



inforegio | news

New schemes of interregional cooperation

Inforegio Panorama

The first issue of a new quarterly magazine called *'Inforegio Panorama'* has just been published. This new channel of information on regional policy "aims to provide local actors with a forum where they can exchange experience, opinions, ideas and innovative approaches", writes Guy Crauser, the Commission's Director-General for regional policy, in the preface. The contents of this first number include: interviews with Commissioner Michel Barnier and with Veijo Kavonius, Director for regional development in the Finnish Home Office, a personal account by the Director of the Development Institute for Murcia in Spain, a portrait of Lisbon, and an assessment of the Terra programme on regional planning.

Inforegio Panorama is available in the eleven official languages on the Inforegio website at http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/wbdoc/docgener/panorama/panora_en.htm and is printed in five languages (French, English, German, Spanish and Italian).

On 6 November the Commission produced a draft Communication on interregional cooperation projects covered by strand C of the Community Initiative 'Interreg III'. These activities will in future have a more precise role within the overall framework of Community regional policy: they are designed to improve the impact of large-scale regional programmes part-financed by the European Union.

The pilot schemes in interregional cooperation implemented over recent years have shown that the regional and local authorities can find it very beneficial to exchange know-how and good practice. In the 2000-06 programming period, Interreg III C will be the mainstay for promoting all forms of cooperation among the regional and local authorities in the Union. Four frameworks for action are available to regional and local authorities and equivalent bodies:

- regional development and economic and social conversion, as foreseen under Objectives 1 and 2;
- crossborder and transnational cooperation as foreseen in Interreg III A and III B;
- urban development;
- topics covered by new innovative actions (see Inforegio News 77).

This cooperation will cover all the themes contained in existing regional development programmes, such as research, technological development and small businesses, the information society, tourism, culture and employment, the entrepreneurial spirit and the environment. However, the Commission is also proposing that similar topographical conditions be taken into account to create cooperation among mountain regions, coastal areas, islands, very remote areas and sparsely populated regions.

Three types of scheme are envisaged under Interreg III C:

- mini cooperation programmes to carry out several projects involving at least three different regions;
- cooperation to carry out a single project in a particular sector;
- networks for sharing experience and transferring know-how.

All regions of the Union are eligible for Interreg III C. Regions in non-member countries, more particularly the applicant countries, are also being invited to take part. The geographical coverage of such programmes of interregional cooperation may for example start from the transnational areas defined under strand B of Interreg III but bring in other authorities outside these areas as partners.

The complete text of the draft Communication is available on the Inforegio website <http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/interreg3>. The text can also be obtained by sending your order to e-mail address regio-info@cec.eu.int or fax number +32-2-296.60.03.

New impetus for Objective 1 in France

At the end of October, the European Commission approved draft single programming documents (SPDs) for the regional development of Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana, Corsica and three districts of Nord-Pas-de-Calais under Objective 1.

The five new programmes set out the strategy and the economic and social development measures that the European Union will part-finance in each of these regions up to 2006.

Objective 1 regions	Overall budget*	Contribution of the Structural Funds *
Guadeloupe	2 000	808.5
Martinique	1 681	674
French Guiana	725	370
Corsica (transitional support)	365.6	181
Nord-Pas-de-Calais (transitional support)	1 200	389

* in million euro.

Readers will recall that Objective 1 mainly applies to the overseas departments. Corsica and the three districts in Nord-Pas-de-Calais are to receive Objective 1 assistance as "transitional support" because they no longer meet the criteria for lagging development as defined at Community level (a regional GDP less than 75% of the Community average).

The Commission will proceed to final adoption of programmes after receiving opinions from the consultative committees composed of representatives of the fifteen Member States. The programme for Réunion in the Indian Ocean, also part of programming under Objective 1 in France, was adopted in its final form on 30 October.

More detailed information on these programmes is available in a series of press releases, which can be consulted in the "News" section of the Inforegio website at <<http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/news>>.

New Objective 2 programmes

During October the Commission approved several single programming documents (SPDs) for conversion areas in four Länder of Austria, four regions of Sweden and the Åland Islands in Finland.

Austria - The four programmes for Carinthia, Upper Austria, Lower Austria and Styria are marked by strong participation of the private sector, on average 73%. Many measures set out to encourage networking among businesses and other local actors, innovation and the information society. Given the importance of tourism in these regions, measures are also included to improve the quality of services and develop new ideas.

Objective 2	Overall budget*	Contribution of the Structural Funds *
Austria		
Carinthia	457.258	85.252
Upper Austria	718.855	121.871
Lower Austria	875.777	177.167
Styria	1 138.970	215.467
Sweden		
Norra	628.906	185.000
Västra	430.740	124.500
Södra	320.208	83.500
Öarna	101.100	30.000
Finland		
Åland Islands	22.320	4.560

* in million euro.

Sweden - About 1.2 million people, i.e. 14% of the Swedish population, will benefit directly or indirectly from the new measures planned for the development and conversion of the Swedish regions of Norra, Västra, Södra and Öarna. Among these measures, the use of modern technologies, the promotion of innovation and the spread of the information society will play a key role in stimulating employment and the entrepreneurial spirit, diversifying the economy, and improving competitiveness and the level of skills.

Finland - The SPD for the Åland Islands contains many measures to promote the competitiveness of small businesses, with a view to diversifying the economy of the 6 500 or so large and small islands of this island group in the Baltic. This is the third and final Objective 2 programme in Finland (see also Inforegio News 77).

Readers will recall that the national programmes part-financed by the European Union on human resources (Objective 3), the fishing sector and rural development can also provide assistance to the Objective 2 conversion areas.

Information on all the programmes adopted by the Commission is available on the Inforegio website at: http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/wbpro/prord/pro2000_en.htm.



European Commission
Directorate-General for Regional Policy

KN-AB-00-009-EN-C