



Objective 2 and employment

On 14 November 1997 the Commission adopted a communication in which it analyses the content and socio-economic impact, in particular on employment, of the industrial restructuring programmes to be financed by the Structural Funds between 1997 and 1999. Here are the main points.

The figures available show that almost 880 000 jobs are likely to be created or safeguarded by the programmes under Objective 2 (1997-99), two-thirds of these in France, Spain and the United Kingdom. As recommended by the Commission and national ministers responsible for regional development, job creation has top priority in these programmes.

In concrete terms, the contents of the programmes can be summarised under four headings:

- support for growth and competitiveness in companies, in particular small businesses (48% of proposed total expenditure)
- training and employment aid, including schemes to familiarise workers with advanced technologies (34%)
- modernising and improving degraded industrial and urban areas (12%)
- promoting green tourism, clean technologies, recycling of waste water and industrial solid waste, etc. (6%).

In the first half of 1997, the Commission agreed one CSF (Community Support Framework) for declining industrial regions in Spain and 65 SPDs (Single Programming Documents) covering all the other regions of the Union which are eligible under Objective 2. As a reminder, the regions eligible under

Objective 2 between 1997 and 1999 account for the same share of the Union's population, i.e. 16.4%, as during the previous programming period (1994-96). Overall, the 1997-99 Objective 2 programmes will receive a Community contribution of ECU 9 148 billion, which includes ECU 859 million not used in 1994-96 and consequently carried over to 1997-99.

The full text of the Commission's communication (COM(97) 524) can be found at the Inforegio site: <http://www.inforegio.org/wbdoc/docoffic/communic/obj2/home_en.htm>. It can also be obtained on request by fax at +32-2-230.49.15.

Access to programmes

Some of the programmes themselves can also be found on the Inforegio website, which contains the complete texts of 17 Objective 2 SPDs for the period 1997-99:

- all the Swedish, Finnish, Austrian and Luxembourg programmes
- three programmes in Italy (Liguria, Piemonte, Toscana)
- two programmes in the Netherlands (Groningen-Drenthe, Zuid-Oost Brabant)
- one programme in Belgium (Meuse-Vesdre).

By the end of January 1998, all the industrial conversion programmes for 1997-99 will also be accessible on-line:

<http://www.inforegio.org/wbdoc/docoffic/official/doin/doin_en.htm>

Extension of the Peace programme

On 26 November the Commission published a communication in which it conducts a first review of the Community's Peace programme for Northern Ireland and calls for it to be extended to cover 1998 and 1999.

One of the main features of this programme is its largely decentralised implementation. Only 43% of the assistance is managed by ministries, mainly for infrastructure and economic development, while 40% of the assistance is managed by non-governmental organisations at the grassroots level and 17% by local partners (local authorities, businesses, etc.).

In order to continue the current schemes, the Commission has asked the European Parliament to agree to an

additional contribution of ECU 100 million for 1998 and the same sum again for 1999.

Readers will remember that the purpose of the Peace programme is to promote reconciliation and economic and social recovery in Northern Ireland and in the six counties of the Republic of Ireland bordering it. The programme was originally designed to cover the period 1994-97 and was allocated a Community contribution of ECU 300 million.

The full text of this communication (COM(97) 642) can be found on the Inforegio website: http://www.inforegio.org/wbdoc/docoffic/communic/peace/home_en.htm. It can also be obtained on request by fax to +32-2-230.49.15.

Spatial development: Terra projects and pilot schemes

The Commission recently decided to provide support under Article 10 of the ERDF Regulation for 18 projects and pilot cooperation schemes in the field of spatial development.

Terra projects

The Terra projects comprise 14 collaboration schemes among regional and local authorities faced with similar kinds of problem (fragile coastal areas and river basins, remote rural areas, endangered areas of natural or cultural heritage). These projects will receive a total of ECU 20 million and have been selected from 142 proposals sent in to the Commission as a result of the call for tenders published in April 1996.

Pilot schemes

The pilot schemes involve four larger-scale operations proposed directly by Member State governments: Each one will receive assistance from the ERDF of ECU 5 million.

A list of these projects and pilot schemes in French, English and German is available on the Inforegio site: http://www.inforegio.org/wbpro/prord/prordi/prdib_en.htm and can also be obtained on request by fax at +32-2-230.49.15.

In brief

Exchange of experience on ERDF funding

On 13 and 14 November, the region of Basilicata (Italy) and the Commission jointly organised a seminar at Matera on the procedures used for implementing programmes financed by the ERDF in Spain, Ireland and

Italy. This comparison of different approaches helped to clarify the strengths and weaknesses of the various implementation models in these countries. The main contributions to this seminar can be found on the Internet at <http://www.regione.basilicata.it/sem-i.htm> or obtained on request by fax at +32-2-230.49.15.



European Commission
Directorate-General for Regional Policy and Cohesion

CX-AB-97-012-EN-C