commission in March, the Spring European Council issued a list of the measures to be taken with the aim of guaranteeing the EU a secure, competitive and sustainable energy supply. As a follow-up, the Commission, acting jointly with the Secretary-General of the Council, presented a document entitled "An external policy to serve Europe's energy interests". The Commission also presented an **Energy Efficiency Action Plan** as the first major step in a package of measures to promote sustainability, security and competitiveness in European energy. The extensive work undertaken in 2006 paved the way for the **Strategic Review** of the European energy policy presented early in 2007.

In the **transport field**, the Commission reviewed its 2001 Transport White Paper and proposed additional instruments to promote sustainable mobility. One of these new priorities here concerns the **logistics** of the freight transport chain, on which a communication was issued as a first step towards an action plan. The Commission also put forward a series of measures to support the **revitalisation of the railway sector**.

As of 1 January 2007, all **rail freight services** have been opened up to competition. This new stage in the process of revitalising the rail industry should mark a turning point for rail freight.

Enlarging the Eurozone

On 1 January 2007, **Slovenia** became the first of the Member States from the Union's fifth enlargement to join the euro area. The **2006 Convergence Report** showed that other EU countries 'with a derogation' are making progress towards convergence, though at different speeds. A specific report drawn up by the Commission in response to a request by Lithuania concluded that this country should retain its present status. This assessment was endorsed by the Council.

3. SOLIDARITY

Social Solidarity

The Commission adopted in October a communication setting out five areas for concrete action to help Member States adapt to **demographic change** in their own national context. Other significant developments included the presentation of a communication on **Social Services of General Interest** to clarify existing Community provisions in this area, and the proposal for, and subsequent creation of, a **European Globalisation Adjustment Fund** enabling the Community to support workers affected by the side-effects of globalisation.

2006 - the **European Year of Workers' Mobility** - saw the organisation of 2 000 events across Europe to raise people's awareness of their right to work in another EU country. In the area of **labour law**, the Council endorsed Commission proposals to promote **decent work**, both within the Union and worldwide. The Commission consulted the social partners on better ways to **reconcile family and professional life** and on the active **inclusion of the people**

furthest away from the labour market. The social partners were also consulted on the need to incorporate the **ILO Maritime Labour Standards Convention** into European law. In response to a call from the Spring 2006 European Council, a Green Paper launched a debate on how labour law at EU and national level can help the job market become more flexible while maximizing security for workers (the '**flexicurity**' approach). Results of this consultative process will feed into flexicurity initiatives which the Commission will present in 2007.

Preparations for the **2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue** continued, including the conclusion of the legislative process for the Decision designating the Year. The legislative process was also completed for **new programmes in the field of culture, youth and active citizenship.**

Fundamental Rights and Civil Justice

The area of fundamental rights was marked by the political agreement reached in December on the Regulation establishing a **European Agency for Fundamental Rights.** The establishment of this Agency in 2007 will be a milestone for the EU's ability to promote and ensure respect for fundamental rights in the EU. Another major piece of work was the presentation of an initiative to promote and safeguard the **rights of the child** in the European Union's internal and external policies.

The Commission tackled gender inequality in Europe with a new roadmap for **equality between women and men** 2006-2010, and the creation of a **European Institute for Gender Equality.** In order to enhance European citizenship, the Commission proposed to facilitate the exercise by EU citizens of their **electoral rights** in their State of residence in European elections. A Green Paper on **diplomatic and consular protection** for Union citizens in third countries proposed courses of action for informing citizens more effectively, examining the scope of the protection that they should be offered, and improving the structures and resources required.

In the field of civil justice, the Commission set out options on how to improve the **enforcement of monetary claims** in Europe. A proposal for a regulation introducing rules concerning the applicable law in **matrimonial matters** should improve the situation for a growing number of international couples divorcing within the EU. Linked to this, a Green Paper on conflict of laws in matters concerning matrimonial property regimes launched a reflection process on possible Community action. Finally, a Green Paper on the role of civil society in Community efforts to **combat drugs** explored the scope for involving those most directly affected by the drugs problem more closely in the policy process.

Migration

Since the Global Approach to Migration was adopted by the European Council in December 2005, the **first tangible steps** towards a truly European migration policy have been taken. The main achievements of the Global Approach include: the launch of several joint maritime operations in the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean; the EU contribution to the UN discussions on migration and development; agenda-setting with African countries; reinforced cooperation with Mediterranean and African countries; and the rapid adoption of Community support for further strengthening migration management capacities in Senegal and Mauritania to contribute to improved controls of migration by sea.

