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## 2001 annual reports on structural instruments

The 2001 annual reports for the Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund and the Structural Instrument for Pre-Accession (ISPA) were published by the Commission on 5 November 2002. The reports contain information about the implementation of Structural Funds programmes and projects by Member States or candidate countries.

The reports are available in PDF format on the EUR-Lex site [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/search/search\\_dpi.html](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/search/search_dpi.html) Please use the following search criteria: Year '2002' and the reference numbers: Structural Funds 'COM(2002) 591', Cohesion Fund 'COM(2002) 557', ISPA 'COM(2002) 596'.

## The demographic consequences of enlargement

'Demographic consequences of enlargement of the European Union with the 12 candidate countries' is the title of a new report which presents an analysis of the impact of enlargement on population ageing and population growth in the EU. The report concludes that if the 12 candidate countries join the EU, population decline will occur several years earlier, population ageing will be slightly suppressed, population rejuvenation will be somewhat stronger, and the expected decline of the working age population will hardly change. Funded by the European Commission in the context of the second report on economic and social cohesion, the report is now available on the inforegio web site [http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/demographic\\_study\\_2cr.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/demographic_study_2cr.pdf)

# First progress report on the action plan for border regions

**On 29 November, the European Commission adopted the first progress report on the action plan for regions bordering the applicant countries. The action plan proposed a series of measures to help border regions in Germany, Greece, Italy, Austria and Finland to prepare for enlargement of the Union.**

The report concludes that considerable progress has been made in the first year of implementation of the plan (adopted on 25 July 2001), which involves the provision of specific additional funding in the areas of transport and environmental infrastructure, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), networking activities and youth exchanges, and the promotion of better coordination of existing policies.

In relation to networking, the Commission has approved additional funding of EUR 20 million for three Interreg III C programmes (north, east, south) as well as for the Interact programme. Operations foreseen include networks and individual cooperation projects aimed at encouraging and facilitating cooperation in border regions in order to strengthen their economic competitiveness.

In November 2001, the budgetary authority agreed to allocate a further EUR 30 million to the 13 Strand A Interreg programmes covering the borders with candidate countries and to the Strand B Interreg programme for the Baltic Sea region. Priority is being given to the strengthening of transport systems, supporting SMEs affected by enlargement and supporting training and intercultural cooperation actions.

The Commission has also made co-financing of EUR 10 million available for a pilot project developed by the working community of the cham-

bers of economy in the EU regions bordering the applicant countries. The pilot project aims at strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs through information, strategy development and implementation, and cross-border cooperation. A further EUR 20 million has been allocated to this pilot project in 2002.

In order to improve coordination between Phare-CBC and Interreg, the Commission has modified the Phare-CBC regulation in order to achieve more consistency with the Interreg approach. In addition, the Interreg guidelines have been modified to include Vienna in the Interreg III A programmes with Hungary and the Czech Republic.

With a view to 2003, the Commission envisages a continuation of support measures for SMEs, consolidation of actions for workers and a continuation of measures to prepare local and regional public administration bodies for increased mobility and migration and to help implement targeted social, cultural and educational initiatives for their citizens.

With the allocation of an additional EUR 60 million in the 2002 and 2003 budgets, overall financing under the action plan now amounts to EUR 305 million. For further information, see the web site

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/sources/docofficial/communic/border/avancement\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docofficial/communic/border/avancement_en.pdf)

# ISPA: green light for 34 new projects

**At its 14th meeting on 7 and 8 November 2002 in Brussels, the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA) Management Committee gave the green light for 34 new projects to be financed in the candidate countries of central and eastern Europe.**

Together with decisions already taken this year, the amount of commitments for ISPA in 2002 now stands at EUR 1.1 billion. This is broken down between projects for decentralisation (2.5 %), transport (48.7 %) and the environment (48.8 %). All countries now have a project for decentralisation and the expected balance between environment and transport projects has been reached in 2002.

If the Commission signs all current proposals by the end of this year, more than EUR 5.6 billion will have been decided for 249 ISPA projects in the candidate countries between 2000 and 2002. This is equivalent to more than 70 % of the estimated total ISPA budget for 2000–06. The largest share of resources for the period 2000–02 will go to Poland, with

54 projects, and a total ISPA contribution of EUR 2 053 million.

The breakdown for the other countries is as follows: Romania 31 projects (EUR 1 171 million), Hungary 30 projects (EUR 547 million), Bulgaria 17 projects (EUR 526 million), Czech Republic 19 projects (EUR 349 million), Slovakia 18 projects (EUR 280 million), Latvia 21 projects (EUR 277 million), Lithuania 25 projects (EUR 252 million), Estonia 21 projects (EUR 121 million) and Slovenia 13 projects (EUR 70 million). For further information, see the web site

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/newsroom/document/ispa\\_in\\_2002.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/newsroom/document/ispa_in_2002.pdf)

# EU renews support for the Northern Ireland peace process

**At its session of 9 and 10 December 2002, the Council of Ministers decided to continue the European Union's financial support to the International Fund for Ireland (IFI), which is worth a total of EUR 30 million in 2003 and 2004.**

The IFI was created in the mid-1980s by the UK and Irish Governments to support early efforts to implement a peace process in Northern Ireland and the border region of Ireland. Its aim is 'to promote economic and social advance and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists throughout Ireland'. Other donors include the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Although it is an independent organisation, the IFI's objectives and activities are very similar to those pursued by the

Structural Funds programmes in the region, in particular the EU programme for peace and reconciliation ('PEACE programme'). This renewed EU support encourages harnessing of synergies between the IFI and the Structural Funds programmes. The EU contribution will be prioritised for cross-community or cross-border projects that are sustainable and provide added value. In addition, conditions for payments will be tightened and provisions on publicity reinforced.



**European Commission**  
Directorate-General for Regional Policy

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