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Cohesion on-line

In the run-up to the Cohesion Forum being held in Brussels on 21 and 22 May this year, the Commissioner responsible for regional policy, Michel Barnier, took part in an Internet chat on 26 March during which he answered questions from the public about the new challenges facing cohesion in the European Union. For two hours, Mr Barnier had a virtual discussion with some 200 participants from all geographical and linguistic corners of the Union. A structured presentation of this debate is available on our Inforegio site. The discussion focused on eight topics:

- 1) cohesion policy and enlargement;
- 2) funding cohesion activities after 2006;
- 3) decision-making in regional policy;
- 4) cohesion policy for the applicant countries;
- 5) pre-accession funding;
- 6) top priorities for accession strategy after 2006;
- 7) decentralisation and partnership with regional and local authorities;
- 8) impact on cohesion of investments in infrastructure.

For details, please consult our Inforegio site:
<http://www/temporum/forum_en.htm>.

The first Urban II programmes

The Commission has agreed to a demand from the European Parliament and increased to 70 (from 50) the number of towns and cities to benefit from the URBAN II Initiative. By 10 April, a first raft of 48 programme proposals had been declared eligible, opening the way to negotiations over the content of the development priorities in the context of the Commission's guidelines.

The Community Initiative 'Urban II' is aimed at promoting the design and implementation of innovative models of development for the economic and social regeneration of troubled urban areas. These areas must in principle have a population of at least 20 000, though the threshold can be lowered to 10 000 in duly justified cases; the problems must also affect the area as a whole.

Urban II has an overall budget of EUR 700 million funded entirely from the ERDF. The breakdown among the Member States is: EUR 140 million for Germany, 117m for the United Kingdom, 108m for Italy, 106m for Spain, 96m for France, 28m for the Netherlands, 24m for Greece, 20m for Belgium, 18m for Portugal, 8m for Austria, and 5m each for Ireland, Denmark, Finland and Sweden. The ceiling for Community assistance is set at 75% of total programme volume in Objective 1 regions and at 50% in other regions. EUR 15 million will be earmarked for sharing experience and good practice, in particular through the formation of networks among towns and cities.

First 48 urban areas selected

Austria (2): Graz, Wien

Belgium (2): Brussels-Capital, Sambreville

Denmark (1): Aarhus

Finland (1): Helsinki/Vantaa

France (7): Bastia, Bordeaux, Clichy/Montfermeil, Grenoble, Grigny/Viry, Le Havre, Strasbourg

Germany (12): Berlin, Bremerhaven, Dessau, Dortmund, Gera, Kassel, Kiel, Leipzig, Luckenwalde, Mannheim/Ludwigshafen, Neubrandenburg, Saarbrücken

Greece (3): Irakleio, Komotini, Perama

Italy (7): Caserta, Crotona, Genoa, Milan, Mola di Bari, Pescara, Turin

Netherlands (3): Amsterdam, Heerlen, Rotterdam.

Spain (10): Cáceres, Gijón, Granada, Jaén, Orense, Pamplona, San Cristóbal de la Laguna, San Sebastián/Pasajes, Sant Adrià de Besòs, Teruel

To measure more clearly the overall contribution of regional policy to Europe's towns and cities, an evaluation has been launched on the way in which the urban and spatial dimensions are taken into account in the programming for Objectives 1 and 2, as already adopted or in the process of being adopted.

Associating INTERREG and TACIS

The Commission is publishing a guide called "Bringing INTERREG and TACIS funding together". This reference manual sets out to explain the scope for funding cross-border cooperation under either the INTERREG initiative (designed for members of the European Union) or TACIS (designed for the Commonwealth of Independent States, in particular Russia). The main thrust is on the possible synergies between the two types of funding with a view to promoting cooperation projects beyond the borders of the Fifteen, e.g. within the framework of the "Northern Dimension". The guide is already available in English and will soon be ready in other languages, see Internet address: <<http://inforegio.ccc.eu.int/interreg3>>.