The Commission addressed the issue of **illegal immigration** by proposing a number of practical actions in response to the mounting migratory pressure at the EU's external borders. In view of the influx of illegal migrants on the Union's southern borders, the Commission proposed an integrated model to improve the EU's capacity to manage its **external maritime borders**. The Commission also proposed ways to step up the **dialogue and cooperation with Africa on migration issues**.

European Cohesion

The negotiations on the **regulatory package for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013** were concluded in July. The Community Strategic Guidelines, approved by the Member States in October, established the priorities for future investment, notably in research, innovation, the knowledge economy and human capital. Combined with the allocation of Community resources by Member State and by priority Objective, this provided the frame for the negotiations of approximately 450 operational programmes to be submitted by Member states and regions.

Protection of the Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Management of Resources

In June, the European Council renewed its firm commitment to pursue sustainable development with the endorsement of a renewed **EU strategy for sustainable development** for an enlarged Europe. With the adoption of the **Thematic Strategies on urban environment, soil protection and pesticides** in 2006, the Commission has now adopted all seven 'thematic strategies' (on air, soil, waste, natural resources, pesticides, environment, and marine environment) that form the centrepiece of the 6th EC Environment Action Programme. A Community strategy for encouraging the sustainable production of **biofuels** from agricultural matter was also presented, as well as a Community plan for halting the loss of **biodiversity** in the EU by 2010.

In 2006, **climate change** was consistently high on the political agenda. During the year, the **EU Emissions Trading Scheme** proved its durability in the face of market turbulence. A Communication set out the agenda for extending the system to new sectors and gases. Legislation to bring greenhouse gas emissions from **civil aviation** within the EU Emissions Trading Scheme was also presented. A major task in 2006 was to check and approve Member States' **national allocation plans** for emission allowances during the second Emissions Trading Scheme trading period (2008-2012).

On the international front, the Commission played a leading role in the 12th Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention and the Meeting of the Parties to the **Kyoto Protocol** (Nairobi, November 2006). Progress was made on several issues, including the Special Climate Change Fund; and the path towards agreement on the need for emission reduction commitments after 2012 was established.

A Green Paper on a **future maritime policy** for the Union launched one of the largest consultation exercises in the EU's history. Its aim is to ask citizens how they want to deal with oceans and seas, while seeking to strike a sustainable balance that takes account of the economic, social and environmental dimensions.

In the area of the **Common Fisheries Policy**, the Council adopted the first comprehensive fisheries conservation framework for the Mediterranean as well as the Commission's proposal to strengthen control and enforcement by means of modern technology. The Commission also

secured the renewal of important fisheries partnership agreements with third countries such as Greenland and Mauritania.

With regard to the **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**, the Commission proposed reforming the common organisation of the **wine market** in order to improve the competitiveness of this sector. In December, an agreement was reached by EU agriculture ministers on a comprehensive reform of the aid scheme for **banana** producers. The reform process was further carried forward with the preparation of a proposal on a more market-oriented policy for the **fruit and vegetables** sector, which was tabled in early 2007. The Council decided in February 2006 on the Community **Strategic Guidelines for rural development** for the period 2007-2013, aiming at meeting the Göteborg sustainability goals and contributing to the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs. Together with the implementing rules this provides the framework for the negotiations of **96 expected rural development programmes**. In order to **simplify the CAP** for the benefit of farmers, administrations and companies, the Commission proposed to establish a single Common Market Organisation (CMO) for all agricultural products, to replace the 21 existing CMOs.

4. SECURITY AND FREEDOM

Justice and Home Affairs

In order to further develop the area of Freedom, Security and Justice, the Commission put forward a communication exploring possible ways to **improve the functioning** of EU policies on the basis of the existing Treaties. A communication proposed the setting up of a comprehensive system for **objective and impartial evaluation** of EU measures. For the first time, the national implementation of **The Hague Action Plan** was assessed and the first report on its application was published. The December European Council endorsed this mid-term review of EU policies and called on the Member States to further explore the options to improve decision-making.

Within the context of border management, the Commission proposed creating **Rapid Border Intervention Teams** to provide assistance to Member States facing extreme difficulties in controlling their external borders. An important step for reinforcing the coherence of the common visa policy was the presentation of a proposal for a **Community Code on Visas**. To support the extension of the Schengen area, the Council and Parliament reached political agreement on measures preparing the legal framework for the second generation **Schengen Information System (SIS II)**. An initiative to strengthen **European police cooperation** was taken through the proposal to bring the **European Police Office (EUROPOL)** into the EU framework, increasing democratic oversight.

