

Structural assistance 2000-06: Information and publicity

Extracts from the Regulation laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds 2000-06

Article 34:

"... the managing authority ... shall be responsible for ... compliance with the obligations concerning information and publicity..."

Article 46:

"... the managing authority shall be responsible for informing:

- (a) potential final beneficiaries, trade and professional bodies, the economic and social partners, bodies promoting equality between men and women and the relevant non-governmental organisations about the opportunities afforded by the assistance;
- (b) the general public about the role played by the Community in the assistance concerned and its results."

On 24 November the Commission adopted a draft Regulation on information and publicity measures to be taken by the Member States over the period 2000-06.

The aim of this regulation is to provide clearer information to the beneficiaries of the Structural Funds and to raise public awareness of the role played by the European Union in regional development.

This implementing regulation is based on Article 46 of the general regulation governing the Structural Funds, which makes the Member States primarily responsible for information and publicity. A key provision is the proposal of a common methodology and approach which respect the particular situation of each country.

The introduction of a "communications plan" is one of the key components of this regulation. The information and publicity measures put in place by the Member States will be presented in a structured form for each Operational programme or single programming document, clearly setting out the aims and target groups, the content and strategy of the measures, and an indicative budget.

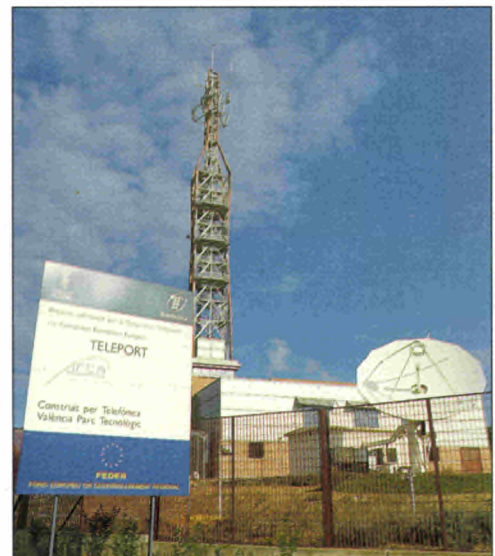
So that the Commission can fully discharge its duty to provide coordination and support, the programme management authorities are also requested to designate a person responsible for coordinating and monitoring communications measures.

As in the past, billboards mentioning the Union's financial contribution and displaying the European emblem will have to be erected on all project sites.

The Commission hopes that the Member States, programme managers and local representatives will play an active part in circulating and disseminating information to the various potential beneficiaries and partners of the European Structural Funds.

The text of the new regulation is available on Inforegio:

<http://inforegio.cec.eu.int/information>
or on request by fax: +32 2 296 60 03.



New Objective 2: approval of the areas eligible for 2000-2006

The Commission recently took decisions of principle on a first series of lists of areas undergoing economic and social conversion which will benefit under Objective 2 of the Structural Funds in 2000-06.

The lists concern Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland and Denmark.

The lists were drawn up by the Commission in close cooperation with the Member States, with the Commission analysing their proposals in the light of the provisions of the Regulation.

It first had to check compliance with the eligible population ceilings by country. The proposed lists had also to cover the four categories of areas envisaged: industrial, rural and urban areas and those dependent on fishing. Lastly, each proposed area had to be sufficiently large to permit integrated strategic programming.

After consultation with the Committees made up of representatives of the Member States, the Commission

will definitively adopt the lists, which will remain in force until the end of 2006. Member States will then have four months to put forward their regional programming documents. Adjustments may be made at the end of 2003 to cope with unforeseen crises in non-eligible areas.

Seven other Member States are also concerned with Objective 2: the United Kingdom, Spain, Austria, Sweden, Italy, France and Luxembourg. Their lists should be approved in the coming weeks. In all, 18% of the population of the Union will benefit from assistance under Objective 2.

The areas eligible under Objectives 2 and 5b in 1994-99 which are not included in the new Objective 2 lists will receive degressive transitional support until 2005 in order to consolidate the progress achieved.

The maps of the eligible areas approved by the Commission are available on Inforegio: <http://inforegio.cec.eu.int/news> or on request by fax: +32 2 296 60 03.

| | Population covered | Structural Funds (in €) |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Belgium | 1,269,000 | 368,000,000 |
| Denmark | 538,000 | 156,000,000 |
| Germany | 10,296,000 | 2,984,000,000 |
| The Netherlands | 2,333,000 | 676,000,000 |
| Finland | 1,582,000 | 459,000,000 |

Annual report of the Structural Funds 1998

As the penultimate year of the 1994-99 programming period, programme implementation in 1998 was both consolidated and speeded up. Acceleration affected both the national initiative programmes (priority Objectives) and the Community Initiative programmes. Few new programmes were adopted but many amendments were made, mainly as a result of the indexing of assistance or financial reprogramming.

The report sets out in details the main points of the work of the Funds in each Member State and also provides

examples of local development projects. This topic, considered throughout the report, is defined as a development process based on the integrated action of the various parties engaged "on the ground". The Commission considers that local development measures account for about 10% of structural assistance.

The complete text of the report can be downloaded in 11 official languages from Inforegio: http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/wbdoc/docoffic/official/repor_en.htm or be obtained on request by fax: +32 2 296 60 03



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