



ETUI-REHS
European Trade Union Institute

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The European Social Fund 2007-2013: a handbook for trade unions



European Trade Union Confederation
(ETUC)

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this Guide is to support trade union representatives involved in the various committees established under the European Social Fund.

The Guide gives information on the most recent reform of the ESF and other Structural Funds as well as on the principles of partnership under the European Social Fund. It also presents a series of examples of good practice by trade unions in using the ESF.

We hope that this Guide will be a useful instrument for improving the involvement of trade union organisations in the implementation of Community structural policies and, more particularly, the ESF.

The aim of the European Union's structural policies is to help reduce disparities between regions and to promote a society with full employment, equal opportunities, social inclusion and cohesion and hence, more broadly, the European Social Model.

For the ETUC, the partnership principle is key to guaranteeing the successful operation of structural fund measures. High-quality partnerships should be pursued, involving the social partners in every phase of fund interventions.

The European Social Fund is the only Fund which relies on the active participation of the social partners in its European Committee. We believe that this participation ensures significant added value and regret that the same type of participation has not been extended to the other Structural Funds.

The ESF is the primary instrument for supporting the implementation of the European Employment Strategy. The EES should be concretely incorporated in national, regional and local labour market policies, and in the aims of the ESF. This involves the ESF contributing further to achieving the objectives for changing to a knowledge society and promoting lifelong learning, and more generally to implementing the Lisbon Strategy.

Europe needs to make a huge investment in people, who are undoubtedly the most important competitive asset in any society. This investment should anticipate the social changes arising from the knowledge society, whilst providing answers to the issues of job retention and creation, increasing of productivity levels in European businesses, identifying innovative and more effective ways of organising work including substantial investment in the development of workers' qualifications and skills, social inclusion and promotion of equal opportunities. This is Europe's key to the future.

John Monks
ETUC General Secretary

HOW TO USE THE HANDBOOK

This Handbook, produced by ETUI-REHS in cooperation with the ETUC, is a follow-up to the “Guide for Trade Unionists” issued by the ETUC on the earlier edition of the Structural Funds from 2000-2006.

It aims to provide specific support to the trade union colleagues from the new 12 Member States, who are participating for the first time in the ESF.

We have focused our attention on the ESF, as one of the main tools for promoting the European Employment Strategy, and as a contribution to the “European triangle of knowledge” (research, innovation and education in the EU).

For the first time, in fact, the Regulation places a useful emphasis on the involvement of the social partners, setting an appropriate potential allocation for “capacity-building” aimed at strengthening social dialogue and activities jointly undertaken by the social partners.

The Guide aims:

- to provide some general information on the new structure of the ESF for the years 2007-2013;
- to raise trade unions’ awareness of how they can participate in the implementation of the ESF, at different stages and levels, though particularly in the “Monitoring Committees”, in which trade unions are asked to provide guidance on the initiatives and on the coherence between the financial interventions and the key objectives for workers;
- to show trade unionists how they can use the ESF to have an impact on the employment and innovation policies in their countries.

In the Appendix, the Handbook contains some training materials, used by the ETUI-REHS and the ETUC in their first joint course on **“Training for designing and delivering European Social Fund projects”**, held in Madrid in June 2007. The examples of good practices, presented in Madrid and described here, will hopefully offer inspiration to our colleagues.

I wish to thank John Monks, Józef Niemiec and Claude Denagtergal from the ETUC, Ornella Cilona and Roberto Pettenello from CGIL, Charlotta Krafft from SACO, Alan Manning from the TUC, Luis Galiano from UGT-E and Paco Moreno from CC.OO., all of whom assisted in putting together this material, and passing on their knowledge in this area of work. Thanks also to Silvana Pennella, who is responsible for the ETUI-REHS EU Information Service, for coordinating this initiative and bringing it to a successful conclusion.

Particular thanks are due to the European Commission representative Dominique Be, Deputy Head of Unit in the *European Social Fund Coordination of DG Employment*, who has provided useful assistance and advice.

This Guide has been produced in English and French. The ETUC and the ETUI-REHS are willing to cooperate with confederations to enable its translation into their national languages.

Jeff Bridgford
Director – Education Department
ETUI-REHS

THE STRUCTURAL FUNDS AND THE ETUC'S STRATEGY

I should first like to congratulate the Education Department of the ETUI-REHS for preparing this training activity on the ESF programming period 2007-2013. I am convinced that it will help the ETUC's member organisations to get involved in projects financed by the Fund.

The ETUC has always insisted on the need to strengthen the structural policies of the enlarged EU, since the principles of cohesion and solidarity are enshrined in the Treaty and constitute two of the most important planks for the integration of the peoples and territories concerned. The cohesion policy needs to help bring solutions to the many challenges (globalisation, enlargement, etc.), whilst reducing disparities between regions and promoting a society with full employment, equal opportunities, social inclusion and social cohesion, in other words, our social model.

The broad guidelines of the policy for the years 2007-2013 have already been defined, as has its overall funding, and together they stipulate the rules and budgets for this period.

As you will be aware, the ETUC presented its views (in October 2004) on the cohesion policy of the Union in the period after 2006 and then (in December 2005) on the financial perspectives for 2007-13. This enabled us to present our position and demands for the discussions between the various EU institutions in recent years. I shall return to our priorities shortly.

The Seville Congress focused essentially on the future of the European budget, whilst noting that the regulations of the Funds will not be changing but that the EU has decided to review the financing of European policies in 2009.

So I shall be concentrating on a number of key aspects, which I hope will be relevant to your work in this three-day seminar. I should like to focus in particular on the ETUC's role, on our priority demands, and on the actions needed in the short-term.

A new architecture for the cohesion policy, integrating the Lisbon objectives more effectively

In 2007, major changes were made to the rules for decentralisation and simplification purposes. The ETUC broadly welcomed this new approach, whilst underlining the need for efficient coordination of the EU's policies, in particular with the Lisbon strategy.

Accordingly, the ETUC considers the explicit reference to the Lisbon and Gothenburg objectives in the general regulation to be of great importance, and in particular the fact that the cohesion policy must integrate those objectives and become an essential plank for their achievement via national development programmes.

At the same time, the ETUC supports the focusing of the priority themes into **three main goals: convergence, regional competitiveness and employment, and European territorial cooperation.**

On **convergence**, the ETUC considers that the less developed regions of the enlarged Union, which lag behind the EU average, must remain a priority, but that temporary aid must be given to regions where the per capita GDP is 75% lower than the average for the EU 15 (the so-called "statistical impact" of the enlargement) and have not, therefore, "got rich quick".

The ETUC considers that the goal of **regional competitiveness and employment** may indeed be difficult to implement in the current programme. It is essential to specify clearly the social dimension of regional development and that the Member States must provide a link with the national action plans for employment and the national action plans for inclusion. The implementation of both of these aspects is essential, through regional development programmes that help the regions anticipate and promote economic change by bolstering their competitiveness and attractiveness as locations; and, secondly, through programmes defined at the appropriate territorial level that help people to prepare for and adapt to economic changes.

As regards the eligibility of the regions, however, whilst the Member States, in close cooperation with the regions, are best able to identify the areas that need aid the most, we stress each time that the Structural Funds are an EU policy applied on the basis of a number of common principles and objectives, so as to prevent any drift towards a re-nationalisation of this policy. It is therefore essential to define objective eligibility criteria whilst ensuring optimal articulation and balance between the European, national and regional levels.

The ETUC is delighted that, based on the experience of the INTERREG initiative, a new goal of **European territorial cooperation** has been created, aimed at promoting the harmonious and balanced integration of the territory of the Union through cooperation between its members on important Community issues at the crossborder, transnational and interregional levels.

Cooperation and actions do, indeed, need to be strengthened at the crossborder, transnational and interregional levels. The trade unions' positive experience of actions conducted by the 41 Inter-Regional Trade Union Councils (ITUCs), including in regions sharing borders with the new Member States, shows that this is the right path to follow.

The ETUC supports the strategic approach proposed by the Commission geared to **simplification** and more particularly the establishment of an annual strategic dialogue with the European institutions that have to assess the progress made on the strategic priorities and the results obtained.

The ETUC welcomes the fact that the social partners at European level are consulted on the global strategic document for the cohesion policy. Similarly, the social partners need to be consulted properly at national level on the National Strategic Reference Framework established by the Member States.

