



# inforegio news

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## Open Days 2005: call for contributions

The Regional Policy DG has published on the Inforegio website a call for contributions for speakers at the Open Days 2005 seminars and workshops (European Week of Cities and Regions, from 10 to 13 October):

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/opendays/](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/opendays/)

## The urban dimension with a view to 2007

A conference entitled 'European cohesion policy and integrated urban regeneration' will be held on 8 and 9 June in Saarbrücken (Germany), organised at the initiative of the URBAN Germany-Austria network in cooperation with the City of Saarbrücken, URBAN France networks and Urbact. The aim is to strengthen cooperation between the players and to debate the place and role of the city in post-2006 cohesion policy. More information is available on the Urbact site:

<http://www.urbact.org/srt/urbact/home?location.id=1224>

## Innovation and cohesion

'Technological innovation and regional cohesion in an enlarged Union': a conference on this subject in Cracow on 21 and 22 April, organised by the ERIK networks, IRE and the Malopolska region, illustrated the importance of regional innovation policies and the role of business incubators in this context.

[http://www.innovating-regions.org/network/events/eventDetails.cfm?eve\\_id=281](http://www.innovating-regions.org/network/events/eventDetails.cfm?eve_id=281)

## Sustainable development in figures

Eurostat has placed online around 120 indicators reflecting the priorities of the Gothenburg strategy for sustainable development and the undertakings given by the EU at the Johannesburg Summit. This data will facilitate follow-up of the implementation of the strategy.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/sustainabledevelopment>

## European Council and interinstitutional dialogue: cohesion on the agenda

**Approving the Commission proposals on relaunching the Lisbon strategy, the European Council of 22 and 23 March confirmed the role of cohesion policy in this context and the need for sufficient financing. Other Community bodies also made statements and gave opinions on the future of the policy.**

In the Presidency's conclusions<sup>(1)</sup>, the European Council calls on governments and all the players concerned to relaunch Lisbon without delay along three major lines: making knowledge and innovation the motors for sustainable growth; making the EU an attractive area in which to invest and work; placing growth and employment in the service of social cohesion. To achieve these objectives, the Union must 'mobilise all appropriate national and Community resources — including the cohesion policy — in the strategy's three dimensions (economic, social and environmental)'. The European Council states that 'the financial perspective for 2007–13 will have to provide the Union with adequate funds' to carry through the policies that contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon priorities.

The new simplified approach will be put into practice this year within the context of a three-year cycle, renewable in 2008. On the basis of the 'integrated guidelines' to be adopted by the Council, the Member States will establish 'national reform programmes'. As a counterpart to the national programmes, the Commission will present a 'Community Lisbon programme'.

<sup>(1)</sup> <http://www.eu2005.lu/en/actualites/conseil/2005/03/23conseileuropen/ceconcl.pdf>

**European Parliament and Committee of the Regions.** Jointly organised by the Committee on Regional Development of the European Parliament (REGI) and the Commission for Territorial Cohesion

Policy (COTER) of the Committee of the Regions (CoR), a conference entitled 'The future of European cohesion and its financing' was held on 6 April. There were 300 participants in attendance, including representatives of associations of regional and local authorities. At the meeting, Commissioner Danuta Hübner stressed that the absence of an agreement on the financial perspective for 2007–13 at the summit on 16 and 17 June would result in 'a major problem in financial and political terms' as 'it takes 18 months to complete the process of preparing for the next generation of cohesion programmes'. A joint statement by REGI-COTER in favour of the European Commission's proposals, especially the financial proposals, was adopted at the end of the conference. For further information:

[http://www.core.eu.int/en/activities/in\\_house.htm](http://www.core.eu.int/en/activities/in_house.htm)

**European Economic and Social Committee.** The EESC, a Community advisory body, like the CoR, adopted a number of key opinions on the future of regional policy at its plenary session on 6 and 7 April. In particular, it recommended that the ERDF should: give high priority to R&D, innovation and entrepreneurship; formulate recommendations for areas with natural handicaps, outermost regions and urban and rural areas; and advocate more funds being made available to the Cohesion Fund in the context of enlargement. To find out more:

[http://www.esc.eu.int/press/cp/docs/2005/cp\\_eesc\\_43\\_2005\\_en.doc](http://www.esc.eu.int/press/cp/docs/2005/cp_eesc_43_2005_en.doc)

