



European job challenge

On 29 April 1998 Monika Wulf-Mathies, the Commissioner for Regional Policy and Cohesion, presented awards for the "European job challenge" competition to the following three projects:

- The "Agencies to promote new business start-ups" in North Rhine-Westphalia (D) in the category of "Industrial recovery and regeneration",
- "The Entrepreneurship Programme" in Western Scotland (UK) in the category of "Small and medium-sized business start-ups and self-employment",
- "Project Matching/CC50" in Groningen (NL) in the category of "New business and technology strategies".

This competition was launched by the Commission in June 1997 with the aim of highlighting projects part-financed by the Structural Funds which have been particularly effective in creating jobs in declining industrial areas (Objective 2).

The three winners were on a shortlist of 10 projects selected by a jury of experts from the 84 proposals sent in to the Commission.

http://www.inforegio.org/wbpro/prord/prords/job/job_en.htm

Regional development planning

The Commission has recently approved funding for four pilot schemes in the field of regional development planning. These schemes are designed to develop shared solutions to problems in transnational geographical areas encountering similar problems. They are being funded under Article 10 of the ERDF Regulation and will each receive a Community contribution of ECU 5 million.

- The pilot scheme for the "Northern periphery" involves three Member States (FIN, S, UK) with the purpose in particular of supporting the development of commercial and social services in sparsely populated areas.
- The pilot scheme called "Doorways to the Mediterranean" supports projects aiming to catalogue, manage and develop the cultural heritage of Spain and Portugal.

- The pilot scheme called "Archi-Med" is directed towards transport communications, safeguarding the natural and cultural heritage and developing high-quality tourism in Greece and southern Italy.
- Finally, the pilot scheme on the "Alpine development area" tackles both tourism and the management of the natural and cultural heritage in the Alpine areas of Germany, Austria and Italy.

These regional planning schemes join the 14 programmes already adopted under the Community Initiative Interreg II C (ECU 416.6 million) and the 15 projects under 'Terra' (ECU 20 million).

http://www.inforegio.org/wbpro/prord/prordi/prdig_en.htm

Reprogramming under Objective 1 in Italy

On 28 April 1998 the Italian authorities and the Commission agreed on the reallocation of about ECU 700 million from the Structural Funds as a result of the mid-term review of the Community Support Framework (CSFs) for the Mezzogiorno under Objective 1. The additional funding, which comes mostly from programmes unable to take up the funds they were originally forecast to need, will benefit both new programmes and those existing programmes which have proved especially efficient.

More specifically, the available funds totalling ECU 698 million will come from the following sources:

- ECU 275 million from those programmes which have made the least progress to date,
- ECU 255 million from CSF resources not yet allocated to programmes;
- ECU 168 million from the 1998 indexation bonus available to the CSF.

The principal recipients of these reprogrammed funds are as follows:

- ECU 98 million allocated to the regions of Basilicata and Molise, which have displayed considerable management ability;
- ECU 50 million reallocated to local development in Sicily;
- ECU 140 million to be devoted to funding a new programme which the Italian authorities are about to present to implement a number of territorial employment pacts in the Mezzogiorno;
- ECU 100 million to go to the programme concerned with security in the Mezzogiorno (the fight against crime).
- ECU 73 million for the Objective 1 "industry" programme.
- ECU 50 million for the Objective 1 "airports" programme.
- Just under ECU 50 million for various Objective 1 training programmes.
- ECU 100 million to be transferred to eligible areas in Umbria and Marche affected by the recent earthquakes.

In brief

The 1999 budget

The budget of the Structural Funds in 1999 may increase by 16.6% compared with 1998, while the total Community budget is likely to increase by 3.4%. This is at least what emerges from the preliminary draft budget that the Commission has just presented to the European Parliament.

This budget will be the last of the 1993-99 financial period (the "Delors II" package) and will be the first to be drawn up in euros. According to the Commission's preliminary draft, the total level of Community spending will probably come to 1.11% of the combined GNP of the fifteen Member States, representing a saving of about EUR 13 billion in terms of the ceiling set in the 'financial perspective'.

The new regulations in 11 languages

The text of the proposed Regulations to govern the Structural Funds between 2000 and 2006 (explanatory memorandum, the general regulation, the ERDF regulation) and a comparative analysis of the current Regulations for 1994-99 with the texts proposed for 2000-06 are now available in the eleven official languages of the Union. They can be obtained by fax from +32-2-230.49.15 or via the Inforegio website:
<http://www.inforegio.org/wbpro/agenda2000/regul_en.htm>
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg16/document/doc1g_en.htm>

Regional development planning in eastern Europe

The Estonian authorities and the Phare programme are organising a conference on 15 June in Tartu devoted to regional development planning in Estonia and the other Baltic States.

Information and registration:

EU Phare Regional Development Project

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Ecos-Ouverture

The Commission is organising a meeting in Budapest, from 22 to 24 June, for local and regional authorities involved in the Ecos-Ouverture programme. Readers will recall that this is a programme to fund inter-regional cooperation projects with regions outside the European Union, mainly in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe but also in the newly independent states of the ex-USSR and in the Mediterranean sphere.

Information and registration:

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