

Brussels, 12 February 2008

Danuta Hübner: Record payments for cohesion policy in 2007

Cohesion policy budget execution for 2007 was excellent, Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy, announced today. She presented details of Member States' record performance in making payments of over EUR 41 billion, against EUR 33 billion in 2006. New Member States are now approaching absorption rates close to those of the EU15, she added. As for the next generation of programmes, running from 2007 to 2013, most of these were adopted before the end of last year in the fastest-ever programming exercise to date.

"Last year, we set a record in terms of budget execution in Cohesion policy. We also adopted over 400 operational programmes for the 2007-2013 cycle, thanks to our successful partnership with Member States. Now the challenge is to keep up that momentum so that economic modernisation, growth and job creation are achieved on the ground," the Commissioner commented.

The overall figure of EUR 41 billion comprises payments for two overlapping programming periods. Payments totalling EUR 34 billion for all Structural and Cohesion Funds were made for 2000-2006, and the first payments for 2007-2013 account for the balance of EUR 7 billion.

Period 2000-2006

Payments for the 2000-2006 period (total funding all funds: EUR 223 billion) can continue until the end of 2008.

The 10 new Member States, for which funding began as of May 2004, reached an average rate of 75% of absorption of their financial allocations, varying between 62% for Cyprus and 82% for Hungary.

As far as EU15 countries are concerned, average execution reached 84%, varying between 73% for Greece and 94% for Sweden.

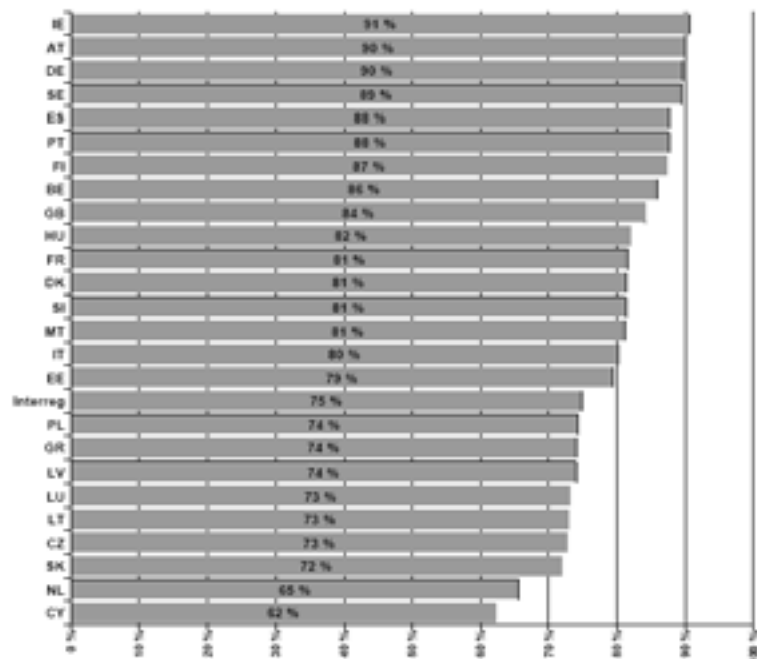
However, this year will be particularly demanding, and DG Regional Policy alone has to execute nearly EUR 30 billion in payment credits. Nevertheless, execution is proceeding apace in the early weeks of 2008.

Period 2007-2013

The Commission has adopted almost all the operational programmes for the new cycle, representing 98% of the EUR 347 billion to be invested. For these new programmes, first advance payments carried out in 2007 amount to about EUR 7 billion.

Programming period 2000-2006

4 Structural Funds: Payments against decisions (1)



(1) The EU10 reference period is 2004-2006.