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## Effectively managing Interreg IIIA

Cross-border programme managers face many difficulties due to the many different regulations and procedures that must be respected. To help them with their task, Interact was set up as a trans-European programme to promote cooperation between the players. In this connection, the Interact point for qualification is organising two practical seminars on Interreg IIIA management on 22 and 23 November in Brussels. Documentation is available in French and English. E-mail: [lindha.feldin@interact-eu.net](mailto:lindha.feldin@interact-eu.net) or [ip.qt@interact-eu.net](mailto:ip.qt@interact-eu.net). Website:

<http://www.interact-eu.net>

## The Cohesion Fund and the ISPA featured in *Inforegio Panorama*

Issue 14 of the magazine *Inforegio Panorama* devotes a thematic dossier to the Cohesion Fund and the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA). It describes past developments and future prospects, complete with project presentations.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/panora\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docgener/panora_en.htm)

## Fact sheets: the Structural Funds in the Member States, proposals for new regulations

The fact sheets presenting cohesion policy at national level in the 25 Member States as well as pre-accession aid in Bulgaria and Romania are now also available in paper format in English, French and the national language(s). A new fact sheet, 'Cohesion policy: the 2007 watershed', which summarises Commission proposals for the post-2007 period, is also available online and on paper, in 19 languages. Copies of these publications can be requested from the Inforegio Service Documentation Centre ([regio-info@cec.eu.int](mailto:regio-info@cec.eu.int)). For the electronic versions:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/atlas/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/atlas/index_en.htm)

## Post-2006 cooperation with the candidate countries and third countries

**The European Commission recently adopted two new proposals for regulations concerning regional development and cross-border cooperation with candidate countries, potential candidate countries and third countries lying on the Union's southern and eastern external borders.**

From 2007, the new Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) will cover the candidate countries (Turkey, Croatia) and potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) with a proposed budget of EUR 14.653 billion for the 2007–13 period. Regional policy components will cover cross-border cooperation and, for the candidate countries, preparations for the implementation and management of the Structural Funds. The IPA replaces the existing instruments (Phare, ISPA, Sapard and CARDS).

The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) will cover third countries participating in European neighbourhood policy, i.e. the countries of the south and east Mediterranean,

Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, and the countries of the southern Caucasus, thus replacing MEDA and part of Tacis. The ENPI will also support the Community's strategic partnership with Russia. The proposed budget for the 2007–13 period is EUR 14.332 billion.

Around EUR 1.6 billion of the budgets allocated to the ENPI and the IPA will come from the new 'European territorial cooperation' objective (and thus the European Regional Development Fund). This amount will cover the component for cross-border cooperation at the EU's external borders between Member States and the ENPI and IPA countries.

To find out more: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enpi/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enpi/index_en.htm)

## Northern Ireland/Ireland: Peace 2005–06

**On 13 October, the European Commission adopted a set of proposals designed to extend in 2005 and 2006 the Union's support for the peace process in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, with a total additional allocation of EUR 150 million for the Peace programme and International Fund for Ireland (IFI).**

The extension of European aid, made possible by the review of the 2000–06 financial perspectives, will permit increased progress towards establishing lasting peace in the region. 'As is often the case with regional policy, the implications extend far beyond the economic framework,' stated Commissioner Jacques Barrot. 'It is a question of generating new ideas, innovative solutions and new working methods' so that 'all the communities concerned can forge their own future.'

The EU Peace programme for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland was set up in 1995. The current Peace II programme, which covers the 2000–04 period, represents total expenditure of EUR 708 million — including EUR 531 million from the Structural Funds (amount approved in 1999 in the financial

perspectives for the 2000–06 period). It has co-financed more than 4 000 projects and 15 % of its resources are allocated to cross-border projects. The IFI, on the other hand, is an independent international organisation set up in 1986 by the British and Irish governments to encourage dialogue and reconciliation through economic and social measures. The EU's present contribution is EUR 15 million a year, or approximately 40 % of the IFI budget.

In 2005 and 2006, the Commission proposes to allocate additional resources totalling EUR 60 million in commitment appropriations per year for Peace and EUR 15 million a year for the IFI. The European Parliament and Council of Ministers will be delivering their opinions on the proposals by the end of the year.

# Regional competitiveness: the best practices meeting

**The managing authorities of Objectives 1 and 2 Structural Fund programmes in six Member States (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, the United Kingdom and Ireland), as well as representatives from other countries, gathered in Rovaniemi, in Finnish Lapland, between 13 and 15 October 2004. Their meeting shed light not only on the great diversity of regional situations but also on the common capital of shared experience.**

Over three days, Rovaniemi, the regional capital of Finnish Lapland, welcomed some 170 representatives who had taken up the invitation from the Finnish Interior Ministry, the Lapland Regional Council and the European Commission as joint organisers of the seminar. Building on the first meeting of this kind, held in October 2003 in Sheffield (South Yorkshire, United Kingdom), the initiative sought to promote the exchange of experiences and dissemination of best practice between authorities responsible for implementing programmes under Objectives 1 and 2 of the Structural Funds. Also underpinning the meeting were the strategic guidelines of the Lisbon and Gothenburg European Councils for a competitive, sustainable European economy that generates jobs.

The three sessions centred on three subjects — 'Competitiveness', 'Cooperation and competitiveness', and 'Sustainable development' — each of which was introduced by an expert and provided the occasion to present 10 projects in the six Member States that were as interesting as they were varied.

**Learning from one another.** The projects presented and the debates that followed revealed the diversity of Europe's regions for which there is no standard model. Each region is unique and must therefore find its own path in its own context. The managing authorities need to learn from one another rather than adopt ready-made formulas. At the same time, there is no shortage of lessons to be shared as, however varied the situations, challenges and potential may be, the meeting also demonstrated that similar, if not common, solutions can be found to certain recurrent problems.

**Networking.** One of the key words in the debates was networking. Networking is clearly seen as a vital factor for the transfer and growth of knowledge across national borders and between administrations, sectors of activity and the public/private sector.

**Cooperating with confidence.** Many participants also stressed the importance of a good climate of cooperation to favour trust and tolerance. It takes time to create this climate, but once trust has been won a great deal of progress can be made in developing competitiveness or setting up new enterprises.

**Linking research to enterprise.** Another element that was often highlighted is the important role of Structural Funds programmes in building bridges between research and business and in promoting a multidisciplinary approach. A number of projects presented at the seminar illustrated this.

The meeting provided tangible evidence of the way European regional policy can act as a catalyst for cooperation at every level, for personalised transfers of know-how and creativity and for drawing optimal benefit from all resources. In short, all the ingredients of sustainable and competitive development. This well-organised event, which was greatly appreciated by the participants, promises to generate new contacts and more intense networking between the managing authorities. It was also of particular interest to representatives from new and future Member States. The third seminar on best practice for competitiveness is already scheduled for 2005, in Saxony-Anhalt, Germany.

A set of 52 fact sheets summarising 52 projects, distributed on the occasion of the Rovaniemi meeting, is available at the following address:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/newsroom/document/pdf/rovaniemi1004.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/newsroom/document/pdf/rovaniemi1004.pdf)

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