In the field of **criminal justice** cooperation, the Commission addressed acute problems linked to the lack of mutual recognition of pre-trial detention across the Member States by proposing a European supervision order in pre-trial procedures between Member States of the EU.

An important step towards enhancing the EU's **preparedness for terrorist attacks** was taken in December, with the proposal on a European programme for **critical infrastructure protection**. In a strategy document on the **security of networks and information**, the Commission gave its backing for an awareness-raising drive to encourage enterprises, individuals and administrative bodies in Europe to take the measures necessary to protect their data and equipment.

In the field of **aviation security**, the EU acted to counter new threats from liquid explosives by restricting the liquids that passengers can carry onto aircraft. The Commission also contributed to the successful conclusion of a new agreement with the USA on **Passenger Name Records**, following the European Court of Justice ruling of May 2006 annulling the Decisions underlying the previous agreement. Lastly, the Commission adopted the implementing provisions of the "**security amendment**" to the **Community Customs Code**, which aim at reinforcing the security of the EU supply chain while facilitating international trade.

Health and Safety

Political agreement was reached on the **EU Health Programme 2007-2013**, which sets the framework for the Commission's funding of projects relating to health over this period. To support cooperation between the health systems of the Member States and to ensure legal certainty under Community law, the Commission launched a consultation on **cross-border healthcare**. The recently launched **Health-EU portal** will provide European citizens with easy access to comprehensive information on health-related issues.

In the area of **food safety**, the Commission addressed the issue of **training the officials** responsible for carrying out controls and proposed new harmonised rules for the placing of **plant protection products** on the market. Rapid action was taken when **long-grain rice** imported from the US was discovered to be contaminated with unauthorised genetically modified rice. Moreover, the Commission designed a strategy supporting Member States in reducing **alcohol-related harm**. A further step towards enhancing **European air safety** was taken by the establishment of a list of airlines considered to be unsafe and therefore not permitted to fly in the EU. In the field of **consumer policy**, negotiations on the new programme of Community action (2007-2013) were completed in near record time.

Substantial efforts were made in 2006 to minimise in the EU the impact and risks attached to **avian influenza**. The Commission sent teams to the Member States to help them review and coordinate their human influenza pandemic preparedness plans. The **EU Civil Protection Mechanism** responded to nearly 20 emergencies in 2006. The **European Union Solidarity Fund** granted financial assistance for 9 cases of natural disasters in 2006 (€199.24 million).

5. EUROPE AS A WORLD PARTNER

Enlargement

2006 has been a crucial year for enlargement. The accession of **Bulgaria and Romania** on 1 January 2007 completed the fifth round of enlargement. On 9 November, the Commission proposed a strategy for building a **renewed consensus on enlargement**, including a special report on the Union's integration capacity. This strategy was endorsed by the December European Council.

As regards the **three candidate countries** - Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey - the Commission continued to monitor progress towards meeting the accession criteria. In parallel, the accession negotiations with Croatia and Turkey were pursued. In view of Turkey not having fulfilled its obligation of full non-discriminatory implementation of the Ankara Protocol, the Commission issued a recommendation on the further conduct of accession negotiations. The December Council largely followed this

recommendation by agreeing that Member States would not decide on opening chapters on policy areas covering Turkey's restrictions and on provisionally closing chapters until the Commission had verified that Turkey has fulfilled its commitments.

The Commission worked on the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) in the **Western Balkans** throughout 2006. Following the referendum and the recognition of **Montenegro's** independence, the Council adopted the Commission's proposal of a new mandate to negotiate a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with this country, and negotiations were technically concluded in December. Other important developments include the signature of a SAA with **Albania**, and the technical conclusion of negotiations on the SAA with **Bosnia and Herzegovina**. Negotiations for an SAA with **Serbia** were put on hold by the Commission in May, due to deteriorating cooperation by Belgrade with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. In **Kosovo**, the Commission worked closely with the two EU preparation teams, deployed to prepare the future international presence and the future European Security and Defence Policy rule of law mission, once the status settlement is reached.

