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REGIO publications: a new look

Two key Regional Policy DG publications have been given a makeover: *Working for the regions*, a general information brochure on Structural Funds action, will shortly be appearing in a new version, in 21 languages and in printed and electronic form. The English, French, German and Polish versions are already available.

(http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/intro/regions1_en.htm)

Inforegio Panorama, the 'magazine of regional development actors', now consists of 28 pages, including a thematic dossier in 19 languages. Edition 13 was published at the beginning of May and is devoted to EU enlargement.

(http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docgener/panora_en.htm)

Cohesion Fund: new regulation on publicity

The Commission has adopted a new regulation governing information and publicity measures on the activities of the Cohesion Fund. Regulation (EC) No 621/2004 replaces a previous Commission decision published in 1996. It lays down the rules for measures designed to increase public awareness of the Cohesion Fund and brings them into line with those which apply to the Structural Funds. The text of the regulation is available at:

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/archive/2004/L_09820040402en.html

Regions of knowledge

EUR 2.5 million is to be allocated to 14 pilot projects in the framework of the 'Regions of knowledge' (Know-REF) initiative which encourages local players to draw up regional knowledge development models. The projects selected will help to improve regional research and innovation strategies, public-private regional partnerships, links between researchers, companies and financial institutions, and the networking of technological innovators in all European regions. To find out more:

[http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/04/548\]0\]RAPID&lg=EN](http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/04/548]0]RAPID&lg=EN)

Message from Jacques Barrot, new Commissioner responsible for regional policy

Following my appointment, on 26 April, it gives me great pleasure to address you, the regional development actors, in this latest edition of *Inforegio News*.

I have long been a committed European and I am very pleased to take over the mandate of my friend Michel Barnier. I believe in cohesion policy as an expression of European solidarity, mutual interest and proximity to the European citizen.

What are my priorities?

Firstly, I will ensure implementation of current programmes between now and the end of the present programming period. At the same time, I will endeavour to launch the 2004-06 programming for the new Member States and participate in accession negotiations for Bulgaria and Romania. I view enlargement as a major priority and, in this field, I will be able to benefit from the advice of my colleague Péter Balász. Finally, I intend to maintain the good results in terms of efficiency and good management, which are crucial to the credibility of the financial perspectives for the next programming period.

As to the future, that is 2007-13, I adhere fully to the proposals contained in the *Third report on cohesion*. These will most certainly help achieve

the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives for a more competitive Europe and sustained growth.

On 10 and 11 May 2004, in Brussels, the Commission organised the Third European Forum on Cohesion (*). This was the occasion to take stock of the contributions of all the cohesion policy actors to the proposed reform. It is on these bases that I shall be submitting five regulations to the Commission: the general regulation on the Structural Funds, the three ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund regulations, and the regulation on the legal instrument for cooperation.

In the debate on the future of this policy, I will be campaigning for a strong cohesion policy which is present throughout the Union. In so doing, I intend to find support in dialogue and partnership, in the belief that the key to successful European development lies in mobilising all the actors — the Member States, the regions and the citizens.

Jacques Barrot, European Commissioner responsible for regional policy.

(* http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/debate/forcom2004_en.htm)

The official texts of the Structural Funds in the languages of the new Member States

Most of the regulations and other legal texts on the Structural Funds are now available in electronic format in the Czech, Estonian, Hungarian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Slovak and Slovene languages in a special edition of the Official Journal at the EUR-Lex site.

To access these texts, go to the address indicated below, click on the target language and choose Section 14 (Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments).

This documentation will be regularly updated.

Link: <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/accession.html>

The European Parliament supports the new cohesion policy

On 22 April, the European Parliament adopted the report by Mr Konstantinos Hatzidakis supporting the new approach to cohesion policy for the enlarged Union during the 2007–13 period, as presented by the European Commission in its *Third report on economic and social cohesion* of 18 February.

Enlargement will bring a considerable increase in economic, social and territorial disparities. A radical review of regional policy is therefore inevitable. To meet these challenges, the Parliament has repeated its conviction that the application of the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategies to promote competitiveness and sustainable development must be a priority for the Union if the stated goals are to be achieved.

As regards the financing of regional policy, the Parliament reaffirmed that the present level of 0.45 % of the Community GDP allocated to cohesion policy is a minimum. Financing below this level risks compromising prospects of achieving the objectives of the Union's cohesion policy. Given the need for financial discipline, the members of Parliament nevertheless accepted the compromise of 0.41 % proposed by the Commis-

sion. In this context, they welcomed the proposal to limit the number of funds to three and to introduce the principle of just one fund per programme. The members also congratulated the Commission on confirming that regional policy will continue to benefit all regions in all the Union Member States.

The European Parliament wants particular attention to be paid to regions affected by structural handicaps (islands, mountain regions, thinly populated regions) which must benefit from specific regional cooperation as well as other Union sectorial policy. Among other recommendations, Parliament stressed that the towns must be viewed as essential elements in economic and social cohesion.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?L=EN&OBJID=76316&LEVEL=3&MODE=SIP&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N>

Regional innovation rewarded

The European Commission's Regional Policy DG has granted a 'European award for regional innovation' to nine Union regions.

The list of winners in the first 'European award for regional innovation' was revealed on 22 April in Brussels. At a plenary session of the Committee of the Regions at the European Parliament, the awards were granted to the regions which presented the most innovative projects. The competition was organised by the Regional Policy DG and was open to regions who are exploring new ideas and methods in the framework of regional programmes for innovative actions, co-financed by the ERDF. An independent jury, chaired by former Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Guterres, selected nine projects from the 72 submitted by regions from throughout the European Union. Three winners were selected for each of the three themes of the regional programmes for innovative actions.

Theme 1 — Development of the regional economy based on knowledge and technological innovation. First prize, 'NanoBioTech — Region Saarland' (Sarreland, Germany), nano-biotechnology project (biotechnology based on living microscopic particles). Second prize, 'X-PROT' (Centro, Portugal), biotechnology

project. Third prize, 'Prodima' (Saxony-Anhalt, Germany), knowledge transfer project in the field of mechanics and engineering.

Theme 2 — The information society serving regional development. First prize, 'Gnulinex' (Extremadura, Spain), online educational project. Second prize, 'Pilot Wireless Care' (Overijssel, the Netherlands), telemedicine project. Third prize, 'IT Quality Seal' (Schleswig-Holstein, Germany), quality label for electronic commerce.

Theme 3 — Regional identity and sustainable development. First prize, 'TANNO meets Gemini' (Styria, Austria), project to encourage eco-construction. Second prize, 'Teknikbussen (TEKNO)' (centre-east Sweden), project to preserve the regional identity. Third prize, 'Les Créanautes' (Limousin, France), project involving young people in strengthening the region's image.

To find out more: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/innovation/concours_en.htm

Inforegio News online

Visit the Inforegio website for a more comprehensive insight into European regional policy, and get all the latest news at the Inforegio newsroom: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/newsroom/index_en.htm



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