The ETUC also supports the idea of greater decentralisation by delegating more responsibilities to the Member States and the regions, whilst maintaining financial rigour, provided that the Commission ensures coherence with the European policies and goals, as well as coordination between the European, national and regional levels, so as to avoid any risk of disparities between and within the Member States.

The ETUC is convinced that the **partnership principle** is of vital importance in guaranteeing the implementation of structural fund actions. It is necessary to continue to ensure high-quality partnerships by involving the social partners in all phases of the ESF-sponsored actions.

That is why the ETUC has requested that the structural fund regulations must define clearly the partnership principles rather than relying on national rules and practices. Similarly, as regards the European Social Fund, the ETUC has supported the Commission's proposal for at least 2% of ESF resources to be allocated to the development of the capacities and activities undertaken jointly by the social partners on the Convergence Objective, while insisting on a clear reference to the social dialogue. Unfortunately, those demands have been rejected.

The ETUC also regrets the fact that the European Social Fund is the only one that includes the active participation of the social partners in its European Committee. We maintain that this participation brings a significant added value. We are insisting that the annual meetings between the European Commission and the social partners involve real consultation and that other forums be established for discussions with the Member States and the Commission.

We also consider that the social partners need to be provided with technical assistance in order to improve their capacities, in particular in the new Member States, so as to facilitate their participation in the administration and implementation of projects financed by the Structural Funds. We therefore welcome the Commission's initiative to create a working group aimed at helping improve the implementation of the partnership principle in the ESF Committee.

Financial resources reflect the EU's policy intention. It has to be said that the current level of investment of the Union's budget resources is relatively modest compared to the positive results obtained, in particular as regards the improvement of the situation of the less favoured regions and the beginning of real convergence. Furthermore, given the ambitious targets that the Member States have set for the EU, in terms of the enlargement and the Lisbon and Gothenburg strategic objectives, the level of resources, which is only around 1%, is not in proportion to either the challenges or the commitments that were made.

The growth of the EU has been promoted to a great extent by the funds provided to the less favoured Member States and regions. In 2005, the agreement on the Financial Perspectives for 2007-2013 was worrying in that regard, since the funds made available to the new Member States turned out to be smaller than in the past. The approval of the budget was welcome, of course, but it is important to recognise that some problems remain.

Each element will have to be examined in 2008/2009, in accordance with the European Council's decision of March 2006, including the matter of agricultural subsidies and the special UK rebate (albeit reduced) from the European budget.

As the Commission has proposed no new specific resources for the immediate future, the system will retain its current structure. The current system has come under criticism for its complexity and lack of transparency. The ETUC is consequently in favour of the proposed debate on the matter and on how to correct these shortcomings, and will make an active contribution in those discussions.

Such a debate should not be limited to a specific issue, but needs to review the structuring of the resources and expenditure. The ETUC maintains that the Financial Perspectives reflect the Union's policy aspirations. They are based on the notion that the economic advantage that each country derives from belonging to the Union exceeds the strictly budgetary cost of its participation. Europe is the appropriate level for certain types of expenditure and investment. The European added value needs to guide the considerations, rather than efforts to secure a "fair return" based on the specious calculation of net balanced budgets at national level.

The enlargement and the solidarity that it requires, as well as the focusing of European policies on the Lisbon Strategy goals, provide an opportunity to reflect on a new system of own resources and on the aims of the European tax. We want the EU to commit itself to achieving its goals, and the Member States to be prepared to contribute to common policies that they know are effective and necessary, based on solidarity and greater democracy."

Józef Niemiec,
Confederal Secretary ETUC
ETUI-REHS Education
Training course, June 2007, Madrid

THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND SUPPORTS SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

The European Union is committed to more and better jobs. Therefore it needs to invest in its people and the European Social Fund (ESF) is its main financial instrument for this. The ESF spends over 10 billion a year across the EU to help people enhance their education and skills. This represents more than 10% of the total budget of the European Union.

During the 2007-2013 period the ESF is focusing on four areas of particular relevance to the social partners and their members: adaptability among workers and businesses, access to employment, reducing social exclusion, and promoting partnerships for reform.

The ESF Regulation stresses the central role of the social partners in delivering the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs, and the importance of their commitment to strengthening economic and social cohesion by improving employment and job opportunities.

The role of the social partners is also highlighted in the integrated guidelines for growth and jobs for the period 2005-2008 which are the principal policy instrument for developing and implementing the Lisbon Strategy. The employment policy guidelines emphasize the role of the social partners, in particular with regard to promoting flexibility combined with employment security, reducing labour market segmentation, and ensuring employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage-setting mechanisms. The social partners are particularly expected to contribute to the development of the job-matching capacities of employment services, the development of policies to prevent skills shortages and the enhancement of the functioning of labour markets.

Partnerships are particularly important for improving the labour market situation and promoting good governance. The ESF Regulation therefore includes a new and separate priority for ESF support (Art. 3.1(e)) which provides for specific support for partnerships and pacts, through networking of relevant stakeholders, such as the social partners and NGOs, with the aim of mobilising for reforms in the area of employment and social inclusion. Further acknowledging the importance of the social partnership, the ESF Regulation emphasizes the need to actively involve the social partners in the implementation of the ESF while providing for specific support for the development of partnerships. The social partners are major ESF beneficiaries as well as key actors in its governance.

The social partners are actively involved in the implementation of the ESF

The social partners are promoters of a large number of projects financed by the ESF. During the 2000-2006 programming period the social partners were particularly involved in the adaptability of workers field, especially in the provision of training and lifelong learning. The 2007-2013 ESF Regulation ensures that the social partners will continue to be beneficiaries under all the ESF priorities in all Member States by instructing the managing authorities of each operational programme to encourage adequate participation of the social partners in actions funded by the ESF.

The social partners benefit from enhanced support in the least developed Member States and regions

The European Union recognizes that social dialogue is an essential part of governance in Europe and that the social partners have a unique role in economic and social governance. The Treaty itself promotes the development of social dialogue (Art. 138-139). The involvement of the social partners and other stakeholders is indeed key to the development and implementation of effective policies and both the EU and the Member States benefit from efficient social dialogue structures.

Despite progress in recent years, the social partners and social dialogue remain relatively weak in many regions eligible for the Convergence objective, i.e. regions where per capita GDP is below 75% of the

Community average. The ESF therefore provides for enhanced support to the social partners in these regions. The aim is to further improve the capacity of the social partners to take part in social dialogue and in social, labour market and economic governance. Support for reinforcing the institutional capacity of the social partners is seen as essential to encourage the setting-up and functioning of social dialogue structures at all levels as well as to support the development of partnerships and dialogue between public authorities, the social partners and NGOs.

The ESF Regulation (Art. 3.2(b)) therefore prioritises support for strengthening the institutional capacity and the efficiency of the social partners, in particular by promoting capacity building in the Convergence regions. In addition the ESF Regulation (Art. 5.3(2)) states that an appropriate amount of ESF resources shall be allocated to support capacity-building for the social partners. Capacity building activities include training, networking measures, strengthening the social dialogue and activities jointly undertaken by the social partners, in particular as regards adaptability of workers and enterprises.

The social partners play an essential role in the governance of the ESF

The ESF Regulation acknowledges that efficient and effective implementation of actions supported by the ESF depends on good governance and partnership between all relevant actors, and in particular the social partners and other stakeholders.

While the social partners were already effectively involved in the implementation of the ESF during the 2000-2006 period, their involvement is further reinforced in the 2007-2013 period by the General Regulation (EC) N° 1083/2006 (Art. 11), which encourages Member States to organise partnerships with authorities and bodies such as the social partners, and the ESF Regulation (Art. 5), which states that the ESF shall promote good governance and partnership.

More specifically the ESF Regulation (Art. 5.2 & 5.3) assigns to the social partners an explicit role in the governance of the ESF, by urging Member States to ensure their involvement in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of ESF support. By being involved in the monitoring of the ESF, the social partners have a say in the implementation of operational programmes as they approve criteria for selecting the operations financed by the ESF, review progress of the operational programmes, and approve the reporting on implementation.

Conclusion

The European Union acknowledges the fundamental contribution of the social partners to achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work and strengthening social and territorial cohesion, and it puts the social partners at the heart of the implementation of the ESF.

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THE EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL FUNDS 2007-2013 IN A NUTSHELL

(from Chapter 13 of the Handbook "Trade unions and transnational projects" 6th Edition, ETUI-REHS Education¹)

Among the most important funding mechanisms at the Commission's disposal are the so-called 'Structural Funds', of which perhaps the most significant from a trade union perspective is the European Social Fund. After a general overview of the Structural Funds, this chapter looks in more detail at the European Social Fund and the role for trade unions within it.

