

ISPA is two years old

New web site 'Regional policy — Inforegio': the debate goes on

The new thematic web site 'Regional policy — Inforegio' has been online since 1 March. It is a more interactive site. Hence under 'debate', which contains the latest discussions on the future of cohesion policy, you are invited to give your opinion on our online forum. Do not hesitate to answer one of the ten questions raised in the second report on economic and social cohesion.

We want your views!

For more information, see http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/debate/forum_en.htm

Erratum

In *Inforegio News* No 95, Slovakia was listed as one of the countries whose living standard was 87 % of the future Community average (Union of 27). The country listed should have been Slovenia. Slovakia is one of the group of countries including most of the candidate countries whose living standard is 41 % of the Community average.

ISPA (instrument for structural policies for pre-accession), intended to part-finance transport and environment projects in the candidate countries, an innovation at European level, began in 2000. Two years later, 169 projects have been adopted.

ISPA, which has EUR 1 040 million a year to share among the beneficiary countries in proportion to their wealth, area and population, helps achieve a number of objectives. Firstly, it enables the 10 candidate countries of central and eastern Europe (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) to improve their environment and transport infrastructures and reach the levels required by the relevant Community standards. It also helps these countries prepare for accession and familiarise themselves with Community policies and procedures, for example as regards management, evaluation and the award of contracts.

Since 2000, ISPA has taken a decision on 169 projects. Costing a total of EUR 6 113 million, they will receive part-finance from the European Union amounting to EUR 3 900 million, with the rest coming from the budgets of the beneficiary countries and international financial institutions.

Of these 169 projects, 100 are in the field of the environment (and account for 38.4 % of the total amount available), 64 are in the field of transport (61.4 % of funding) and 5 concern technical assistance (0.1 %).

The projects decided on are in the following countries and fields.

Breakdown of financing by country 2000/01

| Country | Number of projects | Community assistance (million EUR) | Examples of projects |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Bulgaria | 9 | 349.6 | Construction of regional wastewater treatment stations and electrification of the rail network |
| Czech Republic | 14 | 171.4 | Road building, construction of plants to treat drinking water and wastewater treatment stations and decentralisation of the management system |
| Estonia | 14 | 82.4 | Road building, modernisation of sewers, regional wastewater treatment stations and technical assistance |
| Hungary | 23 | 337.1 | Regional waste management, modernisation of railway lines, regional programme for drainage and wastewater treatment, preparations for implementing European directives on urban wastewater and technical assistance |
| Latvia | 17 | 219.7 | Waste management, road building, modernisation of the rail network and technical assistance |
| Lithuania | 16 | 143.6 | Modernisation of telecommunications, development of regional waste management systems and technical assistance |
| Poland | 35 | 1 402 | Construction of wastewater treatment stations, improvement and modernisation of railway lines, construction of motorways, urban and municipal water projects (particularly wastewater) and technical assistance |
| Romania | 22 | 1 014.2 | Construction and improvement of regional wastewater treatment stations, construction of roads and technical assistance |
| Slovakia | 10 | 172.5 | Modernisation and extension of a regional wastewater treatment station, construction of motorways, modernisation of the rail network and technical assistance |
| Slovenia | 9 | 45 | Construction of a regional water-supply network and regional wastewater treatment stations and modernisation of a railway line |

For more information, see http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/applicants/index_en.htm

Working together to improve communication on the Structural Funds

On 18 and 19 March, a seminar was held in Brussels on information and publicity on the Structural Funds, which is a matter for the Member States. Managing authorities have certain obligations to ensure that all potential beneficiaries of the Funds are informed as openly as possible and that the combined efforts of the European Union and its Member States are correctly explained to the public.

The seminar provided an opportunity for those responsible for information in the Objective 1 regions and the European institutions to meet in round tables and workshops on informing the general public and potential beneficiaries and on the evaluation of communication measures. The visibility of regional policy and the role of the media were also discussed.

Exchanges of experience demonstrated the importance of the needs of target publics and the need to spread messages in simple terms.

They also allowed the following conclusions to be reached:

- communication is an essential element of the sound management of programmes;
- communication strategies at different levels (Community, national, local) must be complementary.

The Commission intends to continue promoting dialogue among those present at the meeting, for example through a computer forum to be set up on the Internet pages of the Directorate-General for Regional Policy.

For more information, see
http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm

Interreg III: adoption of 23 new programmes

In February 2002, the Commission announced the adoption of 23 new programmes for cooperation between border regions. Of these, 19 come under Interreg III A (cross-border cooperation) and the other four under Interreg III B (transnational cooperation). Programmes under strand A include cross-border cooperation with candidate countries such as Bulgaria and Estonia and with other neighbours of the Union such as Russia, Switzerland and Morocco.

| | (million EUR) | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Programmes 2000–06 | Total cost | Contribution from the Structural Funds |
| Interreg III A | | |
| Greece/Bulgaria | 367.2 | 170. |
| Rhine upper–centre–south | 70.6 | 31.6 |
| Schleswig/Sønderjylland | 28.3 | 13.8 |
| K.E.R.N. region (D)/Fyns Amt (DK) | 21.4 | 9.9 |
| Storstrøms Amt/Ostholstein-Lübeck | 19.2 | 9.6 |
| Saar–Moselle/Western Palatinate | 56.5 | 28. |
| Finland/Sweden/Norway | 128. | 47. |
| France/Wallonia/Flanders | 173. | 86.5 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|-------|
| Wallonia/Lorraine/Luxembourg | 49. | 24.5 |
| Öresund | 61.7 | 30.8 |
| Karelia (Finland–Russia) | 70. | 28. |
| Finland/Estonia | 42.2 | 14.1 |
| Spain/France | 173.9 | 84.3 |
| Italy/France | 112.2 | 52.3 |
| France/Switzerland | 41.4 | 20.7 |
| Rhine–Waal/Rhine–Maas–Nord | 211. | 98. |
| Pamina | 29.5 | 14.8 |
| Spain/Portugal | 1 132. | 807. |
| Spain/Morocco | 225.9 | 169.4 |
| Interreg III B | | |
| Northern periphery | 50. | 21. |
| Azores/Madeira/Canary Islands | 170.7 | 145.1 |
| North Sea | 278.4 | 129.2 |
| Western Mediterranean | 194.3 | 103.8 |

For more information on this programme, see
http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/interreg3/index_en.htm