In 2006, the Commission gave priority to **communicating** about enlargement through strategic partnerships, including other EU institutions, regional and local administrations, the media, and NGOs. Moreover, the Commission pursued its **civil society dialogue** with a view to improving mutual understanding and addressing citizens' concerns about enlargement.

The European neighbourhood

The implementation of the **European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)**⁴ made significant progress in 2006. Three **additional Action Plans** (covering Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) were adopted and two more (Egypt and Lebanon) were agreed, with adoption due in early 2007. This will bring to twelve the number of partners with whom the EU has established concrete mutual commitments within the ENP framework. In addition, negotiating directives for a new enhanced agreement with **Ukraine** to replace the existing Partnership and Co-operation Agreement were submitted to the Council. A long-term environmental **strategy for cleaning up and protecting the Mediterranean Sea** was adopted in September.

The reflection on **future steps of the ENP** was pursued with an ambitious communication setting out new proposals to strengthen and further develop the ENP. In November, a new **dedicated financial instrument**, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), was adopted. This instrument will significantly improve the quality of our assistance and provide more funds to support our partners' reforms.

The wider world

In June 2006 the Commission presented to the European Council an analysis document entitled "Europe in the World", which identifies practical proposals for **greater coherence, effectiveness and visibility** of EU external action and for reinforcing the **link between internal and external policies**, in particular in areas such as energy security, climate change, migration, the prevention of terrorism and economic and financial policy.

⁴ The EU's policy towards its neighbours: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

Realising the potential for developing relations with **China** will be one of the greatest challenges for EU external policy in the years to come. The EU-China Summit in Helsinki on 9 September 2006 agreed to launch negotiations on a comprehensive new Partnership and Co-operation Agreement. Building on the results of this summit, in October the Commission proposed an ambitious new agenda for **EU-China relations**. In July, the Commission sent the Council draft directives for negotiating a new Framework Agreement on **EU-Russia relations**. Following the IV EU/Latin America and Caribbean Summit (Vienna, May 2006), the Commission proposed starting negotiations for Association Agreements with **Central America** and **the Andean Community**.

2006 was a year of progress on some important trade challenges, supported by the presentation by the Commission of a new strategy '**Global Europe: Competing in the World**' which sets out how the combination of internal and external action can reinforce growth and jobs in Europe. Substantial efforts were made by the Commission to carry forward the multilateral world trade talks within the **Doha Development Agenda**, but regrettably the negotiations reached an impasse in the middle of 2006.

As part of the Global Europe trade policy framework, the Commission launched a reflection on the application of the EU **Trade Defence Instruments** in a changing global economy. The Commission also presented requests for negotiating mandates for a new generation of bilateral trade agreements with key partners: **India, South Korea and ASEAN countries**. These new deals will tackle issues which are not yet ready for multilateral discussion and will prepare the ground for the next level of multilateral liberalisation.

For the first time ever, the Commission presented a new vision for the **Caribbean and Pacific Regions**. For the Caribbean, the main objective is to foster regional integration to address economic and environmental specificities of the area. With regard to the Pacific Region, the key aim is to broaden political dialogue and ensure sustainable management of natural resources.

The year 2006 marked the first year of implementation of the **EU Strategy for Africa**. In this context, the Commission proposed an ambitious and innovative **EU-Africa partnership on infrastructure** (transport, energy, water and sanitation, and ICT). The Commission also presented a Communication on a **Strategic Partnership between the EU and South Africa**, the anchor country on the African continent and an active mediator in African politics; as well as an **EU Strategy for peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa**.

Poverty reduction, sustainable development and peace can be achieved only if significant progress is made towards **democratic governance**. The Commission proposed a **common EU approach** to encourage developing countries to step up their reform efforts, based in particular on substantial incentives for those governments drawing up ambitious and credible governance plans. The recently proposed **Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund** (GEEREF), a €100m risk capital fund, is designed to supply developing countries with clean, safe energy while helping them to overcome their lack of venture capital in that context.

The Commission has continued to play an important role in **reaction to international crises** or unforeseen political events, both through its contribution to EU Common Foreign and Security Policy operations and through responses under Community instruments such as humanitarian assistance, electoral observation, or the rapid Reaction Mechanism. Examples include the establishment of direct assistance channels to the Palestinian people through the

Temporary International Mechanism, or by providing swift responses to the conflict between Israel and Lebanon or the crisis in Timor-Leste, with a timely combination of political, humanitarian and assistance measures.

