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Brussels, 6 May 1992

**Commission launches pilot cooperation programme with the
countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the
field of science and technology**

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The Community cooperation programme with countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the field of science and technology is entering its implementation phase. This is the first pilot project for 1992 and it has a budget of ECU 55m.

The Commission yesterday approved the content and practicalities of this project. In particular, the following initiatives will be put into action during the course of the year:

firstly, a programme of fellowships designed to help integrate researchers belonging to the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe into a single European scientific community. Research fellowships normally lasting three months is the chosen formula, and this year 2 000 researchers will benefit from this Community initiative;

secondly, the implementation of joint research projects in science and technology geared to the needs of these countries, especially to help develop the technologies needed in the present industrial redevelopment process; and

thirdly, the participation of researchers and scientists from Central and Eastern Europe in Community programmes, particularly in a number of specific programmes provided for by the third Framework Programme, and in COST projects by way of information, assistance and financial support measures.

These measures should be seen as a forerunner to greater and more coordinated scientific cooperation between the two blocs, which will be included in the Community's fourth research and development Framework Programme.

In the pilot programme approved today the Commission has given a positive response to the initiative from the European Parliament ("Let's go East" and others) and from the Council of Research Ministers (COPERNICUS).

The formal decision of the Commission coincides with an important and well-attended information seminar held in Budapest and organized by the Commission at the initiative of Vice-President Filippo Maria Pandolfi. This seminar provided the requisite information on Community projects to a broad section of interested parties made up of some 600 representatives from universities, research centres and companies belonging to the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe. The seminar was opened yesterday with contributions from Vice-President Pandolfi, Mr Valente de Oliveira, the President-in-Office of the (Research) Council, and Mr Gordon Adam representing the European Parliament.

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