



Cohesion policy and the environment

On 22 November the Commission adopted a communication presenting what it sees as the main options for achieving greater synergy between the Community's cohesion policy and its policy on the environment.

Environmental protection and socio-economic development have, in the past, often been seen as mutually clashing objectives. More and more, we are coming to understand that we need to reconcile the two, hence the importance now given to sustainable development.

Between 1989 and 1993, about ECU 2.8 billion from the Structural Funds was spent on direct schemes to benefit the environment in areas qualifying for Community regional assistance. The programming documents for these areas in 1994-99 include more than ECU 9.4 billion towards environmental schemes. And this is without taking into account the many projects which have an indirect effect on the environment and play an important role in preventing environmental problems.

To reinforce this trend, the Commission is proposing the following options. Under the Cohesion Fund, the goal is to arrive at an even distribution (50-50) between assistance for transport projects and support for projects connected with the environment. With regard to the Structural Funds, the Commission would like to improve the monitoring and assessment of the environmental impact of regional programmes. It would also like to tighten up the criteria on which projects are selected to ensure that they have a marked impact in economic, social and environmental terms. The Commission proposes launching new pilot projects in the environmental field. Finally, it supports establishing a dialogue between all the parties involved, including the non-governmental organizations.

The complete text of the communication can be obtained on request from DG XVI/F2 (fax: +32 2 296 60 03).

Adoption of seven new programmes

Between 24 October and 14 November, the Commission approved the part-financing by

the Structural Funds of seven Community Initiative programmes.

Areas eligible under Objective 2	Community Initiative	Total public investment (million ecu in 1995)	Contribution of the Structural Funds (million ecu in 1995)
D Hamburg	KONVER	2.5	1.2
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	KONVER	33.0	19.5
Sachsen-Anhalt	KONVER	17.0	11.2
Sachsen-Anhalt	SMEs	47.9	35.1
Berlin	URBAN	29.9	16.1
Bremen	URBAN	15.8	8.0
UK Wales	SMEs	5.2	2.3

Conference on programme assessment

On 16 November the Commission held an initial conference on the assessment of regional policy results. This conference brought together almost 400 persons and provided a forum for comparing views and experiences among policy-makers, programme managers and professionals in the area of assessment.

The conference showed that the need to assess regional assistance is a view widely shared by those active in the regional policy field. However, assessment work is often still perceived as an activity for specialists far removed from the concerns of those responsible for programme management. The intermediate assessments which accompany the implementation of regional schemes offer a

good opportunity to bring the experts closer to the people operating on the ground.

Ideally, assessment should be an on-going process which continuously provides those responsible for programmes with a clear, independent and professional picture of the impact of current operations and the adjustments that need to be made to them. However, for assessment to form an integral part of the decision-making process, it is essential that the political authorities accept the idea of submitting their decisions to the critical appraisal of independent observers and also that the appraisers be in a position to take into account the complexity of local realities. The proceedings of the conference can be obtained from Philippe Goybet (DG XVI/G2) fax: +32 2 296 33 11.

Summary table showing the funding of Community Initiatives

Now that the budget reserve relating to the Community Initiatives has been allocated by the Commission (on 4 October, as reported in Inforegio News No 21), it is

possible to present a summary table showing the allocation of Structural Fund resources by Initiative and by country for the period 1994-99:

(in million ecu in 1995)

Country / Community Initiative	Interreg II	Leader II	Regis II	Employment / Adapt	Rechar II Resider II Konver Retex	SMEs	Urban	Pesca	Peace (NI)	Total
Belgium	104.00	10.20	-	83.80	65.40	12.30	14.10	2.00	-	291.70
Denmark	19.20	9.90	-	48.30	2.40	2.50	1.50	19.70	-	103.50
Germany	451.90	206.80	-	454.60	804.60	185.50	115.00	23.30	-	2241.70
Greece	628.20	162.90	-	103.50	109.90	83.30	51.10	30.70	-	1169.60
Spain ⁽¹⁾	688.60	402.70	216.90	738.30	235.40	251.10	189.50	45.60	-	2768.10
France	268.00	230.50	265.60	473.50	226.50	58.50	70.50	33.50	-	1626.60
Ireland	164.70	84.00	-	116.20	9.40	28.80	20.50	6.80	60.00	490.30
Italy	385.60	326.50	-	616.90	232.20	190.40	135.10	37.00	-	1923.60
Luxembourg	3.60	1.20	-	0.60	13.50	0.30	0.50	-	-	19.90
Netherlands	188.00	11.50	-	131.30	51.30	10.30	22.40	12.80	-	427.80
Austria	48.82	26.44	-	39.30	9.53	8.74	13.27	-	-	146.10
Portugal ⁽²⁾	352.60	129.40	125.70	66.50	198.50	124.00	49.40	29.10	-	1075.20
Finland	47.93	28.07	-	55.51	-	10.80	7.66	3.41	-	153.40
Sweden	46.55	16.10	-	36.30	3.26	16.76	4.87	3.97	-	127.80
United Kingdom	122.80	77.90	-	514.00	407.00	68.30	121.30	43.30	240.00	1594.70
Total ⁽³⁾	3520.40	1758.70	608.20	3478.50	2368.70	1077.00	816.90	296.40	300.00	14275.50

(1) Except for a reserve of ECU 50.7 million not broken down by Initiative.

(2) The Initiative for the textiles and clothing industry in Portugal (ECU 406 million) is no longer being funded from the budget of the Structural Funds but under the "industry" heading in the Community's general budget.

(3) Including a reserve for Spain as well as ECU 64.9 million (for the Leader, SMEs and Pesca Initiatives) not broken down by country.

Stop press

The Commission has just approved a major programme to assist industry and craft industries as well as business services in the Mezzogiorno (Italy - Objective 1).

Total public investment planned: ECU 4.971 billion, including a contribution from the Structural Funds of ECU 2.593 billion. More information on this programme in the next number of Inforegio News.



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