



## Informal European Council meeting in Glasgow

**On 8 and 9 June, Glasgow hosted an informal session of the Council of the European Union at which the ministers for regional policy discussed the future reform of the Structural Funds, while the ministers for spatial development dealt with the draft European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), as well as urban issues.**

### Reform of the Structural Funds

The ministers supported the proposal to reduce the number of priority Objectives under the Structural Funds, as well as the number of Community Initiatives, to three. They welcomed the idea of integrated programming spread over 7 years (2000-06). They affirmed the principles of partnership and additionality for implementing the Funds. They underlined the need for strong and effective management and control systems, as well as tighter arrangements for monitoring and evaluation.

Despite the national concerns expressed in specific areas, broad consensus emerged in Glasgow on the need for Structural Fund resources to be concentrated on the regions most in need of them and on the fact that the simplification and decentralisation of the implementation of the Funds must be accompanied by tighter control and increased financial responsibility.

They agreed lastly on the importance of rapid progress in reforming the Funds. A week later, this view was confirmed by the Heads of State

and of Government, who indicated in the conclusions of the European Council in Cardiff that substantial progress would have to be made at the European Council in Vienna next December and that overall political agreement on the structural policies would have to be reached by March 1999.

### European Spatial Development Perspective

In Glasgow the Ministers reaffirmed their undertaking to present the final version of the ESDP at the informal Council in May 1999 and agreed that this version should reflect:

- the whole range of national consultations now taking place, as well as the views of the European institutions;
- the results of the seminars the Commission is organising on spatial development in Europe (see table overleaf);
- the initial lessons from the series of studies the Commission launched recently on the trends and issues in regional development planning;
- new aspects of the spatial development impact of the future enlargement of the European Union.

The ministers recommended that the pre-accession countries be given the opportunity of expressing their views on the ESDP.

For the record, the text of the first official draft ESDP is still available on the Inforegio web site: <[http://www.inforegio.org/wbdoc/docoffic/official/sdec/sdec\\_en.htm](http://www.inforegio.org/wbdoc/docoffic/official/sdec/sdec_en.htm)>.

## Urban issues

The ministers discussed this topic on the basis of a document from the UK presidency entitled "Urban Exchange Initiative"; which describes various forms of good practice for an integrated approach to urban development. (A copy of this document can be obtained on request by fax at: +32.2.230 49 15).

Monika Wulf-Mathies, European Commissioner, announced in Glasgow that the Commission will shortly be presenting an action plan for cities that will seek to include urban issues in the various Community policies, especially regional policy. This topic will be covered in depth at the Urban Forum which the Commission is organising in Vienna on 26 and 27 November. (Information on the Urban Forum can be obtained on request by fax at: +32.2.296 60 03.)  
<[http://www.inforegio.org/wbnews/newage/agend\\_en.htm](http://www.inforegio.org/wbnews/newage/agend_en.htm)>

## Seminars on regional development planning

To broaden and deepen the debate on the draft ESDP, the European Commission is organising eight seminars between April and December on matters concerned with

regional development planning in Europe. Four of these meetings have now taken place and four are still to come. Further information can be requested by fax at: +32.2.296 32 71.

Topic of seminar	Date	Place
Launch of debate on European regional development planning	27-28 April 1998	Berlin (D)
Transport and telecommunications	25-26 May 1998	Naples (I)
Europe's network of cities	22-23 June 1998	Lille (F)
Water management	2-3 July 1998	Thessaloniki (GR)
Knowledge as a factor in development	17-18 Sept. 1998	Manchester (UK)
The partnership between town and country	15-16 Oct. 1998	Salamanca (E)
Environmentally sensitive areas	26-27 Oct. 1998	Gothenburg (S)
Enlargement	25-26 Nov. 1998	Vienna (A)

## In brief

### Europartenariat

On 11 and 12 June, Apeldoorn (NL) welcomed almost 2000 European and international small firms to the 18th Europartenariat event. The next Europartenariat event will take place in Valencia (E) on 12 and 13 November and the following one in Vienna (A) on 10 and 11 May 1999. (Further information can be requested by fax at: +32.2.296 24 73).

### Ecos-Ouverture II

On 14 September, an information meeting will be held in Brussels for all project sponsors preparing applications for the 1999-2001 phase of the Ecos-Ouverture II programme. (Further information and registration details can be requested by fax at: +32.2.299 56 01 or by e-mail: [ecos-ouverture@fmb.dg16.cec.be](mailto:ecos-ouverture@fmb.dg16.cec.be))

### Reform of the Structural Funds

The proposals for the Regulations to govern the Structural Funds between 2000 and 2006 were published in Official Journal C 176 of 9 June. These can also be found on the Inforegio web site <[http://www.inforegio.org/wbpro/agenda2000/regul\\_en.htm](http://www.inforegio.org/wbpro/agenda2000/regul_en.htm)> or can be obtained on request by fax at: +32 2.230 49 15.

### First birthday for <http://www.inforegio.org>

The Inforegio web site was set up a year ago. Each month it is consulted by over 10 000 visitors. To learn more about the profile and expectations of these users, an on-line survey will be open on the site till the end of September. <[http://www.inforegio.org/study\\_en.htm](http://www.inforegio.org/study_en.htm)> It is still possible to join the Inforegio web site mailing list in order to receive automatically by e-mail details of new items on the site and the Inforegio News monthly newsletter. <[http://www.inforegio.org/wbcont/maillist/maill\\_en.htm](http://www.inforegio.org/wbcont/maillist/maill_en.htm)>

