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Announcements, Issues Affecting the United States

Commission's Reaction to U.S.-Pacific Agreement on Climate Change

Asked to comment on the U.S.-Pacific countries agreement on an alternative approach to Kyoto, spokeswoman for Environmental issues, **Barbara Hellferich**, said it was consistent with the EU's own efforts on climate change. She described the agreement as a complement to Kyoto, not a replacement. *"It is a partnership agreement, it is a regional ... agreement supporting, and not replacing the Kyoto Protocol,"* she said. *"In this context, we welcome very much this agreement and are encouraged by this Asia-Pacific partnership initiative, it underlines our growing awareness of the seriousness of climate change and the need to address it,"* she added.

According to the spokeswoman, *"this partnership recognizes that it is consistent with, and it contributes to the efforts of countries involved under the UN framework convention on climate change, (but) doesn't replace the Kyoto Protocol."* She also said it was in line with the G8 outcome and that it helped to strengthen the momentum for the discussions on the multilateral climate regime that we are seeking for post 2012,"

On a question of whether the U.S. and Australia would now sign Kyoto, Hellferich said the Commission hoped to reach an agreement with its global partners, *"in particular with those who are the greatest polluters... Those five countries which have reached this agreement contribute for up to 40 percent of Co2 emissions. "Clean technology is an important issue, but it certainly cannot substitute, or cannot do the emission cuts we need in order to combat climate change,"* she said.

In answer to another question, Hellferich denied that the Commission had lost sight of having a multilateral agreement on combating climate change after the 2012 Kyoto deadline. *"Quite the contrary actually. We have multilateral agreements between the European Union and developing countries. We are*

also in discussions on an overall agreement,... we have been in discussions since November in Montreal and we have done our utmost to have discussions with the United States and reach an agreement, or at least reach the initial stages of an agreement, and that is what we are discussing in Montreal," she concluded.