The Structural Funds

The Structural Funds are the principal tools used by the European Union, in partnership with the Member States, to support the less-favoured areas within the Union. They are used to reduce the socio-economic gap between Member States and between different territorial areas. They aim to boost economic and social cohesion, competitiveness and employment, in the context of a sustainable development model, the most important of the EU's political priorities.

The funds involved are:

- **The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**, used to fund productive investments, infrastructures and initiatives designed to reduce economic and social disparities between the Union's territorial areas
- **The European Social Fund (ESF)**, focused on employment, the development of human resources and the promotion of social integration
- **The Cohesion Fund**, focused on environmental policies and on trans-European transport infrastructure, applies to the entire territory of those Member States whose per capita gross national income (GNI) is less than 90% of the Community average.

These funds are directed towards the three priority objectives defined for the period 2007-2013:

- Convergence
- Regional Competitiveness and Employment
- European Territorial Cooperation.

The Convergence objective

The Convergence objective aims to accelerate the convergence of the least-developed Member States and regions, by improving conditions for growth and employment through:

- Increasing and improving the quality of investment in human and physical capital
- Promoting innovation and the knowledge society
- Encouraging adaptability to economic and social changes
- Ensuring the protection and improvement of the environment
- Pursuing administrative efficiency.

The regions targeted by this objective are those where per capita gross domestic product (GDP), calculated on the basis of Community figures for the period 2000 to 2002, is less than 75 % of the average GDP of the EU-25 for the same reference period.

¹ http://www.etui-rehs.org/education/resources/trade_unions_and_transnational_projects_sixth_edition__1

The Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective

This aims to strengthen competitiveness and employment and to anticipate economic and social change. It is intended to promote:

- Increased quantity and quality of investment in human capital
- Innovation and the idea of a knowledge society
- Entrepreneurship
- The protection and improvement of the environment
- The improvement of accessibility, adaptability of workers and businesses
- The development of inclusive job markets.

The regions targeted by this objective are those that are not covered by the Convergence objective.

The European Territorial Cooperation objective

This objective aims to strengthen:

- Cross-border cooperation through joint local and regional initiatives in the border regions
- Transnational cooperation between those regions listed as eligible by the European Commission, by means of actions which are both conducive to integrated territorial development and linked to the Community priorities
- Interregional cooperation and exchange of experience across the entire territory of the Community.

Transitional support is available for regions which would have met the criteria for the Convergence objective, had their GDP per capita level been measured in terms of the EU-15 countries, rather than the EU-25. Similar transitional support is available for States which would have met the criteria for support from the Cohesion Fund had, their GNI been measured against that of the EU-15, rather than the EU-25 countries.

The Convergence objective is supported by all of the above Funds. The Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective is supported by the ERDF and the ESF. The European Territorial Cooperation objective is supported exclusively by the ERDF.

It is important to point out that, from 2007 on, these Structural Funds will apply to all 27 European Member States (i.e. including Bulgaria and Romania).

Each Member State, working in conjunction with the European Commission, was required to prepare a framework document (known as the *National Strategic Reference Framework*) by the end of 2006. This document provides both general and specific guidelines for interventions under each objective.

In addition, each country, again in consultation with the Commission, is required to submit an **Operational Programme**, which contains the planned implementation measures, funding plans and handling and monitoring methods for each intervention.

Member States are required to involve regional and local authorities, together with economic and social partners, including trade unions, in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Operational Programmes.

Funding for the Structural Funds

The overall sum for EU finance committed to the Funds for the period 2007-2013 is €308,041 million. This is allocated to the various objectives, as follows:

■ Convergence objective	81.54%
■ Regional Competitiveness and Employment objective	15.95%
■ European Territorial Cooperation objective	2.52%

In addition, sums are earmarked for national co-funding. Normally, each country must contribute matching funding, amounting to at least 25% for areas included under the Convergence objective and 50% for areas included under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment objectives, although there are some exceptions to this, including areas benefiting from transitional support.

The European Social Fund

The European Social Fund has been refocused to meet the demands of the Lisbon Strategy. It is now designed to support Community objectives in relation to social inclusion, non-discrimination, the promotion of equality, and education and training. The links between the ESF and the policy framework – the European Employment Strategy – are being reinforced, with an emphasis on employment and training. It is therefore worth looking in some detail at the priorities that the Community Regulations for 2007-2013² have outlined for the Convergence and Regional Competitiveness and Employment objectives. They are:

- a)** increasing adaptability of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs, with a view to improving the anticipation and positive management of economic change, in particular by promoting:
 - (i) lifelong learning and increased investment in human resources by enterprises, especially SMEs, and workers, through the development and implementation of systems and strategies, including apprenticeships, which ensure increased access to training by, in particular, low-skilled and older workers, the development of qualifications and competences, the dissemination of information and communication technologies, e-learning, eco-friendly technologies and management skills, and the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation and business start-ups;
 - (ii) the design and dissemination of innovative and more productive forms of work organisation, including better health and safety at work, the identification of future occupational and skills requirements and the development of employment, training and support services, including outplacement, for workers in the context of company and sector restructuring;

- b)** enhancing access to employment and the sustainable inclusion in the labour market of job seekers and inactive people, preventing unemployment, in particular long-term and youth unemployment, encouraging active ageing and increasing participation in the labour market, in particular by promoting:
 - (i) the implementation of active and preventive measures ensuring the early identification of workers' needs and to facilitate job seeking;
 - (ii) mainstreaming and specific action to increase the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment and reduce gender-based segregation in the labour market, including by addressing the root causes of gender pay gaps;
 - (iii) specific action to increase the participation of migrants in employment, strengthening their social integration, and to facilitate geographic and social mobility of workers and integration of cross-border labour markets, including through guidance, language training and validation of competences and acquired skills;
 - (iv) specific action to increase the participation of migrants in employment, strengthening their social integration, and to facilitate geographic and social mobility of workers and integration of cross-border labour markets, including through guidance, language training and validation of competences and acquired skills;

- c)** reinforcing the social inclusion of disadvantaged people, with a view to their sustainable integration into employment and combating all forms of discrimination in the labour market, in particular by promoting:
 - (i) pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for people experiencing social exclusion, early school leavers, minorities, people with disabilities, and people providing care for dependant persons through employability measures, access to vocational education and training; and other actions such as care services that improve employment opportunities;
 - (ii) acceptance of diversity in the workplace, and the combating of discrimination in accessing and progressing in the labour market through awareness raising, the involvement of local communities and enterprises and the promotion of local employment initiatives;

- d)** enhancing human capital and promoting partnership for reform in the fields of employment and inclusion, in particular by promoting:
 - (i) the design and introduction of reforms in education and training systems, in order to develop employability, the improvement of initial and vocational education and training and the continual updating of the skills of training personnel with a view to innovation and a knowledge-based economy;
 - (ii) networking activities between higher education institutions, research centres and enterprises;

- e)** promoting partnerships, pacts and initiatives through networking of relevant stakeholders such as the social partners and non-governmental organisations at the transnational, national, regional and local levels in order

² See [http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2007/fse/ce_1081\(2006\)_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/pdf/2007/fse/ce_1081(2006)_en.pdf)

to mobilise for reforms in the field of employment and labour market inclusiveness.

The Convergence objective also has the following priorities:

- a)** expanding and improving investment in human capital, in particular by promoting:
- (i) the implementation of reforms in education and training systems, especially with a view to raising people's responsiveness to the needs of a knowledge-based society and lifelong learning;
 - (ii) increased participation in education and training throughout the life-cycle, including through actions aiming to achieve a reduction in early school leaving and in gender-based segregation of subjects and increased access to and quality of initial, vocational and tertiary education and training;
 - (iii) the development of human potential in research and innovation, notably through post-graduate studies and the training of researchers;
- b)** strengthening institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services at national, regional and local level and, where relevant, of the social partners and non-governmental organisations, with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance especially in the economic, employment, education, social, environmental and judicial fields, in particular by promoting:
- (i) mechanisms to improve good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation, including through studies, statistics and expert advice, support for interdepartmental coordination and dialogue between relevant public and private bodies;
 - (ii) capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes in the relevant fields, including with regard to the enforcement of legislation, especially through continuous managerial and staff training and specific support to key services, inspectorates and socio-economic actors including social and environmental partners, relevant non-governmental organisations and representative professional organisations.