In the field of **humanitarian aid**, 2006 proved to be particularly challenging notably due to the conflict in Lebanon and the worsening of the humanitarian situation in Darfur-Sudan and in the Palestinian Territories. As well as dealing with the consequences of natural disasters, the Commission continued to assist the victims of conflict, with particular attention to 'forgotten crises' – such as Algeria for Sahrawi refugees, India/Pakistan (Kashmir), Myanmar/Thailand, Nepal and Russia for Chechnya. Africa remains by far the continent most concerned by these local and/or regional conflicts, where the majority of the victims are civilians. The number and gravity of humanitarian crises in 2006 led to a significant increase in the budget for humanitarian aid from €496 million to €671 million.

6. BETTER REGULATION AND ONGOING ACTIVITIES

The Commission presented in November its **strategic review** of the Better Regulation initiative, which assesses the progress to date and makes a number of proposals. The system for impact assessment of all major initiatives has been strengthened to ensure quality through the establishment of an independent **Impact Assessment Board** under the direct authority of the President. More than 40 new initiatives have been added to the **simplification rolling programme** covering the period 2006-2009, and simplification initiatives were integrated into the Commission's Legislative and Work Programme. **Consultation** of interested parties has been broadened and enhanced, with 129 internet-based consultations.

The Commission carried out some **67 impact assessments** in 2006 and launched an external evaluation of its impact assessment system. The Commission also put forward a proposal to cut, jointly with Member States, the **administrative burden** for companies by 25 % by 2012 and integrated the EU Standard Cost Model for the measurement of administrative costs into its impact assessment guidelines. As a practical example of how the Commission intends to make its commitment a reality, it set out a strategic approach to continue **reducing the statistical burden on enterprises**. This approach was further developed in the proposal for a Community Statistical Programme 2008-2012.

In parallel with the process of modernising and streamlining EU legislation, a great deal of effort was invested in 2006 in **managing existing policies**. In particular, 2006 was the final year of commitments for the **previous generation of EU financial programmes** under the Financial Perspectives 2000-2006. In 2006 the Commission strengthened its **budget execution monitoring system** so as to ensure reliable forecasting and improve budget execution. For **external aid**, record levels of budgetary commitments were made under the European Development Fund and the EC budget totalling €7.6 billion, representing a 57% increase since 2001.

Monitoring the **implementation of EU law** remained an important focus of the Commission. It continued to support Member States' efforts to achieve an overall transposition deficit below 1.5%, as defined by the European Council. In 2006, the total of number of new infringement proceedings decreased slightly compared to 2005. As regards **implementing legislation**, the Commission brought to a successful conclusion the negotiation of the legal framework for the implementing powers conferred on the Commission ("Comitology

Decision") and ensured its follow-up, including the adoption of the 26 priority proposals for alignment with the new rules.

Work towards a modern, effective and service-minded administration was pursued, in particular through the establishment of a framework for **business continuity management** in the Commission, the aim of which is to prepare the institution for major potential disruptions to its activities resulting, for instance, from terrorist attacks, a global pandemic or equally damaging threats to staff, buildings or IT systems. In addition, two exercises were undertaken to test the adequacy of the Commission's **crisis management procedures**, including a joint Council/Commission exercise. The Commission continued to ensure the adequate representation of the **new Member States** among its staff by meeting its 2004-2006 recruitment targets, and took the necessary preparatory steps for the integration of **Bulgarian and Romanian officials** into its staff from 2007 onwards. Finally, progress made in the fields of **e-administration** and communication with national administrations, business and citizens have shown concrete results to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the administration.

