



inforegio news

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Informal Council on Regional Policy

An informal Council on Regional Policy will be held at Portlaoise on 26 and 27 February, under the Irish Presidency. On the agenda: the debate on the future of cohesion policy after 2006.

<http://www.eu2004.ie>

Interreg III C newsletter

The four technical secretariats of Interreg III C (north, south, east and west) have just published their first joint newsletter, available in English and French.

<http://www.interreg3c.net>

Sphere of influence of European cities

DATAR (France) is publishing a comparative study on the sphere of influence and power of attraction of 180 European cities with a population of over 200 000. The study shows a Europe with a much more multipolar fabric than is suggested by the famous image of the 'blue banana' (backbone of growth) running from London to Milan.

http://www.datar.gouv.fr/datar_site/datar_framedef/nsf/webmaster/actu_Rayonnement_vf?opendocument

Structural Funds for the 10 accession countries: the European Commission gives the green light

Commissioner Barnier confirmed, on 18 December 2003, the completion of negotiations on the strategy for implementing the Structural Funds with the 10 accession countries. In all, and including the Cohesion Fund, they will receive more than EUR 24 billion (at current prices) in Community aid during the 2004–06 period. Of the EUR 14.96 billion from the Structural Funds, 61 % will be from the ERDF, 25 % from the ESF, 12 % from the EAGGF-Guidance Section and about 2 % from the FIFG.

The new Community support frameworks (CSFs) and single programming documents (SPDs) will not be approved formally until the 10 States become effective European Union members, on 1 May 2004. However, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia will have access to the Structural Funds from January 2004, pro-

vided projects in the field comply with Community legislation in areas such as regional policy, environmental protection, public works contracts and financial management and control.

The table below gives the breakdown of Community aid (in millions of euro and at current prices) per new Member State.

| Country | Objective 1 | Objective 2 | Objective 3 | Interreg | Equal | Cohesion Fund (*) | Total |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Czech Rep. | 1 454.27 | 71.30 | 58.79 | 68.68 | 32.10 | 936.05 | 2 621.19 |
| Estonia | 371.36 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 10.60 | 4.07 | 309.03 | 695.06 |
| Cyprus (**) | 0.00 | 28.02 | 21.95 | 4.30 | 1.81 | 53.94 | 113.44 |
| Latvia | 625.57 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 15.26 | 8.03 | 515.43 | 1 164.29 |
| Lithuania | 895.17 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 22.49 | 11.87 | 608.17 | 1 537.70 |
| Hungary | 1 995.72 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 68.68 | 30.29 | 1 112.67 | 3 207.36 |
| Malta | 63.19 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2.37 | 1.24 | 21.94 | 88.74 |
| Poland | 8 275.81 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 221.36 | 133.93 | 4 178.60 | 12 809.70 |
| Slovenia | 237.51 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 23.65 | 6.44 | 188.71 | 456.31 |
| Slovakia | 1 041.04 | 37.17 | 44.94 | 41.47 | 22.27 | 570.50 | 1 757.39 |
| Total | 14 959.64 | 136.49 | 125.68 | 478.86 | 252.05 | 8 495.04 | 24 451.18 |

(*) Average.

(**) Including the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG).

These allocations will support the priorities and measures for economic and social development which are negotiated with each accession country.

In the **Czech Republic**, the CSF for Objective 1, which covers the whole country except for the Prague region, is to provide EUR 1.45 billion in Community aid. This will be channelled through five operational programmes: industry and enterprises, infrastructures, human resources development, rural development and multifunctional agriculture. The Objective 2 SPD for the

Prague region (EUR 71 million) will concentrate on improving the urban environment.

In **Estonia** (EUR 371 million), the structural instruments will pursue four priorities: human resources development, business competitiveness, support for agriculture, fishing and rural development, and improvements in infrastructures and local development.

In **Cyprus**, the Objective 2 SPD (EUR 28 million) is aimed at sustainable rural development and the development of urban areas in difficulty. The Objective 3 SPD (EUR 22 million) will seek to re-

talise the labour market and promote continuous training and education. Cyprus also receives EUR 3.4 million under a programme to support its fishing sector.

Latvia will implement a programme (EUR 626 million) based on four priorities: territorial cohesion, innovative enterprises, employment and training, rural development and fishing.

The programme for **Lithuania** (EUR 895 million) will concentrate on improving infrastructures, human resources development, business competitiveness, rural development, agriculture and fishing.

The **Hungary** CSF (EUR 1 995 million) will concentrate on competitiveness in the production sector, employment and human resources, improving transport infrastructures and environmental protection and local development.

Malta (EUR 63.2 million) will pursue a policy of strategic investments and measures to improve business competi-

tiveness in the manufacturing and tourism sectors, increase training and job opportunities, and promote rural development and fishing. There will be specific support for the island of Gozo.

Poland, the 'heavyweight' among the accession countries, has negotiated a CSF worth EUR 8 276 million, to be channelled into four priority fields: companies, human capital, infrastructures, regional and rural development.

Slovenia (EUR 237.5 million in Community funding) plans to focus on three priorities: boosting competitiveness in the production sector, developing human resources and employment, and restructuring agriculture, forestry and fishing.

Finally, **Slovakia** is to allocate its EUR 1 041 million to four operational programmes devoted to industry and services, human resources, basic infrastructures, and agriculture and rural development.

Dialogue with the associations of local authorities on developing EU policy

The European Commission wants to introduce more systematic dialogue with the associations of local authorities on the development of its policy. That is the purpose of the communication, adopted by the European Commission on 19 December 2003, following the White Paper on European governance.

The Commission is to give local representatives who are involved in implementing Union policy, or who are affected by it, the opportunity to make their views known at the annual meetings of their national and European associations. These meetings will be held on the occasion of the presentation of the Commission's annual work programme or at the time of any major policy initiatives with a direct or indirect local impact.

The Commission will invite associations representing the diversity of the European area to each of these meetings. It expects the representatives to formulate common opinions as well as to report back to their mandators on the Commission's policy proposals and direction. The Commis-

sion will invite the Committee of the Regions to assist it in identifying the associations likely to be interested in each case. This new process will not replace one-off contacts or ad hoc consultations between the Commission and the associations or the consultation process laid down by the treaty and in the administrative texts.

Prior to the communication, the Commission consulted the actors on a working paper entitled 'Permanent and systematic dialogue with associations of local authorities on policy development'. To consult this document and the reactions to it, go to:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/consultation/territorial_en.htm

Regions: five key factors in competitiveness

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Enterprise has just published its seventh annual report on European competitiveness.

The report identifies five key factors which determine a region's competitiveness:

- good links between the principal modes of transport and, especially, good access to an international airport and a modern telecommunications network;
- a strong entrepreneurial culture which establishes a bridge between university research and innovative companies;
- the presence of high-tech 'clusters' in fields such as biotechnology;

- an active public authority establishing links between the academic and business worlds and promoting the region in the face of coming challenges, such as enlargement;
- the effects produced by the networking and shared vision of the regional representatives.

This report (available in English only) can be downloaded at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/enterprise_policy/competitiveness/index.htm

Inforegio News online

Consult the Inforegio website for an overview of European regional policy. For the latest news, go to the 'Newsroom' section: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/newsroom/index_enfr.htm



European Commission
Directorate-General for Regional Policy

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