

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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Conclusions of the report pursuant to Article 25 of Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88

ERDF 1991

(presented by the Commission)

This report on the ERDF in 1991 is presented pursuant to Article 25 of Regulation (EEC) No 4253/88 in the context of the monitoring of the implementation of assistance from the Funds at the level of the CSFs and specific measures.

Together with the other two structural Funds (the EAGGF and the ESF), the ERDF, created in 1975, contributes to reducing regional imbalances in the Community and attaining the five priority Objectives laid down by the 1988 reform.

While 1989 was the year in which development priorities were defined and the CSFs were adopted, and 1990 saw the negotiation and adoption of most of the measures, including 140 operational programmes and about fifty different projects, 1991 witnessed the implementation of these measures and a trend towards diversification. Many decisions involved the Community initiatives, greater use began to be made of global grants and a series of measures were launched under Article 10 of Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88. It was also the year in which the Community showed its solidarity with the new German Länder and east Berlin.

Implementation of the CSFs

In all, 99.8% of the appropriations available for 1991, i.e. ECU 6 712 million, were committed in 1991 and 98% of the payment appropriations (ECU 6 229 million) were taken up.

1. In the seven countries or parts of countries covered by Objective 1, 15 operational programmes and projects were approved in 1991, together with three global grants. ECU 4 873 million were committed, of which ECU 1 356 million related to new measures (27.83%).
2. The CSFs adopted in 1989-90 for declining industrial regions (Objective 2) gave rise to commitments in 1991 totalling ECU 1 243 million, of which ECU 147.5 million related to new measures (11.87%). These CSFs expired on 31 December 1991. However, the 60 regions eligible for the first phase continue to be eligible by virtue of a Commission Decision of 30 April 1991, and the new CSFs for 1992-93 were approved by the Commission on 18 December 1991, with a further allocation of appropriations. ECU 3 296 million have been allocated to measures during the new period (1992-93), broken down into ECU 2 520 million for the ERDF and ECU 775 million for the ESF.
3. With regard to the areas eligible under Objective 5(b), most of the 61 OPs presented by the nine Member States concerned were approved during the year and the annual commitment of the ERDF amounted to ECU 360.77 million.

In addition, the Monitoring Committees fulfilled their role during 1991 and in most countries reprogramming allowed adjustments to be made to the CSFs and OPs to take account of progress in actual implementation of the measures.

Community initiatives

During 1991 a large number of programmes (70) were approved, relating to the initiatives Rechar, Envireg, Stride, Regis, Regen, Telematique, Prisma and Interreg and involving fields as diverse as research, technology transfer, cooperation and the provision of services to businesses, advanced telecommunications equipment and services and the environment. ECU 685.38 million were committed¹.

However, the programmes as initially presented had to be amended substantially because requests for funding outstripped available resources.

Global grants

Based on real implementation of the principles of subsidiarity and partnership and administered by an intermediary body, whether public, private or mixed, in close contact with the realities of the local situation concerned, the global grant mechanism was finally chosen during 1991 by Italy (Puglia: ECU 2.8 million), Spain (Murcia: ECU 18.9 million; Andalucia: ECU 45.7 million) and France for the implementation of the Community initiative Stride in Objective 2 regions (ECU 17.3 million).

Direct involvement of the social and economic forces concerned should provide active support to SMEs through measures to assist craft businesses and the provision of services to firms, the development of industrial estates or the promotion of innovation.

Article 10 (Regulation (EEC) No 4254/88)

Work continued on studies and the gathering of information to follow up the document "Europe 2000: outlook for the development of the Community's territory", approved by the Commission on 16 October 1991 and constituting the first stage in defining the spatial organization of the Community's territory. Measures to further cooperation between regions have also been implemented: financing has been granted for 21 projects proposed under the Recite programme and eight new urban pilot projects have been approved for the renovation of urban areas, illustrating the will to improve coordination between economic and environmental objectives.

¹ Not including ECU 124.08 million for the Leader initiative.

The new Länder and east Berlin

In 1991 the five new Länder and east Berlin became eligible for structural assistance with the adoption on 13 March of a CSF involving a Community financial contribution of ECU 3 billion, 50% of which is to come from the ERDF and the approval, on 26 March, of seven programmes to reduce structural disparities and promote economic convergence.

Opinion of the Committee for the Development and Conversion of Regions

The Committee adopted a favourable opinion on this document on 16 December 1992.