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## Regions: Statistical Yearbook 2002

The *Regions: Statistical Yearbook 2002* will soon be available from Eurostat. This new edition has been compiled using the latest available data collected on the basis of the NUTS classification of territorial units. The comprehensive series of comparable statistics is supplemented by expert commentaries, maps, graphs, methodological notes and explanations. Several new chapters have also been incorporated and many fields of analysis cover not only the 15 Member States, but the 12 candidate countries too. Further information is available on the Eurostat web site

<http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/>

## Guide to cost-benefit analysis of major projects

Cost-benefit analysis of larger investment projects is explicitly required by the new EU regulations for Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund and the instrument for pre-accession countries (ISPA). Last updated almost three years ago, this new guide provides EU officials, external consultants, and other relevant parties with an agenda for the evaluation process. It is also a tool to enhance the transparency of the procedures for project selection and financing decisions. The guide is available free of charge from the Documentation Centre of DG Regional Policy, Documentation Centre, DG Regional Policy. Tel. (32-2) 296 06 34, Fax (32-2) 296 60 03, e-mail: [regio-info@cec.eu.int](mailto:regio-info@cec.eu.int) or from

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/guides/cost/guide02\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docgener/guides/cost/guide02_en.pdf)

# New Members States to receive EUR 23 billion in Structural and Cohesion Funds between 2004 and 2006

**At a meeting of the European Council in Brussels on 24 and 25 October 2002, it was agreed that total Structural and Cohesion Fund commitments to the new Member States for the period 2004–06 would amount to EUR 23 billion.**

The funds will be distributed in accordance with the relevant European Union common positions, which have already been agreed with the candidate States. The own resources *acquis* will also apply to the new Member States on accession and, if the forecasted cash flow balance with the Community's budget compared to the year 2003 is negative for individual candidate States in the years 2004–06, temporary budgetary compensation will be offered. In total, per capita aid of EUR 124 will be granted to the new Member States in 2006, which is lower than the initial amount foreseen in the Berlin Council.

In order to meet the considerable needs for new infrastructure in the fields of transport and environment identified in the candidate States, it was agreed that one third of the overall allocation for structural operations in the new Member States

would be devoted to the Cohesion Fund. This will also allow simpler procedures to be used as well as a higher co-financing rate. As far as the Structural Funds are concerned, 94 % of aid will go to Objective 1 areas. Areas eligible for Objectives 2 and 3 (Prague, Bratislava and Cyprus if not reunited) will be granted an aid level equal to that of the Member States. Two Community initiatives will be given priority: Interreg and EQUAL. Measures eligible under Leader and URBAN can be integrated into the Objective 1 and 2 programmes.

The Council also took a number of other important decisions, clearing the way for the conclusion of enlargement negotiations with the first countries at the European Council in Copenhagen on 12 and 13 December and the signing of the Accession Treaty in Athens in April 2003.

# Ministers welcome new proposals to simplify and improve Structural Funds administration

**At a Council meeting in Brussels on 7 October, national ministers for regional policy welcomed proposals from Commissioners Michel Barnier (Regional Policy), Anna Diamantopoulou (Employment and Social Affairs) and Franz Fischler (Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries), for new measures to simplify the management of the Structural Funds.**

The proposals represent an attempt by the Commission to respond positively to the Member States' call to streamline procedures and facilitate the Member States' management and implementation of their appropriations. However, the measures proposed also take account of the institutional responsibilities of the Commission, particularly as regards the implementation of the budget in accordance with the principle of sound financial management. The different measures will be implemented by the Commission services and the Member State's authorities alike in respect of the existing legislative framework ensuring the sound and efficient management of the funds.

The Commission's approach is based on further simplification of the requirements in the Structural Funds regulations, clarification of existing measures, better coordination between the Commission and Member State departments, and more flexibility and proportionality. As regards the latter, the Commission believe that while the rules must be standardised, an element of proportionality must be provided for in implementing this

approach with respect to the intended purpose of the requirement concerned and the size of the assistance operation.

Within the existing legislative framework, nine measures have been identified at EU level: the adjustment of programmes, audit inspections, the programme's mid-term reviews, reports, the question of evaluation and indicators used for it, the allocation of the so-called performance reserve, annual meetings of administrations, the Commission's role in monitoring committees and the rules on financial management. However, the Commission services emphasise strongly that its efforts will only be successful if equivalent simplification initiatives are launched at the national and regional levels.

It is envisaged that the modalities of most of the measures proposed will be discussed at a meeting to be held between 19 and 21 November 2002. Further information is available at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm), or from Pierre-Jérôme Henin, Tel. (32-2) 296 20 50, fax (32-2) 295 01 43, e-mail: pierre-gerome.henin@cec.eu.int

## A new network for sustainable regional development

**On 30 October, the European Commission approved a specific network programme of innovative actions in the field of regional identity and sustainable development.**

The programme was submitted by Wales on behalf of 12 partner regions from nine Member States. During the period 2002-04, the EU will provide EUR 0.8 million towards the total cost of the programme, which amounts to EUR 1.642 million. The balance will be provided by the public sector in the regions concerned.

The networking activities are designed to enhance the exchange of information, experience, know-how and expertise between the participating regions with a view to improving the use of Structural Funds' investment for activities concerning sustainable development at regional level.

The overall objectives of the network are: to set out a vision for Europe for the next 25 years and to make a significant contribution to the realisation of the concept of sustainable development at the regional level within the EU; and, to inform about the future development of the Structural Funds and make sustainable development a practical reality in the regions.

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Web site:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/innovation/doc/wales\\_network.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/innovation/doc/wales_network.pdf)



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

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