COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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EU measures for developing countries agreed

The Council today amended certain EU financial instruments for developing countries.

The measures had been agreed in the conciliation committee with the European Parliament. The conciliation came in the wake of questions concerning the extent of powers given to the Commission in implementing the programmes. As a result, key parameters for the allocation of two programmes were defined by both legislators as part of the legislative procedure rather than by Commission measures.

Today's decisions modify the EU's financing instrument for cooperation with industrialised and other high-income countries ("ICI plus"). The funds can now be used for cooperation with developing countries in addition to the original 46 countries in Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, which included Brazil, China, India and Iraq.

This programme supports in particular the promotion of economic partnership and market access for European companies. In addition, it also contributes to actions concerning public diplomacy and people to people links, for instance the "Erasmus mundus" programme for exchanges among students and higher education institutions between the EU and those states. Over the period 2007-2013, the budget of the instrument amounts to EUR 176 million.

The laws approved today also set the modalities for supporting the adjustment of banana producers in ACP states to trade liberalisation, with an emphasis on vulnerable groups. This follows a reduction of EU tariff preferences for them after an agreement at the WTO.

A budget of EUR 190 million will be available until 2013 and benefit ten states: Belize, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Suriname.

1 namely the measures for in support of ACP banana producers and the financing instrument for cooperation with industrialised and other high-income countries ("ICI plus")

P R E S S
Moreover, technical changes to the EU's development cooperation instrument (DCI) and the European instrument for democracy and human rights (EIDHR) were agreed today so as to harmonise provisions in all EU financial instruments for external action. This will allow limited flexibility, on a case-by-case basis, to use these instruments to finance taxes, duties and other charges, which will not be permitted in principle.

The decisions must still be formally adopted by the European Parliament before entering into force.