Within the framework of these objectives, the ESF will support Operational Programmes prepared by Member States at a national or regional level. The ESF resources also represent one of the main tools for promoting the European Employment Strategy, launched by the Luxembourg European Council in 1997 and updated by the Brussels European Council in July 2005³. This strategy has established the following quantitative targets to be achieved by 2010:

- That jobseekers throughout the EU are able to consult all job vacancies advertised through Member States' employment services
- An increase by five years, at EU level, of the effective average exit age from the labour market (compared to an average of 59.9 years in 2001)
- The provision of childcare to at least 90% of children between three years old and the mandatory school age, and to at least 33% of children under three years of age
- An EU average of no more than 10% of early school leavers
- At least 85% of 22-year olds in the EU having completed upper secondary education
- That the EU average level of participation in lifelong learning should be at least 12.5% of the adult working-age population (25 to 64 age group).

The ESF will finance transnational and interregional actions, in order to promote the dissemination of good practice and the development of timely and appropriate strategies for managing change. It will also support actions that incorporate lessons learnt from the Community Initiative EQUAL (one of the main EU Community Initiatives funded by the ESF in the period 2000-2006, which will not operate in 2007-2013). These actions will also pay particular attention, through the strengthening of transnational cooperation, to the integration of migrants, including those seeking asylum, and of groups marginalized in relation to the labour market.

Trade Unions and the Structural Funds

Community Regulations provide for the full involvement of trade union and employers' organisations in the various stages of implementing the Structural Funds, with particular emphasis on the preparation, the implementation and monitoring of plans and actions. This includes participation in the Monitoring Committees, which will be set up for each Operational Programme established by the Structural Funds. In these Committees,

³ For more detail, see <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:205:0021:01:EN:HTML>

trade unions can offer guidance on the initiatives to be supported, as well as monitoring the relationship between the financial allocations and the main objectives for workers.

Decisions concerning individual projects will remain for the most part the province of institutional bodies such as ministries and regional authorities, which in the past have not always been receptive to projects involving trade unions. However, throughout the general objectives in the European Social Fund, there is continual reference to workers, to social partners and to the importance of training as a crucial factor in improving employability.

Trade unions should make good use of these references, noting particularly the ESF resources that, for the first time, the ESF Regulation assigns to the Convergence objective. These include increasing the social partners' capacities to realise ESF objectives, through training, networking measures, strengthening social dialogue, and other activities jointly undertaken by the social partners, in particular with regard to the adaptability of workers and enterprises. The relevance of this for trade union participation is clear.

The best opportunities are likely to arise in connection with projects aimed at training or re-training workers, or at providing support for the professional orientation of young people and the unemployed. Most of these are likely to take the form of professional training projects, a field in which not all European trade union organisations are currently taking an active role.

Professional training needs to be interpreted in the broadest possible sense, including a number of areas of expertise proper to those trade union structures that are involved in trade union training. The training of trade union officials whose job it will be to track European Social Fund programming, job market policies, initiatives to boost employment at the local level, immigration problems, equal opportunities and the various forms of inequality present at the local level, must include crucial areas of training expertise, including:

- Prior analysis of training needs
- Drafting of curricula and the implementation of training pathways
- Drafting of guidelines, innovative material and IT aids.

Given the opportunities to realise transnational actions through the ESF and also through the new European Territorial Cooperation objective, trade unions will need to make the best possible use of the networks within the ETUC and ETUI-REHS Education, in order to identify the best resources and opportunities and potential partner organisations to help define and realise successful transnational activities. The networks and results of some of the major projects realised by ETUI-REHS in the last few years offer an important resource for this. These include DIALOG-ON with 16 partner organisations, which concentrated on exploring the use of Information Society tools in the context of Social Dialogue, and TRACE , with 20 partners, which was concerned with building capacity within European Trade Unions to anticipate and manage change.

For further information:

- European Commission and Social European Fund web site
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf2000/2007-2013_en.html
- EU Information Service
http://www.etui-rehs.org/education/eu_information_service

PARTNERSHIP IN THE ESF

The principle of partnership

The Structural Funds operate on the basis of four main principles: concentration, partnership, additionality and programming.

For the ETUC the partnership principle is key to guaranteeing the successful operation of Structural Fund measures. High-quality partnerships should be pursued, involving the social partners in every phase of the funds' interventions.

The ETUC regrets the fact that the Structural Funds' rules do not define the partnership principle clearly whilst, again, relying on "current national rules and practices".

It should be noted that the new Regulation extends the definition of potential partners. A partnership can be organised with authorities and bodies such as:

- a) the competent regional, local, urban and other public authorities;
- b) the economic and social partners;
- c) any other appropriate body representing civil society, environmental partners, non-governmental organisations, and bodies responsible for promoting equality between men and women.

The new Regulation stipulates that the partnership shall cover the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the operational programmes. Member States shall involve, where appropriate, each of the relevant partners, and particularly the regions, in the different stages of programming within the time limit set for each stage.

■ The operational programme

The new regulation stipulates that each operational programme shall be drawn up by the Member State or any authority designated by the Member State, in cooperation with the partners.

■ The Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee shall be chaired by a representative of the Member State or the managing authority. Its composition shall be decided by the Member State in agreement with the management authority.

■ Technical assistance

At the initiative of and/or on behalf of the Commission, subject to a ceiling of 2.5% of their respective annual allocation, the Funds may finance the preparatory, monitoring, administrative and technical support, evaluation, audit and inspection measures necessary for implementing the Regulation.

It is to be noted that those actions shall include, in particular:

- measures aimed at the partners, the beneficiaries of assistance from the Funds and the general public, including information measures;
- measures to disseminate information, networking, raise awareness, promote cooperation and exchange experiences.

* In the ESF

The Regulation on the ESF strengthens the “good governance and partnership” principles. It stipulates that the ESF shall promote good governance and partnership. Its support shall be designed and implemented at the appropriate territorial level taking into account the national, regional and local level based on the institutional arrangements specific to each Member State.

Moreover, the Member States shall ensure the involvement of the social partners and adequate consultation and participation of other stakeholders, at the appropriate territorial level, in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of ESF support.

■ Funding

In the framework of the new Regulation, the managing authority of each operational programme shall encourage adequate participation of the social partners in actions funded under Article 3.

More particularly, under the convergence objective, **an appropriate amount of the ESF resources** shall be allocated to capacity-building, which shall include training, networking measures, strengthening the social dialogue and activities jointly undertaken by the social partners, in particular as regards adaptability of workers and enterprises referred to in Article 3 (1) (a).

The Commission has set up an ad hoc group on ESF Support for Social Partners in order to ensure and “monitor” that support. The meetings of the ad hoc group have been very useful for clarifying the European understanding of social dialogue and the definition of “social partners”.

A “fiche” on “Social Partners as ESF Beneficiaries” has been formally adopted by the ESF Committee as an official reference document for the committees.

At the ETUC’s request, the Commission has agreed to retain ESF support to the social partners as a permanent feature on future agendas of the ESF Committee.

Claude Denagtergal
ETUC

GOOD PRACTICES BY TRADE UNIONS IN USING THE ESF

THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS (TUC) AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

The TUC is the UK Trade Union Centre, with some 66 affiliated trade unions who together represent 6.5 million members.

The ESF is a labour market instrument and within the UK there are two broad areas for activity:

- **Getting people into work**
- **Creating an adaptable and skilled workforce**

In this note the experience of the TUC and member unions is discussed under these two main headings.

Union Experience: into work

In the UK the new Labour Government first introduced the “New Deal” for the young unemployed and those who had been out of work for some time. In subsequent years the New Deal has been steadily extended to other groups who have experienced alienation from the labour market, such as single parents and disabled workers.

The New Deal is most successful when it recognises the multiple barriers that individuals face and the ESF was very useful in funding the testing of more flexible and innovative approaches that unions supported and that help focus the New Deal on helping rather than penalising individuals.

In the preparations for the Commonwealth Games, held in Manchester in 2002, the ESF supported a large programme to recruit volunteers who helped in the running of the games. The programme offered valuable opportunities and training for unemployed individuals from disadvantaged groups. Trade union support and involvement ensured that the programme was about offering real additional opportunities and not substituting for work that should have been done by paid staff.

Union Experience: workers’ skills

The ESF has been used to support union-led initiatives to respond to widespread redundancies as sectors and areas restructured, while ESF-funded needs analysis, counselling and customised training programmes have given workers skills that they can take into new sectors and occupations.