**Annex – 2006 Work Programme initiatives adopted by the Commission –
by strategic objective**

Prosperity

Reference	Title	Adoption date	COM/SEC References
2006/INFSO/003	Communication from the Commission – i2010 e-Government Action Plan: Accelerating e-Government in Europe for the Benefit of All	25/04/2006	COM(2006)173; SEC(2006)511
2006/SG/008	Green Paper – European Transparency Initiative	03/05/2006	COM(2006)194
2006/MARKT/002	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC with regard to improving the effectiveness of review procedures concerning the award of public contracts	04/05/2006	COM(2006)195; SEC(2006)557 2006/0066 (COD)
2006/ECFIN/097	Report from the Commission – Convergence Report 2006 on Slovenia (prepared in accordance with Article 122(2) of the Treaty at the request of Slovenia)	16/05/2006	COM(2006)224; SEC(2006)615
2006/ECFIN/020	Proposal for a Council Decision in accordance with Article 122(2) of the Treaty on the adoption by Slovenia of the single currency on 1 January 2007	16/05/2006	COM(2006)225 2006/0077 (CNS)
2006/TAXUD/001	Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an action programme for customs in the Community (Customs 2013)	17/05/2006	COM(2006)201; SEC(2006)570 2006/0075 (COD)
2006/TAXUD/002	Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Community programme to improve the operation of taxation systems in the internal market (Fiscalis 2013)	17/05/2006	COM(2006)202; SEC(2006)566 2006/0076 (COD)
2006/TAXUD/003	Communication from the Commission concerning the need to develop a co-ordinated strategy to improve the fight against fiscal fraud	31/05/2006	COM(2006)254; SEC(2006)659
2005/TREN/011	Communication from the Commission – Keep Europe moving : Sustainable mobility for our continent (Mid-term review of the European Commission’s 2001 Transport White Paper)	22/06/2006	COM(2006)314; SEC(2006)785
2006/ECFIN/021	Conversion rates between the euro and the currencies of the Member States adopting the euro	28/06/2006	COM(2006)320
2006/TREN/010	Communication from the Commission - Freight Transport Logistics in Europe – the key to sustainable mobility	28/06/2006	COM(2006)336; SEC(2006)818; SEC(2006)820

Reference	Title	Adoption date	COM/SEC References
2006/INFSO/001	Communication from the Commission on the Review of the EU Regulatory Framework for electronic communications networks and services	29/06/2006	COM(2006)334; SEC(2006)816 and 817
2006/ENTR/007	Communication from the Commission - Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme: Financing SME Growth – Adding European Value	29/06/2006	COM(2006)349; SEC(2006)841, 842 and 856
2006/INFSO/029	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on roaming on public mobile networks within the Community and amending Directive 2002/21/EC on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services	12/07/2006	COM(2006)382; SEC(2006)925 and 926
2006/EAC/006	Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning	05/09/2006	COM(2006)479; SEC(2006)1093,1094
2006/MARKT/007	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 92/49/EEC and Directives 2002/83/EC, 2004/39/EC, 2005/68/EC and 2006/48/EC as regards procedural rules and evaluation criteria for the prudential assessment of acquisitions and increase of shareholdings in the financial sector	12/09/2006	COM(2006)507
2006/SG+/030	Communication from the Commission – Putting knowledge into practice: A broad-based innovation strategy for the EU	13/09/2006	COM(2006)502
2006/EAC+/004	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the European Institute of Technology	18/10/2006	COM(2006)604; SEC(2006)1313; SEC(2006)1314
2006/MARKT/006	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 97/67/EC concerning the full accomplishment of the internal market of Community postal services	18/10/2006	COM(2006)594; SEC(2006)1301; SEC(2006)1291, 1292
2006/SG+/016	Commission Working Document - First progress report on the strategy for the simplification of the regulatory environment	14/11/2006	COM(2006)690
2006/SG+/029	Communication from the Commission – A strategic review of Better Regulation in the European Union	14/11/2006	COM(2006)689
2006/MARKT/004	White Paper on Enhancing the Single Market Framework for Investment Funds	15/11/2006	COM(2006)686; SEC(2006)1451-1452
2006/ECFIN/019	Report from the Commission – Convergence Report December 2006	05/12/2006	COM(2006)762; SEC(2006)1570
2006/MARKT+/012	Interpretative Communication on the application of Article 296 of the Treaty in the field of defence procurement	07/12/2006	COM(2006)779; SEC(2006)1554-5
2006/TREN/025	Green paper on Satellite Navigation Applications	08/12/2006	COM(2006)769

