

**Newsletter No. 57**

October 1998 - EN

**The 1997 Cohesion Fund Report**

**On 13 October, the Commission adopted its report on the work of the Cohesion Fund in 1997. During the first five years, ECU 10.76 billion, almost two thirds of the total funding available, has been committed in the four beneficiary Member States. The breakdown among them lies at the mid-point of the ranges laid down in the Regulation: Spain 55%; Portugal 18%; Greece 18% and Ireland 9%.**

Most of the assistance provided by the Fund in 1997 was for managing and checking a large number of projects approved in earlier years, which absorb the bulk of the financial resources. The increase in the proportion of the budget going to environmental projects (see Inforegio News No. 49) means that a 50/50 balance with transport projects (which originally absorbed a larger part of the appropriations) has almost been achieved. Another feature is the increased funding for rail transport.

**Spain.** New environmental projects include facilities to improve the quality of water in the Ebro at Logroño and in the Arga at Pamplona and the laying-out of a park along the Móstoles near Madrid. In the transport sector, projects which the Commission decided to support include completion of the Rías Bajas motorway in Galicia, the Madrid-Valencia road and construction of the first two sections of the high-speed rail line from Madrid to Barcelona.

**Portugal.** Fifteen new environmental projects were approved, covering the protection of coastal areas, the disposal of solid waste and waste-water drainage and treatment. Port infrastructure is currently being part-financed at Sines, Lisbon, Setúbal and Leixões, as are a new section of the Lisbon-Madrid motorway,

the Pampilhosa-Quintans rail link and the modernisation of Funchal airport on Madeira.

**Greece.** During 1997, 27 environmental projects were approved, including improved systems for waste treatment and water supply in Athens and waste-disposal projects in Thessaloniki and Katerini. Assistance to transport infrastructure went mainly to the Via Egnatia, which crosses Greece from the port of Igoumenitsa to the Turkish border, the Pathe motorway (Patras-Athens-Thessaloniki-Evzoni), Thriassio station and the Thriassio-Elefsis-Corinth railway line.

**Ireland.** Support was provided for projects to treat water drawn from lakes and rivers and for improvements to the distribution systems in Dublin, Waterford, Cork, Limerick and Wexford. In the transport sector, support was provided for the Dublin ringroad, for several major roads radiating from the capital (to Belfast, Cork and Limerick) and for a number of railway lines, some of which (Dublin-Belfast and Dublin-Cork) have already been completed.

Copies of the report are available on request by fax to: +32 2 296 60 03.

**Agenda 2000**

The Commission has proposed retaining the Cohesion Fund in its present form for the period 2000-06 with a few adjustments (see Inforegio News No. 51). The draft regulations are available on the Interegio site:

<[http://inforegio.cec.eu.int/wbpro/agenda2000/regul\\_en.htm](http://inforegio.cec.eu.int/wbpro/agenda2000/regul_en.htm)>

# Conference on the territorial pacts for employment

How is it possible, given the variety of economic, social, cultural, legislative and institutional backgrounds, to adapt "good practice" on the creation of economic activity and jobs for use elsewhere?

That was the main question considered at Turku (Finland) on 8, 9 and 10 October, during the first exchange of views on local development and employment organised by the European Commission.

On this occasion, the coordinators of the territorial pacts, whose strategy currently covers 1998-99, identified a number of these "good practices" in all the Member States which could be used as models.

The conference, which followed the pattern of the Directoria seminars on inter-regional cooperation, covered 82 of the 89 pacts and was attended by 28 managers of model projects. Over 700 bilateral meetings were scheduled.

The success of the formula is demonstrated by the large number of unscheduled meetings which were organised on-the-spot. Exchanges took place broadly at two levels: some pact coordinators wanted simply to adjust their strategy, mainly as regards promoting the territorial partnership, while others sought the transfer of operational instruments, which could be used immediately (mainly in the areas of the establishment of firms, platforms for services, venture capital and the information society).

The Commission announced that it was considering whether extra finance could be provided to develop this type of transfer of good practice and to provide links with the next programming period of the Structural Funds.

Information on the territorial pacts for employment is available on the Internet: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/pacts> or on request by fax to: +32 2 296 24 73.

## In brief

### The Future of Cities

On 26 and 27 November, the Urban Forum will be held in Vienna (Austria). The Commission is organising this event to promote the development of urban policies in Europe and continue the discussions, which began in 1997, on the importance of cities and the social, economic and environmental challenges which they face. It will present the document "Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework for Action", which includes policy priorities and proposals for action in urban areas. Over 600 representatives of towns, regions, national authorities, specialist organisations and the private sector will have the opportunity to comment on the proposals at this event.

Further information on this event may be obtained on request by fax to: +32 2 296 60 03 or on the Internet <http://inforegio.cec.eu.int/urban/forum>

### Europartenariat

The European Commission has entrusted the organisation of the third Europartenariat to be held in Spain, on 12 and 13 November, to the Valencia Autonomous Community, the

Region of Murcia and the Balearic Islands. More than 500 small and medium-sized enterprises from these regions will come to Valencia to propose partnerships in the commercial, technological and financial field to visiting companies.

The next Europartenariats will be held in Vienna (Austria) in May 1999 and in Potsdam (Germany) in November 1999. Further information is available on request by fax: +32 2 296 24 73 or on the Internet: <http://www.europartenariat98.com>

### Thesis competition

The Committee of the Regions is organising a competition for theses on the topic "Fighting economic and social disparities in Europe: how can regions and cities contribute to a more balanced EU?". The competition concerns doctoral theses presented by nationals of the EU, aged between 25 and 35. Applications and theses must be sent before 11 January 1999 to the Studies Department of the Committee of the Regions, ARD 619, rue Belliard 79-81, 1040 Brussels, Belgium. Further information is available on request by fax: +32 2 282 23 30.



European Commission  
Directorate-General for Regional Policy and Cohesion

CX-AB-98-010-EN-C