Examples include a national project covering the whole of the steel industry, which was led by the union for that sector and its own training organisation in partnership with others, and one for the ceramics industry, which is concentrated in a particular region of the UK.

The ESF has been used to support union-led efforts to raise members’ skills. We have developed a programme of recruitment and training for Union Learning Reps. These are union appointed workplace representatives whose job is to liaise with employed members to secure learning opportunities that are not just work-related. One technique has been to promote Workplace Learning Centres, which offer both the capacity to improve work-related skills and the opportunity for wider learning and personal development.

One of our key trade union objectives has been to secure opportunities for all. The ESF has in the past and

during the last phase of the Equal programme assisted unions in their work to promote Skills for Life for members. The development of contextualised materials and tools has been supported at various points by ESF investment alongside domestic funding.

Trade Unions and the ESF: some lessons

From our experience it is essential to begin with clear trade union objectives. For us these included the establishment of union learning reps and union initiatives to respond to redundancies. We then decided to look for resources to support this work. In some cases it was the ESF, in others it was domestic programmes, whilst in others still it was through bargaining with employers to secure their investment.

We have been more successful when we have worked with partners. We have a long tradition of delivering training for our own workplace representatives and officers in partnership with local Further Education Colleges and voluntary sector bodies such as the Workers Educational Association. Our programme of training for union learning reps has built on this partnership.

Careful administration of ESF-funded projects is essential not only to be able to meet the best standards of probity etc, but so that we can ourselves properly monitor if we are using our resources wisely.

We have learnt that it is essential to build evaluation strategies into all projects so that we can ensure that we are achieving our objectives.

Further Information

TUC website: www.tuc.org.uk
ESF in the UK: www.esf.gov.uk
Equal: www.equal-works.com
E-mail: amanning@tuc.org.uk

Alan Manning
TUC
UK

THE VALUE OF THE ESF AND WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

First I will briefly introduce myself: I am a former social worker and have worked for SACO, the Swedish Confederation of Professional Association for nearly 20 years. I have worked with the ESF since Sweden became a member of the EU, more than 10 years ago now. I have been representing the Swedish unions in the ESF committee at EU level for many years. I have been, and remain a member of the Swedish monitoring committees for the ESF programmes. I have also been a representative in various executive committees and working groups within the ESF.

Here are some of the main lessons I would like to share, especially with representatives of the new member countries:

Becoming European

Cohesion policy and the ESF, like Nokia in its advert, “make people connect”. All projects within the ESF programmes give us opportunities to understand more about Europe, and about ourselves.

Devising programmes to be funded by the ESF simply in order to get that funding should not be permitted. It would also be a waste of time, money and energy. Everyone, at all levels, should recognise and accept the aims of the ESF when using the fund’s resources.

Partnerships are essential

The ESF Regulation now lays a real stress on working in partnerships between government and the social partners, mainly unions and employers’ organisations. And there are very good reasons behind this “win-win” approach. The investments from the ESF will certainly not give good results and effective outcomes if the players in the labour market and the world of work are not prepared to the practical work and to implement and follow up the different objectives and policies. The bottom line is that it is at the workplace that the job gets done. And how can you reach a workplace without the cooperation of the employers and the employees’ organisations?

The key is added value

Added value is a very complex concept and it needs to be clear what it is and who is gaining it. These are very useful questions to discuss when forming a partnership. Of course, there are no set answers to these questions. For me, it has become clear, that one form of added value is what you get when you work with others and achieve results that would not have been possible to achieve on your own. The partnership and the work process themselves should therefore be regarded as adding value.

Not money from heaven

ESF funding like other “EU money” is often considered to be like a “free lunch”. But I can assure you that “there is no such thing as a free lunch”. Of course, your ESF projects should benefit you, but they must also fit into the European pattern. So there is a limited scope in terms of what you can actually do with the funding. Even if you might think – since you know the local needs – you can find better ways of handling the money given, don’t try it. You can be innovative in many ways but it is important that you keep within the limits of the ESF Regulation and the Operational programmes. This is not only for the sake of the Commission, in the long term it is just as important for you and the programmes you are involved in. The other “bottom line” is the need to safeguard the union’s own reputation.

Partnerships for problem-solving

Of course, every partner in a partnership has to have a good reason to be there. But being there should not be seen as an opportunity to negotiate in order to get the biggest piece of the pie. What you do in a partnership is more about sharing ideas on how to make the pie. If you really disagree about how you should divide the pie, it is better to have that negotiation outside the partnership, especially if you intend to do some more baking together. Working in a partnership is more about problem-solving and how to make a pie big enough for all.

Link in to other EU policies

Working with the ESF is clearly connected to the Lisbon strategy, the Social Agenda and other policies for Europe’s growth and welfare. Investments from the ESF are intended for implementing these policies in the

Member States. But the “policy people” are often only vaguely familiar with the ESF. Having some general knowledge about the Lisbon strategy, for instance, is a great help when meeting colleagues and/or counterparts. Then it is so much easier to make them realise the value of the ESF and the work you do.

Communication between the levels

A common source of irritation and mistakes are the “us and them blame game”. Try to avoid playing that game, since there is nothing to win. Of course, actors at EU level cannot have precisely the same outlook or knowledge as actors at local level, for instance, and vice versa. It is much better to reach out to actors at other levels (or, for that matter, in other Member States), than to “grumble at home”.

Be involved – but not too involved

Since partnerships are a relatively new way of working, there is some scope for creating your role within a partnership without being too hampered by former traditions of rights and wrongs. This is tricky and you should tread carefully, however. I would strongly recommend keeping a very clear line between the role of the Managing Authority and the role for the social partners. Agreeing responsibilities is one important aspect of forming the partnership; it has to be crystal clear who is responsible for what.

Bring back the ESF to the office

Since the ESF is rather complex and demanding, it can be very difficult to get any attention “at home” for ESF-related work. Also the trade unionists involved in this work are often working along in what is frequently time-consuming work. Therefore, it is particularly important to take time to:

- get your top management’s support for working with the ESF
- avoid restrictive mandates from “home”. Working with the ESF is a process-oriented business.
- report back and make your good work visible to your employer and colleagues
- remember to build networks and to have some fun!

Charlotta KRAFFT
SACO
Sweden

SOCIAL PARTNER INVOLVEMENT IN THE “PROGRAMMING” OF EU FUNDS: THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

Partnership is one of the key principles of the EU cohesion policy. In that context the social partners in Italy played an important role in the “programming” of the EU funds in the period from 2000-2006. The role differed in Objective 1 and Objective 3 regions.

In less-developed regions (Southern Italy), the so-called Objective 1 regions, the social partners played an advisory role. They had information and consultation rights. Their active involvement at the beginning of the process was greatly appreciated by the EU Commission. At a technical level, the social partners participated in the Monitoring Committees at national and regional level. At a political level, the Italian social partners also participated in the Partnership Forum, where key issues concerning the allocation of EU funds were discussed between trade unions, employers’ associations and public institutions once a year. Social partner representatives also helped through involvement in the National “Technical Assistance” Operational Programme. This Programme was financed by EU funds and the social partners, together with the public authorities, decided what support should be provided to trade unionists and employers involved in the Monitoring Committees. Training, help with project planning and additional information were provided to them through this measure. There was also a website aimed at supporting social and economic partnership.

In Objective 3 regions (training and employment policies in Central and Northern Italy) the social partners played a more important role than in Objective 1 regions in the period 2000-2006. They participated in the Monitoring Committees with the same participatory and voting rights as other members of the Committee. Social partner representatives in the Monitoring Committees were supported by Scift Aid, an online communication project, that provided them with documentation, training and help with projects. The Italian trade unions achieved considerable success in Objective 3 regions in 2000-2006: most of the European Social Fund resources in Objective 3 regions were allocated for supporting active labour policies and lifelong learning.

Considering the experience of social partners’ involvement in 2000-2006 both in Objective 1 and in Objective 3 Italian regions, it is possible to highlight the strengths and the weaknesses. Three aspects should be chosen concerning the strengths. First, social partners were more involved in the programming period 2000-2006 than in the past. Second, they played an active role, especially at the beginning of the EU funds programming period. Third, The Social Dialogue has been reinforced by the discussion with national and local Public Authorities. Among weaknesses should be considered three aspects. First, the Italian Public Administrations tended to give social partners only a formal role in a number of occasions. Second, the discussion on programming EU funds was often limited to social partners’ representatives who were in the Monitoring Committees. At last, there is still a lack of analysis regarding the impact of EU funds on employment and work organisation.