Objectives 1 and 2 in Spain, Greece, United Kingdom and Ireland

During March, the Commission adopted a total of 23 economic and social development programmes for Spain, 17 for Greece and 2 for the United Kingdom (Northern Ireland) and Ireland, all covering the period 2000-2006.

Spain. Sixteen programmes will be implemented in the twelve Objective 1 regions, including four horizontal programmes covering local development, business competitiveness, research and development, and technical assistance: Andalusia, Asturias, Canary Islands, Cantabria, Castile-La Mancha, Castile-León, Ceuta, Extremadura, Galicia, Melilla, Murcia and Valencia. Seven single programming documents were approved covering all the Objective 2 areas. These are located in the following Autonomous Communities: Aragon, Balearic Islands, Catalonia, Madrid, Navarre, Basque Country and Rioja.

Greece. All the regions except Attika are covered by the package of development programmes adopted in March. The regions concerned are: Crete, North Aegean, Epirus, Continental Greece, Western Greece, Ionian Islands, the South Aegean Islands, Central Macedonia, Western Macedonia, Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, Peloponnese and Thessaly. Four horizontal programmes were also approved: the first deals with the information society, the second a more competitive economy, the third culture and the fourth roads, ports and transport in the major urban centres.

United Kingdom (Northern Ireland). The transitional support programme on "Building sustainable prosperity" is designed to give Northern Ireland a more competitive economy and a more skilled workforce.

United Kingdom - Ireland. The Peace II Programme will consolidate the results of the Peace Programme between 1995 and 1999. In particular, it is designed to support projects contributing to peace and reconciliation between the two communities in Northern Ireland and will be implemented at both a decentralised and a transnational (Ireland and UK) level.

For additional information, please consult our Inforegio site: <http://www.wbpro/Prosr/prog_en.cfm>.

Programme	Total cost*	Contribution of Structural Funds*
Spain		
<i>Objective 1</i>		
Andalusia	11 708.9	7 840.4
Asturias	2 052.7	1 338.9
Canary Islands	2 758.6	1 846.1
Cantabria	519.0	296.5
Castile-La Mancha	3 063.9	2 106.7
Castile-León	4 826.7	3 155.6
Ceuta	105.5	77.1
Extremadura	3 050.0	2 131.2
Galicia	5 087.3	3 430.0
Melilla	83.9	58.4
Murcia	1 711.0	1 137.0
Valencia	4 172.7	2 744.5
Local development	1 542.5	1 073.0
Business competitiveness	2 640.1	1 785.4
Research and development	2 354.6	1 648.3
Technical assistance	25.0	18.8
<i>Objective 2</i>		
Aragon	629.3	306.3
Balearic Islands	186.1	90.5
Catalonia	2 651.7	1 235.5
Rioja	94.7	42.6
Madrid	795.4	394.9
Navarre	195.7	90.6
Basque Country	1 316.2	587.6
Greece (Objective 1)		
Crete	730.3	467.7
North Aegean	547.0	362.0
Epirus	680.0	436.0
Continental Greece	873.0	532.0
Western Greece	781.5	478.5
Ionian Islands	375.2	244.7
South Aegean	609.5	372.2
Central Macedonia	1 390	903.4
Western Macedonia	581.0	372.0
Eastern Macedonia and Thrace	1 100.0	733.3
Peloponnese	698.7	457.2
Thessaly	929.0	563.0
Information society	2 800.0	1 700.0
More competitive economy	6 000.0	1 907.0
Culture	605.0	414.0
Roads, ports and transport in the major urban centres	2 936.0	1 468.0
United Kingdom (Objective 1)		
Northern Ireland:		
Building sustainable prosperity	1 514.0	890.0
United Kingdom - Ireland (Objective 1)		
Peace II	740.0	531.0

* in million euro



European Commission
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