



inforegio news

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New Objective 2: six new decisions



Guy Crauser: a new Director-General:

Guy Crauser, a Luxembourg national, has taken on the role of Director-General of the Regional Policy DG since 1 January. He replaces Eneko Landaburu, who has moved on to the DG Enlargement.

His European career

1970-80: On the staff of

Ambassadors A. Borschette, then R. Vouel, with responsibility for competition and financial issues

1981-88: Head of Division in the Directorate-General for the Internal Market and Industrial Affairs

1989-90: Head of Cabinet to J. Dondelinger, Commissioner responsible for the audiovisual sector and cultural affairs, information and communication, 'People's Europe' and the Official Publications Office

1990-95: Director in the Directorate-General for Industry (DG III)

1995-97: Acting Deputy Director-General, then Deputy Director-General in the Directorate-General for Industry

1997-99: Director-General of the Directorate-General for Enterprise Policy, Distributive Trades, Tourism and Cooperatives (DG XXIII)

On 18 January the Commission adopted decisions of principle approving the lists of areas undergoing socio-economic conversion which are to be assisted by the Structural Funds under the newly defined Objective 2. Following on from areas in Spain and the United Kingdom, approved on 22 December, eligible areas in France, Sweden, Austria and Luxembourg have now been designated.

Final decisions for these six countries will be taken during February 2000, after scrutiny by the committees representing the Member States. The national authorities will then have four months to submit their regional conversion plans to the European Commission; these will have been prepared in partnership with regional and local decision-makers and socio-economic actors. The designated regional development areas must take account of Community priorities as outlined in the guidelines issued by the Commission in July 1999.

The new Objective 2 of the Structural Funds is designed to provide support for economic and social conversion projects in industrial, rural and urban areas and areas dependent on fishing. Under the new Structural Fund regulations and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the responsibility for selecting the eligible areas falls mainly to the Member States.

They also have to decide what will be the eligible population in each area.

The Commission's role is to check that the proposals meet the criteria laid down in the regulations.

Detailed maps and lists of selected areas for all the Member States concerned are available on our Inforegio website:

<http://inforegio.cec.eu.int/news>

| | Population covered | Structural Funds (in €) |
|----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| France | 18,767,000 | 5,437,000,000 |
| Sweden | 1,223,000 | 354,000,000 |
| Austria | 1,995,000 | 578,000,000 |
| Luxembourg | 118,000 | 34,000,000 |
| Spain | 8,809,000 | 2,553,000,000 |
| United Kingdom | 13,836,000 | 3,989,000,000 |

Information and publicity

A draft Regulation to ensure that Structural Fund actions in 2000-06 are brought to the attention of the public has been endorsed by the Committee for the Development and Conversion of Regions. This Regulation covers the information and communication activities which Member States are required to take for development programmes part-financed by the Structural Funds (see Inforegio News No 70).

The new text is available on the Inforegio website at <http://inforegio.cec.eu.int/information>, or you can order it by fax from: +32-2-296.60.03.

The European emblem, the maps showing designated Objective 1 and 2 areas, and the elements to be included on billboards, in publications and on websites can also be downloaded from the Inforegio website at: http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/wbdoc/graph/graph_en.htm

Cohesion and competition: area designations for aid for regional purpose in 2000-06

In the last quarter of 1999, the Commission approved the areas in which state-aid schemes for regional purpose will be permitted in 2000-06 for Denmark, Finland, Ireland and Greece and parts of Germany and Portugal.

The maps show the areas where state aid for investment - of both national and Community origin (via the Structural Funds) - can be granted to the business sector. The designations also specify the maximum intensities of aid allowed in each region. Readers will recall that these designations are required by the Community's competition policy, under which the principle that state aid is prohibited may be waived in order to promote the development of certain regions of the European Union [Article 87(3)(a) and (c) of the EC Treaty].

The maps have been drawn up on the basis of the Member States proposals, which respect the national population ceilings set by the Commission at the end of 1998 (see Inforegio 60 for January 1999).

On 1 January 2000, only the maps for Denmark, Finland, Ireland and Greece were approved for the whole country. In the case of Germany and Portugal, the Commission approved the parts of their maps covering the most disadvantaged regions but launched a procedure to review their other regions for which aid schemes would be allowed.

Owing to the late arrival of some proposals or their incompatibility with the Commission's guidelines, the maps for the other Member States were not approved by the end of 1999. Pending such approval, the Member States concerned have no longer been permitted to grant this type of aid since 1 January.

The place of the environment in regional programmes for 2000-06

The Commissioners for regional policy (Michel Barnier) and the environment (Margot Wallström) have laid down the practical details for implementing the Habitat and Bird Directives (92/43/EEC and 79/409/EEC respectively) in the context of Structural Fund regional programmes.

The Habitat Directive encourages the conservation of natural habitats and wild flora and fauna. It provides for the designation of lists of sites of Community importance on the basis of proposals from the Member States

(Natura 2000). The Birds Directive is designed to protect wild species of birds.

The two Commissioners have stipulated that the 2000-06 programmes under the new Objectives 1 and 2 must contain firm and clear commitments to guaranteeing the protection of sites covered by "Natura 2000". Each regional development plan and draft single programming document will be scrutinised with this in mind. Where necessary, Member States will be told what modifications need to be made to their programmes.

Recent publications

The following publications may be ordered by e-mail from publication-service@cec.eu.int, or by fax to: +32.2.2966003.

- The Structural Funds and their coordination with the Cohesion Fund (11 languages)
- Rules applicable to State aids (11 languages)
- The Structural Funds in 1998 - Annual Report (11 languages)

- The Cohesion Fund in pictures (FR, EN, ES, PT, GR)
- Application of the "polluter-pays" principle in the Cohesion Fund countries (FR, EN, DE, ES, PT, GR)
- The Cohesion Fund and the environment - Spain (FR, EN, DE, ES)
- The Cohesion Fund and the environment - Portugal (FR, EN, DE, PT)
- The Cohesion Fund and the environment - Greece (FR, EN, DE, GR)
- The Cohesion Fund and the environment - Ireland (FR, EN, DE)



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Directorate-General for Regional Policy

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