Having in mind these strengths and weaknesses, some lessons for the EU Funds programming period 2007-2013 should be drawn. Under the new “Convergence” Objective (former Objective 1), social partners will be encouraged to actively participate in capacity building actions and to undertake joint activities in the policy areas where they play a decisive role (e.g.: lifelong learning, modernisation of work organisation and tackling the consequences of restructuring). Moreover, under the new “Regional Competitiveness and Employment” Objective, social partners need to put more emphasis on tools aimed at evaluating the impact of EU funds on the quality and the quantity of jobs.

Ornella Cilona
CGIL,
Italy

THE SPANISH EXPERIENCE (1)

Theme-based focuses

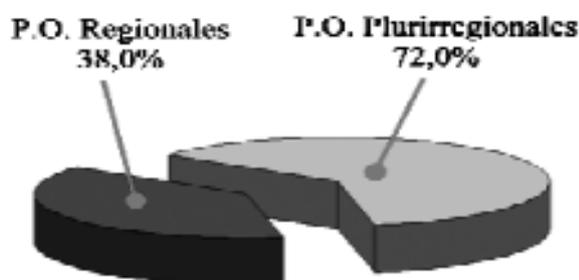
The Operational Programmes have been broken down into five theme-based focuses:

1. Actions that set out to promote employment and vocational training (vocational training for the unemployed). (Objectives 1 and 3).
2. Actions in the field of continuing training and the reinforcement of business skills. (Objectives 1 and 3).
3. Organisation of the vocational training system. (Objectives 1 and 3).
4. The Spanish Research, Development and Innovation system. (Objective 1)
5. Combating discrimination. (Objectives 1 and 3). Transversal

The programming structure followed by Spain

- Two broad groups of Operational Programmes, resulting from the allocation of the areas of competence to be covered by the Central Government and the Autonomous Communities.
- The actions planned by the ESF are broken down into:
 - *The Regional Programmes that cover the actions of each autonomous government, covering the five priority areas of action laid down by the ESF regulation.*
 - *The Pluri-regional Programmes that have a horizontal character, and that follow a structure that is linked to the areas of action and combine the national actions of the Public Administration and other national agencies*

Structure



Theme I. The unemployed

MEASURE 1 - provides the unemployed with possibilities helping them join the labour market

- Vocational Training (for the unemployed)
- *National Training and Integration Plan, FIP Plan, Royal Decree 631/1993, of 3 May.*

Description:

Free vocational training for those who want to enter the labour market and wish to retrain or obtain a specialist qualification.

The above will be complemented by ongoing studies designed to pinpoint new sources of employment, in emerging or expanding sectors and professions, with due consideration for the evolution in vocational skills and the resulting training needs.

Target groups:

The following groups are given priority access to these actions:

- a) Unemployed people who receive unemployment benefit or compensation.
- b) Unemployed people over the age of 25, especially those registered as unemployed for more than a year.

- c) Unemployed people under the age of 25, who have lost a job that they had held for at least six months.
- d) Unemployed people with specific integration difficulties.

In order to ensure a better integration of women into the Labour Market, the F.I.P. plan sets out to achieve a 60% female participation rate in its training actions.

MEASURE 2: Fight long-term unemployment through employment reintegration actions for the long-term unemployed

■ Job workshops

The aim is to improve the employability of unemployed people aged 25 or over through their participation in public or social utility work or services related to new sources of employment.

Description:

At the Job Workshops, the participating workers receive appropriate training concerning the position to be filled, on sandwich courses organised between work placements.

Target groups

Unemployed people aged 25 or over, with a special focus on the long-term unemployed, those over the age of 45, women and persons with any kind of disability.

Theme 2 : Employed workers

National Continuing Training Subsystem

- It is based on the continuing training Agreements concluded between the social partners (bipartite agreement) and between the latter and the Government (tripartite agreement). These agreements are renewed every 4 years.
- The continuing training of workers is geared to more effective forms of work organisation.
- The aim is to anticipate the adaptations needed in production processes, whilst heightening awareness of environmental issues.
- Special focus on Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)

Target group: Employed workers.

For the purposes of the aforementioned Agreement, continuing Training is understood to mean:

- a) Training actions that are carried out for companies, workers or their respective representative organisations, targeting both the improvement of skills and qualifications and the retraining of the employed workers. These actions can take the form of demand training programmes, supply training programmes and cross-sectoral training programmes.
- b) Additional and accompanying training measures that contribute to the detection of new training needs and to the development of new tools and methodologies applicable to training.
- c) Individual training leave that allow workers to improve their qualifications.

Continuing training will fulfil the following functions:

- Ensuring the permanent adaptation to the changing requirements of professions and particular posts, through the improvement of skills and qualifications that is vital to both companies and their staff.
- Providing social enhancement opportunities that will allow many workers to avoid 'stagnating' vocational qualifications.
- A preventive function, geared to anticipating the possible negative consequences of the creation of the single market and overcoming the difficulties faced by sectors and companies undergoing economic and technological reorganisation.

Theme 3: Organisation of the vocational training system

Initial/regulated vocational training

The education provided by the general non-university system is broken down into the following levels, stages and cycles:

- Nursery Education.
- Primary Education.
- Secondary Education, that covers the following stages:
 - Compulsory Secondary Education.
 - Social Guarantee Programmes.
 - Specific Vocational Training.
 - Bachillerato (school leaving certificate)
- Non-University Post-Secondary Education
 - Advanced-level Specific Vocational Training.

Setting up of the National System of Vocational Qualifications and Vocational Training

The National Institute of Qualifications is created:

- To establish, with the Social Partners, a **National Qualifications Catalogue**, and associated training courses. This is key to establishing links to the vocational training structures created through collective bargaining and integrating the various vocational training sub-systems, including the one covering initial training.
- This catalogue is the reference framework for accreditation of vocational qualifications, regardless of how they were obtained, whether formally, non formally, or informally.

The functions of the National Institute of Qualifications are laid down in article 2 of the Royal Decree 375/1999. The following functions are worth highlighting:

- Establishment and management of the National System of Qualifications.
- Provision of a System for Accreditation and Recognition of Vocational Skills.
- Provision of measures needed for the regulation of the system of correspondence, validation and equivalence between the three subsystems for vocational training, including work experience.
- Provision of information about the evolution of the supply and demand of the professions, jobs and profiles on the labour market, taking into account, inter alia, the vocational classification systems that have emerged from collective bargaining.
- Establishment of a process for making the Agencies or Institutes of the Autonomous Communities and the Social Partners jointly responsible, both for the definition of the Catalogue of Vocational Qualifications, and for the updating of the sector demands.
- Development, on behalf of the General Council of Vocational Training, of vocational training activities such as reports, studies, comparative analyses, recompilation of documents, bibliographies, academic seminars at national and community level.

The National Qualifications System

The SNCP (National System of Vocational Qualifications) comprises 3 structural elements:

- 1) The Catalogue of Vocational State Qualifications.
- 2) The Integrated Modular Training Catalogue (referred to as CIM)
- 3) The Vocational Skills Recognition and Accreditation System.

1) *The Catalogue of Vocational State Qualifications.*

With this Catalogue, vocational training, in all its subsystems, will have a common frame of reference of skills that ensures that the training actions are in line with the current (and foreseeable) qualification needs of production processes and the labour market, including the qualification needs in the various Autonomous Communities, in other Member States of the European Union and in industrial economies.

The Catalogue contains the reference to “State” and therefore its construction must be based on the principle of preservation of the whole labour market.

2) The Integrated Modular Training Catalogue (below CIM)

in conjunction with the Catalogue of Vocational State Qualifications, will be the key factor to obtain the full training offer of the three subsystems for vocational training: regulated/initial, vocational and continuing training.

The CIM, organised into models appropriate for the needs of the active population, both employed and unemployed, and the needs of the school age population, will be offered in the network of vocational training centres.

3) The Vocational Skills Recognition and Accreditation System.

The System must be capable of:

Evaluating, recognising and accrediting the skills and qualifications that people have, regardless of how they were obtained, including through non formal channels, whilst enhancing the value of the accreditations with a view to advancing people’s careers and promoting the possibility of lifelong learning for all citizens.

