



Community initiatives Use of the budget reserve

On 4 October 1995 the European Commission decided on the allocation of the budget reserve for Community initiatives, estimated at ECU 1665 million. The result of this allocation will be a new initiative and increased support for some existing ones.

ECU 415 million has been allocated to the establishment of a third strand to the Interreg II initiative (**Interreg II C**), for the purposes of:

- improving international cooperation on water management and controlling floods (ECU 165 million) and droughts (ECU 150 million);
- helping to achieve a better balance in spatial development planning on a European scale (ECU 100 million). Specifically, this will involve measures to increase the territorial impact of trans-European networks, to develop coastal areas and areas with natural handicaps (mountains, arctic regions), to promote environmentally sound integrated economic development measures and to develop the human resources that are an integral part of transnational cooperation.

- Since the Leader initiative has been so successful, **Leader II** will receive an additional ECU 230 million which will be used to support local integrated development initiatives under programmes already adopted, taking account of the recent Commission communication on a European strategy for encouraging local job-creation initiatives.

The four Community initiatives planned for 1994-97 for regions undergoing industrial conversion (**Konver**, **Rechar II**, **Resider II** and **Retex**) will be extended to 1999 and allocated an additional ECU 380 million.

Two of the three existing strands of the Employment initiative will receive additional support (ECU 100 million for Youthstart and ECU 100 million for Now). No change has been

made to the amount allocated to the third strand, **Horizon**, and from now on it will be devoted entirely to the disabled. A fourth strand, **Inclusion**, with ECU 100 million, has been created to support the integration of people in danger of social exclusion and to combat racism.

A new strand is also being added to the Adapt initiative (**Adapt-Bis**: Building the Information Society), and has been allocated ECU 170 million to support job-creation related to changes created by the information society and to increase European competitiveness in the relevant social and economic spheres.

The **Urban** initiative is to receive an additional ECU 140 million to so that further assistance can be provided in districts in difficulty, in particular in medium-sized towns, with an emphasis on equal opportunities, combating long-term unemployment and improving the urban environment.

Finally, the **Pesca** initiative has been allocated an additional ECU 30 million to deal with the recent deterioration of the situation in the fisheries sector.

In operational terms, the Commission does not wish these new allocations to give rise to lengthy procedures. The budgets for the initiatives will be increased under programmes that have already been established or are currently being negotiated, with the exceptions of Interreg II C and the additional allocation to Urban, since their objectives will involve launching new measures (new types of activity in the case of Interreg II C, new towns in the case of Urban). The new strands of the Employment initiative (Inclusion) and the Adapt initiative (Adapt-Bis) will be implemented for the period 1997-99, but the total numbers of operational programmes per country for the Employment and Adapt initiatives should not increase.

Adoption of eleven new programmes

On 14, 18 and 27 September, the Commission approved part-financing by the Structural Funds of eleven new Community initiative programmes:

Area concerned		Community initiative	Total public investment (ECU million at 1995 values)	Structural Fund contribution (ECU million at 1995 values)
B	Vlaanderen	Konver II	11.800	4.800
D	Niedersachsen	Rechar II	3.300	1.650
	Sachsen	Rechar II	47.310	29.800
	Sachsen-Anhalt	Rechar II	29.603	19.223
F	Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur	Resider II	15.060	5.182
	Rhône-Alpes	Resider II	5.199	2.177
I	Sardegna	Rechar II	1.560	0.780
NL	Amsterdam (Bijlmermeer)	Urban	18.766	4.650
	Den Haag (Schilderswijk)	Urban	37.498	4.650
B / NL	Euregio Scheldemond	Interreg II	20.507	11.090
D / F	PAMINA (Südpfalz, Mittel Oberrhein, Nord de l'Alsace)	Interreg II	21.668	11.055

Jacques Santer and Monika Wulf-Mathies address the Committee of the Regions

The President of the Commission and the Member of the Commission with special responsibility for regional policies both addressed the plenary meeting of the Committee of the Regions on 21 September.

Mr Santer, addressing the Committee for the first time, emphasized its role in the proper functioning of European democracy bridging the gap between Brussels and the citizens of Europe. Speaking of the revision of the Maastricht Treaty, he noted that the Committee had opted to strengthen its advisory function, rather than for a co-legislative role, and said that this choice had been wise and

realistic, affirming the importance of the Committee's role in advising not only the Council and the Commission, but also Parliament.

Ms Wulf-Mathies raised the subject of the information society and stated that the role of regional policy in that sphere was to avoid the creation of a "two-speed society". She said that the ideal of the European information society would be achieved when individuals, enterprises and organizations in every region had access to information networks, could afford them and would be qualified to use them efficiently and profitably.

New publications

On the eve of the Prague conference on the future of the wider Europe, the Commission published the proceedings of the Dresden Conference of November 1993 on the same subject (Catalogue No CX-85-94-931-C, available in French, English and German, price: ECU 7.)
Contact: DG XVI F2, F. Martinetto, Fax: +32 2 230 49 15.

As part of its regional development studies, the Commission recently published "Cohesion and the development challenge facing the lagging regions" (Catalogue No CX-87-95-466-2A-C, price: ECU 9.)
Contact: DG XVI F2, L. Nigri, Fax: +32 2 230 49 15.

Eurostat has published two technical brochures of interest to those responsible for regional statistics:

- a description of the content of the "Regio" regional data bank (Catalogue No CA-88-95-515-C, available in French, English and German, price: ECU 7.)
 - an explanation of the concepts GVA (gross value added) and GFCF (gross fixed capital formation) which is useful for establishing regional accounting methods (Catalogue No CA-87-95-943-C, available in all Community languages, price: ECU 7.)
- Contact: Eurostat, G. Decand, Fax: +352 4301 34029.

The Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) has just published, with the Commission's help, a practical guide to cross-border cooperation. This paper, currently available in English, is intended to assist those working on the planning and implementation of cross-border projects. Contact: LACE (Observatory for cross-border cooperation), Fax: +49 2562 1639.



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