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## Regional policy: the Commission's priorities for 2002

**Three key reports on regional policy in 2000 are available on line**

In late November, three key reports on regional policy in 2000 went on line on the Eur-Lex site. The PDF (Portable Digital Format) versions of the following reports can be consulted, downloaded or printed:

- **The Twelfth Report on the Structural Funds**, covering the work of the European Regional Development Fund (Objectives 1 and 2), the European Social Fund (Objective 3) and the Community Initiatives (Urban, Interreg, Equal and Leader);
- **The Year 2000 Report on the Cohesion Fund**, which supports the four countries of the European Union whose gross domestic product is less than 90% of the Community average (Spain, Portugal, Greece and Ireland; now that its rate of economic growth has enabled it to close the gap with the rest of the Union, Ireland is no longer a "cohesion country");
- **The first Report on the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-accession (ISPA)**, which helps the countries applying for membership of the European Union to prepare for the structural policy mechanisms.

The reports are available in all eleven Community languages and are accessible from the Inforegio site, which has a link to the Eur-Lex site.

For further information, see:  
[http://www.europa.eu.int/wbdoc/docoffic/official/repor\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/wbdoc/docoffic/official/repor_en.htm)

**The Directorate-General for Regional Policy recently finalised its work programme for 2002. It contains six priorities.**

### **1. Improving the quality of Structural Funds programmes and Cohesion Fund projects**

Now that negotiations on the programmes for Objectives 1 and 2 have been completed and those on Interreg and Urban are well advanced, attention will turn to the quality of implementation. The effort will focus on evaluation of annual reports, preparation of yearly meetings with the managing authorities and mid-term reviews. Major projects will also be planned and approved.

### **2. Closing and evaluating previous measures**

By the end of 2002, all the programmes and projects approved before 1994 must be brought to a close. Many final reports and final applications for payment are expected and DG Regional Policy will undertake a large number of ex-post evaluations. Extraordinary commitments for Cohesion Fund projects should result in the settlement of payment applications and hence in a substantial reduction in unpaid commitments.

### **3. Simplifying and improving management**

The effort to simplify management and make it more efficient will be continued both in the Commission and in the regions and applicant countries. Audits will be strengthened by specific checks on declared expenditure upon the termination of assistance. Inspection visits will be organised for some projects. The introduction of new financial circuits (particularly electronic reporting) will be improved.

### **4. Preparing the future of regional policy**

The future of regional policy after 2006 will be an increasingly important item on the Commission's agenda. An initial interim report on cohesion will be submitted in January 2002. Seminars on subjects raised in the Second Cohesion Report will be organised. The work of forward-studies groups will continue as will other high-level discussions and analyses.

### **5. Meeting the challenge of enlargement**

2002 will be an important year for accession preparations. Specifically, the applicant countries will have to designate the structures that will implement the Structural Funds. The most advanced among them will also have to submit their first draft development plans. The Commission will pay particular attention to the programmes adopted under the Interreg Community Initiatives, which serve as a test-bed for the applicant countries.

### **6. Informing the public**

The communications strategy will concentrate on providing better information on programmes, exemplary projects and regional policy as such. Emphasis will be placed on the added value of regional policy and the development of networks or channels of information.

For further information, see:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/regional\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/regional_policy/index_en.htm)

# Urban II: five new programmes

The European Commission has approved five new programmes for urban regeneration: in Le Havre and Grenoble (France), Vienna-Erdberg and Graz West (Austria) and Antwerp (Belgium).

The programmes concern neighbourhoods which have not benefited from economic development and urbanisation and often have a bad reputation as regards their living environment or safety.

The programme for **Le Havre** is intended to improve social cohesion and create attractive and environmentally-friendly living conditions while supporting local economic development and training initiatives.

The priorities for **Grenoble** include the physical surroundings and training and the integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market.

The programme for **Vienna-Erdberg** has two priorities. The first is to consolidate the area's economic base through support for small firms and local management. The second is to build on the diversity of the area (integration of ethnic groups, preservation of cultural assets, etc.).

The priorities for **Graz-West** include promoting the information society (facilities, human resources and business creation) and developing urban areas.

In **Antwerp**, the programme will comprise training, improvement of the physical environment and measures to help the least favoured population groups gain access to the labour market.

Programmes 2000-2006	Total cost*	Contribution by the Structural Funds*
<b>France</b>		
Le Havre	30.2	10.7
Grenoble	26.4	9.7
<b>Austria</b>		
Vienna-Erdberg	15.9	4.2
Graz West	20.6	4.2
<b>Belgium</b>		
Antwerp	22.8	7.1

\* € million

For further information, see:  
[http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/wbnews/new\\_en.htm](http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/wbnews/new_en.htm)

# Interreg III A: three new programmes

The Commission has approved three programmes for cross-border cooperation between Austria and neighbouring regions in Germany, Italy and Hungary.

The programme for **Austria and Germany** focuses on the Alpine or mountain areas of Bavaria in Germany and the Vorarlberg and Tyrol, around Salzburg, and Upper Austria in Austria. Planned measures concern spatial planning, the establishment of cross-border networks, economic cooperation, human resources and infrastructure projects.

The programme for **Austria and Italy** covers frontier areas in Friuli, Veneto and Bolzano in Italy, and in Carinthia, Salzburg and Tyrol in Austria. The main aims of the programme are the conservation and sustainable development of the area, economic development and improved cooperation on human resources.

The programme for **Austria and Hungary** includes the Austrian Länder of Burgenland and Vienna, southern Lower Austria and the Hungarian counties of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala. It will concentrate on infrastructure improvement and economic development.

Programmes 2000-2006	Total cost*	Contribution by the Structural Funds*
Austria/Germany	94.6	47.3
Austria/Italy	70.4	33.6
Austria/Hungary	61.65	30.82

\* € million

For further information, see:  
[http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/wbnews/new\\_en.htm](http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/wbnews/new_en.htm)



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