Drawing up of the National Qualifications System

It covers six phases:

- 1) **Preparation of data and training of the working group.** With the participation of the social partners.
- 2) **Drawing up of the qualification.** With the participation of the social partners.
- 3) **Definition of the associated training.** With the participation of the social partners.
- 4) **External verification.** Carried out with the participation of the Social Partners.
- 5) **Negotiation of the qualification with the General Council of Vocational Training.** Tripartite body.
- 6) **Negotiation of the qualification with the State Council of Schools** (with representation for the social partners) and the relevant government departments

1) Preparation of data and training of the working group

Determines the category of work that is to be the subject of examination and identifies and analyses the qualifications that can be achieved within that area of work.

UGT is involved and proposes experts for these working groups, who are selected in accordance with their technical profile and not based on any representation criteria. The selection is made by the Government.

2) Drawing up of the qualification

Drawing up of the General Competence Qualification and determination of the specific units of competence. This is closely linked to the functions to be carried out by the worker holding this qualification. At the same time, it lists the most relevant jobs and tasks associated with the particular qualification.

3) Definition of associated training

Ensuring the relevance of the training, sometimes including consideration of the requirements in terms of training credits for exercising mobility, particularly in “regulated professions”.

(‘regulated profession’: a professional activity or group of professional activities, access to which, the pursuit of which, or one of the modes of pursuit of which is subject, directly or indirectly, by virtue of legislative, regulatory or administrative provisions to the possession of specific professional qualifications. Directive 2005/36/EC, of 7 September 2005, of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications.)

4) External verification

Two channels:

1. Aspects relating to the definition of the qualification, the functions to be developed by those who hold

them, its relationship with the information obtained from collective bargaining and the estimation of the precise time needed for its acquisition.

2. Aspects that refer to the suitability of the training that is listed in the document establishing each qualification and the definition of the general competence that defines it...

5) Negotiations for the drawing up of the qualification

Negotiations about the qualification with the General Council of Vocational Training.

Tripartite body. Advisory body for non-university vocational training.

6) Negotiations about the qualification with the State Schools Council (on which there is social partner representation) **and the ministerial departments involved**

Progress of the development of the Catalogue of Qualifications and Vocational Training

The Catalogue is divided up into 26 categories of work/vocational categories.

It is calculated that the first edition will contain around 600 qualifications.

It currently has **223 vocational qualifications published in the annexes to the following Royal Decrees:**

- Royal Decree 295/2004 (BOE 9 March) includes 97 qualifications.
- Royal Decree 1087/2005 (BOE 5 October 2005) includes 65 qualifications.
- Royal Decree 1228/2006 (BOE 3 January 2007) includes 61 qualifications.

Negotiations are currently underway on 112 qualifications.

In all, **495 qualifications have been officially defined.**

Luis Galiano

UGT-E

Spain

THE SPANISH EXPERIENCE (2)

Royal decree 395/2007 regulating the subsystem for vocational training for employment

Introduction to the RD

After 13 years with two different forms of training – vocational training and continuing training -  It has become necessary to integrate them in a single vocational training model

Furthermore, certain events and factors have had an impact on the vocational training model in recent years:

- ▣ Organic Law 5/2002 on Qualifications and Vocational Training
- Judgements handed down by the Constitutional Court that define the scope of action by central and regional government agencies in the area of continuing training.
- ▣ The Employment Law of 2003, which places training at the centre of workplace policies aimed at achieving employment objectives.
- ▣ Other regulations not specifically aimed at training but which influence its development, such as the General Subsidies Law (Law 38/2003).



2

RD 395/2007 Vocational Training for Employment

Introduction to the RD (cont.)

Moreover, in view of the fact that

the European Union regards **lifelong learning** as a fundamental pillar of its employment strategy and included it in the structural indicators of the Lisbon Strategy for education and training objectives for the year 2010

Consequently, the government and employer and trade union organisations signed the Agreement on Vocational Training for Employment on 7 February 2006



ROYAL DECREE 395/2007 REGULATING THE SUBSYSTEM FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT
published in the BOE on 23 March 2007



3

RD 395/2007 Vocational Training for Employment

Purpose of the RD

The RD regulates:

- ✓ The various training initiatives that make up the subsystem
- ✓ Operating arrangements and financing
- ✓ Organisational structure and structure for institutional participation

The subsystem consists of all instruments and actions designed to provide employed and unemployed people with training that meets their needs whilst contributing to the development of a knowledge-based economy

Aims of the system

- Lifelong training
- *To provide appropriate knowledge and experience*
- To improve the productivity and competitiveness of business
- *To increase employability*
- Provide skills accreditation

Principles of the system

1. Transparency, simplicity, quality and effectiveness
2. Single finance unit for the vocational training levy
3. Unity in labour market and the free movement of workers during training
4. Cooperation and coordination between competent government agencies
5. Links with social dialogue and sectoral collective bargaining
6. Participation of social partners
7. Links with the national vocational qualifications system
8. The right to free employment-related training and equal access to training for workers and businesses

Initiatives included in the RD

☞ **Creation of demand**

☞ **Creation of supply**

☞ **Work-related training**

☞ **Training support initiatives**

Targeted workers

All employed and unemployed workers, including those who do not pay the VT levy

Creation of demand

Workers in paid employment who provide services to companies *including* unemployed and temporarily unemployed dismissed workers

Creation of supply

Employed and unemployed workers

Work-related training

Workers hired for training (training contracts) and the unemployed (government job training programmes)



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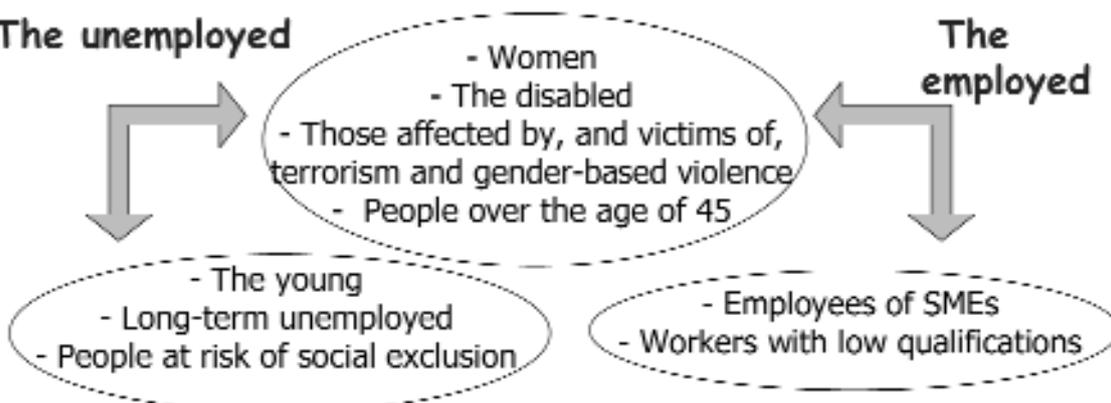
RD 395/2007 Vocational Training for Employment

Targeted workers (cont.)

Training for **government employees**: Through continuing training agreements signed by government departments, and up to 10% participation in cross-sectoral programmes

The following groups may have **priority**:

The unemployed



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RD 395/2007 Vocational Training for Employment

Financing the system

... in accordance with the provisions of the General Budget Law, the system will be financed from:

⇒ FUNDS FROM THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING LEVY

⇒ FUNDS FROM THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND

⇒ SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS STIPULATED IN THE SPEE BUDGET

In addition,

⇒ THE REGIONS MAY CONTRIBUTE THEIR OWN FUNDS



Certificates of vocational competence



Cover training associated with the national vocational qualifications catalogue (CNCP)

- ✓ Constitute official accreditation of vocational skills enabling a person to perform a professional task
- ✓ Relate to specific units of vocational skills listed in the catalogue
- ✓ Each certificate can cover one or more units of competence
- ✓ The unit of competence is the smallest verifiable and cumulative unit for obtaining a certificate of vocational competence



Certificates of vocational competence (cont.)



