



# inforegio news

1025-7039

## Strategic guidelines: all language versions now available

The strategic guidelines for cohesion 2007–13 are now available on the Inforegio website in all the Community languages. Proposed by the Commission on 5 July, the guidelines set out a framework for new programmes that will be supported by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/sources/docoffic/2007/osc/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2007/osc/index_en.htm)

## Cooperation with international financial institutions

'Financing growth and cohesion in the enlarged Europe', is the title of the conference to be held in Brussels on 24 November. In cooperation with the UK Presidency, Commissioner Danuta Hübner has invited European Investment Bank President, Philippe Maystadt, and representatives of four other financial institutions to participate.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/events/ifi/index.cfm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/events/ifi/index.cfm)

## Knowledge society

'Towards a knowledge society — The Nordic experience', will be the theme of a conference organised by the European Commission (Regional Policy DG and Information Society DG) and the Swedish Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications. The event will take place in Gothenburg, Sweden, on 14 and 15 November. It will include several thematic workshops on the role of the Structural Funds in terms of synergies with the seventh framework programme for research as well as the '2010' initiative for the information society.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/sources/docconf/gothenburg/index.cfm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docconf/gothenburg/index.cfm)

## Consultation on the urban environment

The European Commission's Environment Directorate-DGeneral has launched a public consultation on the Internet on the quality of the urban environment (closing date: 21 September 2005). The consultation is with a view to a communication on the subject which will be presented by the Commission in December later this year.

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/public\\_consultation\\_2005.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/public_consultation_2005.htm)

## Common actions for growth and employment: the Community Lisbon programme

**On 20 July the European Commission adopted a 'Community Lisbon programme' (1) including eight actions designed to complement the efforts of the Member States as part of the new 'partnership for growth and cohesion'.**

It was in June 2005 that the European Council endorsed the 2005–08 'integrated guidelines', proposed by the Commission with a view to establishing a basis for the Member States' 'national reform programmes' for growth and employment. The European Council also invited the Commission to present, in addition to the national programmes, a 'Community Lisbon programme' covering all the necessary actions at Community level.

The policy measures the Commission proposes in this programme fall within the three main strategic areas of the re-launched Lisbon strategy:

- placing knowledge and innovation at the heart of growth;
- making Europe a more attractive place to work and invest;
- creating more and better jobs.

The EU will review progress at national and Community level in a single interim annual report. At Community level, this report will be based on regular monitoring of the actions listed in the Community Lisbon programme. On the basis of the annual assessment of programme implementation, the Commission will identify any new actions needed at EU level and revise the Community programme accordingly.

### Eight key actions

The proposed programme aims to increasingly open up markets, reduce bureaucracy and invest in modern infrastructures to enable companies to grow, innovate and create jobs. It revolves around eight 'key actions with high added value':

- support for knowledge and innovation in Europe;
- the reform of the State aid policy;
- the improvement and simplification of the regulatory framework in which businesses operate;
- the completion of the internal market for services;
- the conclusion of an ambitious agreement in the Doha round;
- the removal of obstacles to physical, labour and academic mobility;

- the development of a common approach to economic migration;
- support for efforts to deal with the social consequences of economic restructuring.

### The role of cohesion policy

As far as cohesion policy's contribution to this programme is concerned, the Commission proposes that investments by the Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund should concentrate on knowledge, research and innovation capacities as well as improved education and vocational training, thus equipping workers with the skills to master change and take up new activities. It is also necessary to increase the attractiveness of the Member States, regions and cities through support for economic infrastructures. In this respect, major investment in transport, environmental and energy infrastructures are needed in the less favoured regions — and especially in the new Member States — to encourage growth and long-term convergence with the rest of the EU. By improving accessibility, efficient infrastructure networks are one of the preconditions for economic growth and new jobs in these regions.

In general, it will be important, once they are approved by the Council (see *Inforegio News* No 137), for the priorities defined in the Community strategic guidelines for 2007–13 to be reflected in the next generation of operational programmes for cohesion policy, in order to ensure that this policy is fully aligned with 'Lisbon'.

