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Brussels, October 1985

**ADAPTING THE SOCIAL FUND TO ENLARGEMENT
THE WHOLE OF PORTUGAL AND NINE SPANISH REGIONS CLASSED AS
FIRST PRIORITY**

The Commission has adopted a proposal for a Council Regulation adapting the Social Fund rules in the light of the accession of Spain and Portugal.

Under this Regulation, the whole of Portugal and the nine autonomous Spanish regions of Andalucia, Canarias, Castilla-Leon, Castilla-La Mancha, Extremadura, Galicia, Murcia and the ciudades of Ceuta and Melilla would be included in the list of Social Fund first-priority regions "characterized by especially serious and prolonged imbalance in employment" (Council Decision": 83/516/EEC). These regions qualify for an increased Social Fund assistance rate of 55% of public expenditure (instead of 50% for other regions) and accelerated amortization of training centres. At present, the list of first-priority regions includes the whole of Greece and Ireland, Northern Ireland, the French overseas departments and the Mezzogiorno.

At present, 40% of Social Fund appropriations are devoted to the first-priority regions. After the inclusion of Portugal and the Spanish regions referred to above, the Commission proposes that this percentage be raised to 42.5% in 1986, to 43.5% in 1987 and 44.5% in 1988. This percentage and the increase in the Social Fund budget will enable the Spanish and Portuguese regions to benefit from Social Fund resources on a basis similar to that of the super-priority regions of the Community as it now stands.