

East of INTERREG

At its meeting on 6 April, the European Commission adopted a draft regulation designed to create a cross-border cooperation programme between the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Community's Member States.

The scheme has been sent to the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions for their information. The PHARE Management Committee had already given its opinion on the scheme in advance of final adoption by the Commission. Launched on the initiative of the European Parliament, the new scheme will be included under the PHARE programme and will have a 1994 budget of 150 million ecus.

Its aims mainly draw inspiration from the Community's own cross-border cooperation programmes. The programme seeks to promote cooperation with the regions of Eastern Europe which border the Community, so as to help them to overcome development problems arising from their particular position in the national economy. The scheme also encourages the setting up and running of cooperation networks and the linking of these networks with those in the Community (ECOS, Ouverture).

The process of identifying joint projects has already begun through meetings between representatives of the countries of Eastern Europe, the bordering Member States and the European Commission.

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A Local Europe

The first European Parliament/Local Authorities conference, which was held in Brussels on 6-8 April 1994, adopted a closing declaration which contained a series of proposals for the revision of the Maastricht Treaty, which is due in 1996.

For those who attended the conference, the principle of subsidiarity, which is recognised as a vertical form of power reaching from the citizen up to Community level, should be redefined and extended to make explicit

reference to regional and local authorities.

The principle of local autonomy should be explicitly recognised as a general legal principle and regional and local authorities must be able to bring cases directly before the European Community's Court of Justice.

The conference also called on the Committee of the Regions to begin a process of reflection on its own role, in order to ensure appropriate representation of the differing levels of local and regional authorities.

Correction: Enlargement

The table in the article 'Enlargement and Regional Policy' in the previous edition of InfoRegio News (No. 3, April 1994) unfortunately contained an error. The column headed 'Obj. 2 and 5b' should have read 'Obj. 2 to 5b', as it covers all the allocations under Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5a and 5b. Please accept our apologies.

Decisions under the cohesion financial instrument

On 14 April, the Commission made its first 1994 commitments from the cohesion financial instrument, consisting of 94 million ecus for 20 environment projects in Greece, and 41 million ecus for three transport projects and six environment projects in Ireland.

The temporary instrument was set up in April 1993 to use the sums which the Edinburgh European Council allocated to the Cohesion Fund before it could be definitively established. The Cohesion Fund proper will probably come into effect in the next few months. The Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions recently gave their opinions on the European Commission's draft regulation. The European Parliament still has to give its opinion before the definitive regulation is adopted by the Council.

This new fund, which is written into the Maastricht Treaty, joins with the Structural Funds (ERDF, ESF, EAGGF (Guidance Section)) in the framework of the policy of economic and social cohesion. It is earmarked for environment or trans-European transport projects. Over the period 1993-99, it will total 15.15 billion ecus (in 1992 prices). Its main features are as follows: beneficiaries with a GNP per capita of less than 90% of the Community average (Spain, Greece, Portugal and Ireland); high levels of intervention (between 80-85% of public or comparable spending); macro-economic conditionality, underlining the link between the Cohesion Fund and economic and monetary union.

Fourteen programmes for Portugal

On 25 February and 4 March, the European Commission approved 14 Operational Programmes implementing the Community Support Framework covering the whole of Portugal for 1994 to 1999, which will receive almost 14 billion ecus of Structural Funding.

The programmes adopted can be divided into three categories:

- six sectoral Operational Programmes
- one non-regional Programme to promote regional potential
- seven region-specific Operational Programmes.

Operational Programme (in millions of ecus)	Total cost	Structural Funds
Knowledge & innovation	2 257	1 675
Professional training & employment	1 903	1 385
Development support infrastructure	3 914	1 987
Modernisation of the economic fabric	11 679	4 319
Environment & urban regeneration	834	559
Health & social integration	940	705
Promotion of regional potential	1 232	595
Norte	721	537
Centro	490	362
Lisboa e Vale do Tejo	517	382
Alentejo	251	182
Algarve	102	76
Açores	858	616
Madeira	665	369

Planning

Urban Planning Awards

In 1994, the European Commission and the European Council of Town Planners will be awarding the second European Urban and Regional Planning Prizes.

The deadline for submitting applications is 31 May 1994.

For further information, contact Judy Woollett, tel.: +44 71 636 9107, fax: +44 71 323 1582.

Publications

Two new publications in the series 'Regional Development Studies' have recently appeared. Study No. 9, 'Financial engineering techniques in regions covered by Objectives 1, 2 and 5b of the Community regional policies' focuses on risk capital.

Study No. 10, 'Interregional and cross-border cooperation in Europe' summarises the proceedings of the conference on the subject which was held on 14 and 15 December 1992.

These publications are available (in English only) from EUR-OP, Rue Mercier, L-2985 Luxembourg, tel.: +352 499 28 2451, fax: +352 48 8857.

Reference for study No. 9: ISBN 92-826-6168-7

Reference for study No. 10: ISBN 92-826-6870-3



European Commission
Directorate-General for Regional Policies