In its conclusions, the Commission stresses that, to ensure the credibility of the renewed Lisbon partnership, action has to be taken quickly to achieve visible results. The success of common actions for growth and jobs will depend on synergies between national programmes and the present Community programme as well as between the various EU institutions. It will also require continuous communication at all levels to ensure that citizens are not just informed but also involved.

To find out more:

[http://europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005\\_330\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/growthandjobs/pdf/COM2005_330_en.pdf)

(1) COM(2005) 330 final of 20/07/ June 2005.

# European research close to stagnation

**A recent Commission report shows some worrying trends for innovation and investment in research and development (R & D) in Europe. The growth rate of R & D intensity has been declining since 2000 and is now close to zero.**

The European Union is in the process of failing to meet its own target of increasing R & D expenditure by between 1.9 % and 3 % by 2010. Growth and investment in R & D, in terms of percentage of GDP, has been slowing since 2000 and recorded just a 0.2 % rise between 2002 and 2003.

Europe allocates a much smaller share of its wealth to R & D (1.93 % of GDP in the European Union in 2003) than the United States (2.59 %) or Japan (3.15 %).

Although China has a lower R & D intensity (1.31 % of its GDP in 2003), it rose at the rate of 10 % a year between 1997 and 2002. If present trends continue for the European Union and China, by 2010 China will be allocating the same proportion of its GDP to R & D as the EU, around 2.2 %.

To find out more: <http://www.cordis.lu/indicators/>



## European Week of Regions and Cities Brussels

10 to 13 October 2005

## Open Days 2005: already a success

**With the date fast approaching for 'Open Days 2005 — European Week of Regions and Cities', this event organised by the Committee of the Regions and the Regional Policy DG on the subject of 'working together for regional growth and jobs' is already a success in terms of participation. At the beginning of September more than 1 000 decision-makers and other regional development stakeholders had already registered.**

At the time of writing this article (2 September 2005), the Open Days registration services already had 1 023 confirmed participants. About 70 % are from national, regional and local administrations, the rest from European institutions or organisations, private companies and universities.

In terms of countries of origin, the following countries are particularly well represented: Belgium (22 %, the many regions with offices in Brussels explains this high figure), Poland (10 %), United Kingdom (9 %) and the Czech Republic (9 %). Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands and Italy are also well represented, each accounting for some 6 or 7 % of participants.

Seven of the workshops were already fully booked at the end of August, with places on the others between 48.5 % and 66 % booked. Registration to attend the three plenary sessions was already almost closed on the same date.

In addition to the great interest shown in these 'regional development open days' since they were launched three years ago, they also enjoy support from the European institutions at the highest level. On 12 August Josep Borrell, President of the European Parliament, and John Prescott, British UK Deputy Prime Minister, announced that the EP and UK Presidency were lending their official support to the event.

As Commissioner Danuta Hübner stressed on the day of the press conference: 'Open Days 2005 will be a marketplace for new ideas and a platform for exchanging experiences in regional development. The EU should make better use of the unlocked potential of its regions and cities by focusing on best practices in innovation and more knowledge-based and sustainable pathways to growth and jobs.'

To find out more: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/opendays](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/opendays)

Press release: [http://www.cor.eu.int/en/press/press\\_05\\_08082.html](http://www.cor.eu.int/en/press/press_05_08082.html)

### 2007–13: preparing the next generation of programmes with the Inforegio site

The Member States and regions are beginning to prepare the upcoming 2007–13 programming period. The Inforegio site presents extensive information and important documents of relevance to all the players interested in the process. The aim is to facilitate exchanges between these players and at the same time inform the general public of the progress made. Do not hesitate to address your questions and contributions to the Regional Policy DG.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/debate/forum\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/debate/forum_en.htm)



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Directorate-General for Regional Policy

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Electronic address of the Regional Policy DG on the Internet: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/index_en.htm)  
Commissioner Danuta Hübner: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/commission\\_barroso/hubner/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/commission_barroso/hubner/index_en.htm)  
Orders for publications: [regio-info@cec.eu.int](mailto:regio-info@cec.eu.int) — This newsletter is published in 19 official languages of the European Union.  
Printed on recycled paper.

Text finalised on 2 September 2005.