## Meeting the challenge of economic restructuring

**Faced with the effects of global competition, the Union plans to grant assistance to persons and regions most affected by economic change. In a communication presented on 31 March<sup>(1)</sup>, the Commission proposes setting up a 'growth adjustment fund' and 'national funds to deal with unforeseen events', with total allocations of up to EUR 11.3 billion for the period 2007–13.**

The Lisbon strategy is based on the need for balanced and sustainable growth for the benefit of all. However, in a global context of increasing competition, many regions are experiencing or will experience

the effects of economic restructuring. In order to support the regions and sectors most affected by this restructuring, the Commission proposes various measures concerned, in particu-

lar, with the right to work and social dialogue along with the creation of a new Community instrument, the 'growth adjustment fund', that would be allocated around EUR 1 billion a year. This instrument would be in addition to the 'national reserves for unforeseen events' that are included in the Struc-

tural Fund reform proposals submitted by the Commission in 2004 and that aim to meet the unforeseen effects of restructuring by financing to the tune of a maximum of 1 % of the 'convergence' budget and 3 % of the 'competitiveness' budget.

(<sup>1</sup>) 'Restructuring and employment — Anticipating and accompanying restructuring in order to develop employment: the role of the European Union', COM(2005) 120 final, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/news/2005/apr/com\\_restruct\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2005/apr/com_restruct_en.pdf)

## Emergency situations: the Solidarity Fund gets a makeover

**On 6 April, the Commission presented its latest detailed proposals (<sup>1</sup>) concerning the 2007–13 financial perspectives. The proposals include a new Solidarity Fund and an instrument for preparing a rapid response to major crises.**

The proposed new Solidarity Fund is modelled on the present European Union Solidarity Fund (EUSF) that has proved its effectiveness since it was set up in 2002. Like the latter, it will cover the Member States and countries negotiating accession, but its field of action will be considerably widened and its efficiency improved. In addition to serious crises resulting from natural disasters, it will also intervene following industrial or technological disasters, in emergency health situations and in response to acts of terrorism, on each occasion taking the specific measures the situation demands (medical, counselling and social assistance).

The new proposal lowers the intervention threshold, from a minimum amount of EUR 3 billion in direct damage, or 0.6 % of the national income of the State in question, to EUR 1 billion or 0.5 % of its GNI. On the other hand, exceptional intervention in response to regional disasters is discontinued. However, a new criterion for eligibility makes it possible to mobilise funds

on the basis of political considerations. These are cases where the physical damage alone is not an appropriate criterion, in particular terrorist acts or health crises. Finally, in future, it will be possible to pay an advance on the aid to be granted.

The revised EUSF regulation would enter into force in January 2007. The proposed budget for the period 2007–13 is EUR 6.2 billion and an annual available amount of EUR 1 billion for solidarity actions is included in the proposed financial perspective. A budget of EUR 155 million is also proposed for the device to prepare for a rapid response. For more information:

<http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/05/111&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

For information on the present EUSF, see the 'Solidarity instruments' page on the Inforegio site as well as *Inforegio Panorama* magazine, No 15.

(<sup>1</sup>) <http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/389&format>

## The impact of 'Lisbon' on growth and employment

**The measures set out in the Lisbon strategy are designed to significantly stimulate European growth for the benefit of employment. That is the finding of a study presented on 1 April by the Directorate-General for Economic and Monetary Affairs.**

Surveying the literature on the economic impact of Lisbon-type reforms, the study shows that these measures could increase the European Union's potential growth rate by 0.5 to 0.75 %, bringing it close to the 3 % objective. Over a 10-year period, this would mean a 7 % or 8 % increase in Europe's GDP,

which would help achieve the employment targets adopted by the European Commission in March 2000 when launching the Lisbon strategy. Full text of the study:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/economy\\_finance/publications/occasional\\_papers/occasionalpapers16\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/economy_finance/publications/occasional_papers/occasionalpapers16_en.htm)

**New on the Inforegio website: the 2007–13 financial perspectives**

**Regional and cohesion policy play a fundamental role in reducing economic and social disparities and promoting growth and employment for the benefit of the European Union as a whole.**

**The added value of this policy, its practical benefits for citizens and the resources it needs are all dealt with on a new Internet page which presents all the useful documents and key arguments concerning the financial perspectives: [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/themes/finper/finper1\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/themes/finper/finper1_en.htm)**



**European Commission**  
Directorate-General for Regional Policy