

Brussels, 20 September 2007

Portugal hosts launch of new EU interregional cooperation programme

Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy, attends a conference in Lisbon to launch the EU's new interregional cooperation programme on 20-21 September. Portugal, in its capacity as EU Presidency, hosts the event, entitled: "The Interregional Cooperation Forum".

The Commissioner addresses the Forum on 20 September. She commented ahead of the meeting: *"It is vital that good ideas and good practices be shared if we are to make the best use of regional-policy investments and help regions to maximise their economic, social and environmental potential. This is also a key aim of the Union's initiative on Regions for Economic Change, through which we encourage regions to build networks."*

Over 800 specialists from all 27 Member States, as well as Norway and Switzerland, are attending the event in Lisbon. The first call for project proposals under this new interregional cooperation programme will be issued simultaneously.

The new interregional programme (often abbreviated to INTERREG IV C) supports cooperation among regional and local actors in the fields of innovation and the environment with a budget totalling €405 million, including € 321 million from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Notes for editors

The new cohesion policy for 2007-2013 is structured around three new objectives (convergence; regional competitiveness and employment; territorial co-operation). The territorial component has been reinforced since 2000-2006. It has three strands: cross-border cooperation; trans-national cooperation; and **interregional cooperation**, the topic of the Lisbon conference.

Interregional cooperation is addressed by a single programme covering all 27 Member States as well as Norway and Switzerland. Interregional cooperation promotes the exchange of experience between regional actors to improve the effectiveness of regional policy. This programme has a budget of € 405 million. The ERDF contribution is € 321 million, and the remainder is cofinanced by Member States.

The new interregional programme is a core element of the EU's *Regions for Economic Change* initiative, which aims to support regional and urban networks, identify and benefit from good practice in economic modernisation, and to disseminate best practice throughout all regions.

The *INTERREG IV C* programme has the following headings:

- Innovation and the Knowledge-based Economy, which focuses mainly on innovation, research and technology. ERDF contribution: € 177 million.
- The Environment and Risk Prevention, which concentrates mostly on natural and technological risks, water-management, waste prevention and management, biodiversity and preservation of the natural heritage, energy and sustainable transport, and the cultural heritage and landscape. ERDF contribution: € 125 million.

Technical assistance worth € 19 million will cover programme administration, information, and evaluation.

Call for proposals: The first call for projects will be launched at the Forum, and will close in mid-January. All public authorities can submit projects to the joint secretariat in Lille (F). Proposals will be assessed by a monitoring committee made up of representatives from all Member States (as well as Norway and Switzerland).

Managing Authority: The Managing Authority of the programme, which has overall responsibility for its implementation, will be the *Conseil régional Nord-Pas de Calais* in Lille (F). A Secretariat will be established to oversee the day-to-day operation of the programme.

Info-points: There are four info-points making available information on the programme and giving support for project generation. They are located in: Lille (F), Rostock (D), Katowice (PL), and Valencia (E). See this link: www.interreg3c.net

In total, the Commission expects to approve 70 territorial cooperation programmes to implement cohesion policy 2007-2013 (including interregional, trans-national and cross-border cooperation).

For more information on the interregional programme, see the accompanying [MEMO/07/366](#).

Further information about European Regional Policy:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm