

Brussels, 4 July 2008

Transparency in Cohesion Policy: Published beneficiary lists to raise awareness, enhance quality of EU investment

DG Regional Policy has launched a website indicating regions that have published lists of beneficiaries, as they are required to do in line with new communication requirements for Cohesion Policy over the 2007-2013 programming period. This is part of a Commission initiative to improve transparency over the EU budget and the impact of investment.

The Commission has created a portal with links to national websites provided by Member States and the regions. This will be updated on the basis of information received from Member States. Go to:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/commu/beneficiaries/index_en.htm

“Regional Policy has an impact on all who live in the European Union and represents over a third of the European Union's budget. That is why it is important to raise awareness about this very tangible policy among European citizens. Transparency should also improve management of the funds involved,” said Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy.

The regulatory framework on structural and cohesion funds, adopted in 2006, requires each Member State to set up a database that the public can access on a specific website to identify beneficiaries, the names of the projects and the allocation of public funds (both European and national).

As well as published lists, the regulatory framework introduced the following new requirements to raise awareness and improve visibility of EU Cohesion Policy presence on the ground.

- **Communication plans:** Member States are required to submit communication plans to the Commission for each Operational Programme under Cohesion Policy. There are 455 programmes in all for the current period, 2007-2013.
- **Launch events:** Member States are required to organise a launch event and annual communication events to support each programme.

Billboards identifying EU co-funded projects, displaying the European flag, continue to be obligatory.

Communication in action

Examples of communication on EU investment in Member States include:

Latvia: The Latvian Ministry of Finance sponsors a 20-minute weekly radio programme called "Keys to European Funds" (*Eiropas fondu atslegas*), broadcast on national radio every Wednesday, featuring stories on EU co-funded projects.

Greece: The Ministry of Finance launched a campaign this year to introduce the public to the new programming period, with a humorous TV spot featuring the well-known actor Theodoris Atheridis.

Estonia: The Ministry of Finance of Estonia broadcast programmes on national television at prime time on EU investment in 2005 and 2007. These featured success stories, advice for those applying, and spots featuring a well-known comedian.

France: The region Midi-Pyrenees is running a humorous creative advertising campaign in the press to attract applications for EU co-funding.

Note for Editors

The "RegioStars", the Awards for Innovative Projects launched by the Commission last year will introduce a new category in 2009: "radio or television spot or programme that highlights the contribution of Cohesion Policy". The deadline to submit applications is 15 July 2008.

At European level, the 'INFORM' network brings together 250 regional policy communication officers and 33 members appointed by Member States. It has been established as a platform to share experience and identify ways of improving the visibility of EU-funded projects.

Link to INFORM news:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/commu/index_en.cfm

More information on Regional Policy:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/commu/