Solidarity

Reference	Title	Adoption date	COM/SEC References
2006/AGRI+/019	Communication from the Commission - An EU Strategy for Bio-fuels	08/02/2006	COM(2006)34; SEC(2006)142
2006/EMPL/001	Communication from the Commission – A Roadmap for equality between women and men	01/03/2006	COM(2006)92; SEC(2006)275
2006/TREN/054	Green Paper - A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy	08/03/2006	COM(2006)105; SEC(2006)317
2005/ENV/011	Communication from the Commission – Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 – and beyond : Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being	22/05/2006	COM(2006)216; SEC(2006)621; SEC(2006)607
2006/FISH/001	Communication from the Commission – Towards a future Maritime Policy for the Union: A European Vision for the Oceans and Seas	07/06/2006	COM(2006)275
2006/AGRI/003	Communication from the Commission – Towards a sustainable European wine sector	22/06/2006	COM(2006)319; SEC(2006)770; SEC(2006)780
2006/JLS/007	Green Paper on the role of Civil Society in Drugs Policy in the European Union	26/06/2006	COM(2006)316
2006/JLS/009	Communication from the Commission - Towards an EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child	04/07/2006	COM(2006)367; SEC(2006)888 and 889
2004/ENV/003	Communication from the Commission – A Thematic Strategy on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides	12/07/2006	COM(2006)372 and 373; SEC(2006)894 and 895; SEC(2006)914
2005/REGIO+/013	Proposal for a Council Decision on Community strategic guidelines on cohesion	12/07/2006	COM(2006)386; SEC(2006)929
2003/SANCO/61	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market	12/07/2006	COM(2006)388; SEC(2006)930 and 931
2005/JLS/187	Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 2201/2003 as regards jurisdiction and introducing rules concerning applicable law in matrimonial matters	17/07/2006	COM(2006)399; SEC(2006)949 and 950
2005/JLS/188	Green Paper on conflict of laws in matters concerning matrimonial property regimes, including the questions of jurisdiction and mutual recognition	17/07/2006	COM(2006)400; SEC(2006)952
2006/JLS/005	Communication from the Commission on policy priorities in the fight against illegal immigration of third-country nationals	19/07/2006	COM(2006)402; SEC(2006)964 and 965; SEC(2006) 1010
2005/AGRI/003	Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulations (EEC) No 404/93, (EC) No 1782/2003 and (EC) No 247/2006 as regards the banana sector	20/09/2006	COM(2006)489; SEC(2006)1106, 1107

Reference	Title	Adoption date	COM/SEC References
2006/EMPL/004	Commission Communication – The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity	12/10/2006	COM(2006)571
2006/REGIO/006	Proposal for a Council Regulation concerning Community financial contributions to the International Fund for Ireland (2007-2010)	12/10/2006	COM(2006)564; SEC(2006)1227
2006/TREN/032	Communication from the Commission – Action Plan for Energy Efficiency: Realising the Potential	19/10/2006	COM(2006)545; SEC(2006)1173 to 1175
2006/JLS/006	Green paper on improving the efficiency of the enforcement of judgments in the European Union – The attachment of Bank Accounts	24/10/2006	COM(2006)618; SEC(2006)1341
2006/EMPL/003	Green paper - Modernising labour law to meet the challenges of the 21st century	22/11/2006	COM(2006)708
2006/JLS/008	Communication from the Commission – European elections 2004 Commission report on the participation of European Union citizens in the Member State of residence (Directive 93/109/EC) and on the electoral arrangements (Decision 76/787/EC as amended by Decision 2002/772/EC, Euratom)	12/12/2006	COM(2006)790; COM(2006)791; SEC(2006)1645-47
2006/ENV/017	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2003/87/EC so as to include aviation activities in the scheme for greenhouse gas emission allowance trading within the Community	20/12/2006	COM(2006)818; SEC(2006)1684; SEC(2006)1685
2006/AGRI/002	Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down specific rules as regards the fruit and vegetable sector and amending certain Regulations	24/01/2007	COM(2007)17; SEC(2007)74 and 75

Security and freedom

Reference	Title	Adoption date	COM/SEC References
2006/INFSO/002	Communication from the Commission – A strategy for a Secure Information Society – “Dialogue, partnership and empowerment”	31/05/2006	COM(2006)251; SEC(2006)656
2006/TREN/007	Communication from the Commission under Article 138(2) of the EC Treaty on the strengthening of maritime labour standards	15/06/2006	COM(2006)287
2006/JLS/017	Communication from the Commission - Evaluation of EU Policies on Freedom, Security and Justice	28/06/2006	COM(2006)332; SEC(2006)815
2006/JLS/016	Communication from the Commission - Report on the implementation of the Hague programme for 2005	28/06/2006	COM(2006)333; SEC(2006)813 and 814
2006/JLS/002	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Community Code on Visas	19/07/2006	COM(2006)403; SEC(2006)957 and 958
2006/JLS/003	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a mechanism for the creation of Rapid Border Intervention Teams and amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004 as regards that mechanism	19/07/2006	COM(2006)401; SEC(2006)954 and 955; SEC(2006) 953
2005/SANCO/024	Communication from the Commission – Better training for safer food	20/09/2006	COM(2006)519; SEC(2006)1163, 1164
2005/SANCO/032	Communication from the Commission – An EU strategy to support Member States in reducing alcohol related harm	24/10/2006	COM(2006)625; SEC(2006)1358; SEC(2006)1360; SEC(2006)1411
2006/JLS/045	Proposal for a Directive of the Council on the identification and designation of European Critical Infrastructure and the assessment of the need to improve their protection	12/12/2006	COM(2006)787; SEC(2006)1654; SEC(2006)1648
2006/TREN/005	Communication from the Commission – "Facilitating the movement of locomotives across the European Union" Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the interoperability of the Community rail system Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2004/49/EC on safety on the Community's railways Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 881/2004 establishing a European Railway Agency	13/12/2006	COM(2006)782-5; SEC(2006)1640-2

Europe as a world partner

Reference	Title	Adoption date	COM/SEC References
2006/DEV/004	Communication from the Commission – An EU-Caribbean Partnership for growth, stability and development	02/03/2006	COM(2006)86; SEC(2006)268
2006/ELARG/001	Communication from the Commission – Monitoring report on the state of preparedness for EU membership of Bulgaria and Romania	16/05/2006	COM(2006)214; SEC(2006)595; SEC(2006)596; SEC(2006)598
2006/DEV/002	Communication from the Commission – EU relations with the Pacific islands : a strategy for a strengthened partnership	29/05/2006	COM(2006)248; SEC(2006)642
2006/ELARG/028	Recommendation from the Commission to the Council to amend the Negotiating Directives for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Serbia and Montenegro in order to continue negotiations with the Republic of Serbia Recommendation from the Commission to the Council to authorise the Commission to negotiate with the Republic of Montenegro a Stabilisation and Association Agreement	06/07/2006	SEC(2006)885 and 886
2006/DEV/006	Communication from the Commission – Interconnecting Africa: the EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure	12/07/2006	COM(2006)376; SEC(2006)896; SEC(2006)983
2006/DEV/005	Communication from the Commission – Governance in the European Consensus on Development: Towards a harmonised approach within the European Union	30/08/2006	COM(2006)421; SEC(2006)1020; SEC(2006)1021 and 1022
2006/RELEX+/019 2006/TRADE+/003	Recommendation from the Commission to the Council authorising the Commission to open negotiations with Ukraine for a new Enhanced Agreement	13/09/2006	SEC(2006)1105; SEC(2006)1110; SEC(2006)1156
2006/ELARG/027	Communication from the Commission – Monitoring report on the state of preparedness for EU membership of Bulgaria and Romania	26/09/2006	COM(2006)549
2006/TRADE/001	Communication from the Commission – Global Europe competing in the World - A Contribution to the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy	04/10/2006	COM(2006)567; SEC(2006)1228-1230
2006/ENV/015	Communication from the Commission – Mobilising public and private finance towards global access to climate-friendly, affordable and secure energy services: The Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund	06/10/2006	COM(2006)583; SEC(2006)1224 and 1225
2005/RELEX+/040	Communication from the Commission – EU–China: Closer partners, growing responsibilities	24/10/2006	COM(2006)631; COM(2006)632

Reference	Title	Adoption date	COM/SEC References
2006/ELARG/002	Communication from the Commission – Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2006–2007 (including annexed special report on the EU's capacity to integrate new members)	08/11/2006	COM(2006)649; SEC(2006)1383-1390
2006/RELEX/007	Communication from the Commission on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy Communication from the Commission on the general approach to enable ENP partner countries to participate in Community agencies and Community programmes	29/11/2006	COM(2006)724; COM(2006)726; SEC(2006)1504-1512; SEC(2006)1536
2006/RELEX/022	Recommendation from the Commission to the Council authorising the Commission to open negotiations for the conclusion of an Association Agreement between the European Community and its Member States and the Central American Republics of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama	06/12/2006	SEC(2006)1625; SEC(2006)1596-8; SEC(2006)1613-5; SEC(2006)1558-1566
2006/RELEX/023	Recommendation from the Commission to the Council authorising the Commission to open negotiations for the conclusion of an Association Agreement between the European Community and its Member States and the Andean Community and its Member Countries	06/12/2006	SEC(2006)1625; SEC(2006)1596-8; SEC(2006)1613-5; SEC(2006)1558-1566
2006/TRADE/021	Communication from the Commission – Global Europe: Europe's trade defence instruments in a changing global economy A Green Paper for public consultation	06/12/2006	COM(2006)763