- ✓ A certificate of vocational competence will be issued when all training modules for all units of competence in the course have been successfully completed
- ✓ Partial accreditations will expire when one or more training modules in the catalogue have been successfully completed
- ✓ Training not associated with the catalogue: Participants must be issued with the following:
 - Certificate of attendance
 - Diploma that certifies training, with a positive evaluation
- ✓ Like vocational experience, this training can be recognised through full or partial accreditations of vocational competence in accordance with the regulations



Paco Moreno
CC.OO.
Spain

APPENDICES

- ▶ **EU KEY TEXTS 2007-2013** **P.35 ❖ P.70**
 - ▶ L210 2006, page 12-18- Regulation ESF
 - ▶ L291 2006, page 11-22- Community Strategic Guidelines on cohesion
 - ▶ L205 2005, page 22-27- Guidelines for employment policies of Member States

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REGULATION (EC) No 1081/2006 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

of 5 July 2006

on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 148 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee ⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions ⁽²⁾,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty ⁽³⁾,

Whereas:

- (1) Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund ⁽⁴⁾ establishes the framework for action by the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund and lays down, in particular, the objectives, principles and rules concerning partnership, programming, evaluation and management. It is therefore necessary to define the mission of the European Social Fund (ESF) in relation to the tasks prescribed under Article 146 of the Treaty and in the context of the work by Member States and the Community towards developing a coordinated strategy for employment under Article 125 of the Treaty.
- (2) Specific provisions concerning the type of activities which may be financed by the ESF under the objectives set out in Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 should be laid down.
- (3) The ESF should strengthen economic and social cohesion by improving employment opportunities within the framework of the tasks entrusted to the ESF by Article 146 of the Treaty and of the tasks entrusted to the Structural Funds by Article 159 of the Treaty, in accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.
- (4) This is all the more important in the light of the challenges arising from the enlargement of the Union and the phenomenon of economic globalisation. In this connection, the importance of the European social model and its modernisation should be acknowledged.

- (5) In accordance with Articles 99 and 128 of the Treaty, and with a view to refocusing the Lisbon strategy on growth and jobs, the Council has adopted an integrated package comprising Broad Economic Policy Guidelines and Employment Guidelines, the latter setting out employment objectives, priorities and targets. In this regard, the Brussels European Council of 22 and 23 March 2005 called for the mobilisation of all appropriate national and Community resources, including cohesion policy.
- (6) New lessons have been learnt from the Community initiative EQUAL, especially in respect of the combination of local, regional, national and European action. These lessons should be integrated into ESF support. Particular attention should be paid to the participation of target groups, the integration of migrants, including those seeking asylum, the identification of policy issues and their subsequent mainstreaming, innovation and experimentation techniques, methodologies for transnational cooperation, outreach to groups marginalised in relation to the labour market, the impact of social issues on the internal market, and access to and management of projects taken on by non-governmental organisations.
- (7) The ESF should support the policies of Member States which are closely in line with the guidelines and recommendations under the European Employment Strategy and the relevant objectives of the Community in relation to social inclusion, non-discrimination, the promotion of equality, and education and training, in order to better contribute to the implementation of the objectives and targets agreed at the Lisbon European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000 and at the Göteborg European Council of 15 and 16 June 2001.
- (8) The ESF should also act to tackle the relevant dimensions and consequences of demographic changes in the active population of the Community, in particular through life-long vocational training.
- (9) With a view to better anticipating and managing change and increasing economic growth, employment opportunities for both women and men, and quality and productivity at work under the Regional competitiveness and employment and Convergence objectives, assistance from the ESF should focus, in particular, on improving the adaptability of workers and enterprises, enhancing human capital and access to employment and participation in the labour market, reinforcing the social inclusion of disadvantaged people, combating discrimination, encouraging economically inactive persons to enter the labour market and promoting partnerships for reform.

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 234, 22.9.2005, p. 27.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 164, 5.7.2005, p. 48.

⁽³⁾ Opinion of the European Parliament of 6 July 2005 (not yet published in the Official Journal), Council Common Position of 12 June 2006 (not yet published in the Official Journal) and Position of the European Parliament of 4 July 2006 (not yet published in the Official Journal).

⁽⁴⁾ See p. 25 of this Official Journal.

- (10) In addition to these priorities, in the least developed regions and Member States, under the Convergence objective and with a view to increasing economic growth, employment opportunities for both women and men, and quality and productivity at work, it is necessary to expand and improve investment in human capital and to improve institutional, administrative and judicial capacity, in particular to prepare and implement reforms and enforce the *acquis*.
- (11) Within the range of these priorities, the selection of ESF interventions should be flexible in order to address the specific challenges in each Member State, and the types of priority action financed by the ESF should allow for a margin of flexibility to respond to these challenges.
- (12) The promotion of innovative transnational and interregional activities is an important dimension which should be integrated in the scope of the ESF. In order to foster cooperation, Member States should programme transnational and interregional actions using a horizontal approach or through a dedicated priority axis.
- (13) It is necessary to ensure that the action of the ESF is consistent with the policies provided for under the European Employment Strategy and to concentrate ESF support on the implementation of the guidelines and recommendations under that strategy.
- (14) Efficient and effective implementation of actions supported by the ESF depends on good governance and partnership between all relevant territorial and socio-economic actors, and in particular the social partners and other stakeholders, including those at national, regional and local level. The social partners have a central role in the broad partnership for change, and their commitment to strengthening economic and social cohesion by improving employment and job opportunities is essential. In this context, where employers and workers collectively contribute to financially supporting ESF actions, this financial contribution, although private expenditure, would be included for the purposes of calculating ESF co-financing.
- (15) The ESF should support actions in line with the guidelines and relevant recommendations under the European Employment Strategy. However, changes to the guidelines and recommendations would require the revision of an operational programme only where a Member State, or the Commission in agreement with a Member State, considered that the operational programme should take account of significant socioeconomic changes or take greater or different account of major changes in Community, national or regional priorities, or in the light of evaluations or following implementation difficulties.
- (16) The Member States and the Commission are to ensure that the implementation of the priorities financed by the ESF under the Convergence and Regional competitiveness and employment objectives contribute to the promotion of equality and the elimination of inequalities between women and men. A gender mainstreaming approach should be combined with specific action to increase the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment.
- (17) The ESF should also support technical assistance, with a particular focus on encouraging mutual learning through exchanges of experience and dissemination of good practice and on highlighting the contribution of the ESF to the policy objectives and priorities of the Community in relation to employment and social inclusion.
- (18) Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 provides that rules on eligibility of expenditure are to be established at national level, with certain exceptions for which it is necessary to lay down specific provisions. Specific provisions should therefore be laid down for the exceptions related to the ESF.
- (19) In the interest of clarity, Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 1999 on the European Social Fund ⁽¹⁾ should therefore be repealed.

HAVE ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Subject matter

1. This Regulation establishes the tasks of the European Social Fund (ESF), the scope of its assistance, specific provisions and the types of expenditure eligible for assistance.
2. The ESF is governed by Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and by this Regulation.

Article 2

Tasks

1. The ESF shall contribute to the priorities of the Community as regards strengthening economic and social cohesion by improving employment and job opportunities, encouraging a high level of employment and more and better jobs. It shall do so by supporting Member States' policies aiming to achieve full employment and quality and productivity at work, promote social inclusion, including the access of disadvantaged people to employment, and reduce national, regional and local employment disparities.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 213, 13.8.1999, p. 5.

In particular, the ESF shall support actions in line with measures taken by Member States on the basis of the guidelines adopted under the European Employment Strategy, as incorporated into the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs, and the accompanying recommendations.

2. In carrying out the tasks referred to in paragraph 1, the ESF shall support the priorities of the Community as regards the need to reinforce social cohesion, strengthen productivity and competitiveness, and promote economic growth and sustainable development. In so doing, the ESF shall take into account the relevant priorities and objectives of the Community in the fields of education and training, increasing the participation of economically inactive people in the labour market, combating social exclusion — especially that of disadvantaged groups such as people with disabilities — and promoting equality between women and men and non-discrimination.

Article 3

Scope of assistance

1. Within the framework of the Convergence and Regional competitiveness and employment objectives, the ESF shall support actions in Member States under the priorities listed below:

- (a) increasing adaptability of workers, enterprises and entrepreneurs with a view to improving the anticipation and positive management of economic change, in particular by promoting:
 - (i) lifelong learning and increased investment in human resources by enterprises, especially SMEs, and workers, through the development and implementation of systems and strategies, including apprenticeships, which ensure improved access to training by, in particular, low-skilled and older workers, the development of qualifications and competences, the dissemination of information and communication technologies, e-learning, eco-friendly technologies and management skills, and the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation and business start-ups;
 - (ii) the design and dissemination of innovative and more productive forms of work organisation, including better health and safety at work, the identification of future occupational and skills requirements, and the development of specific employment, training and support services, including outplacement, for workers in the context of company and sector restructuring;
- (b) enhancing access to employment and the sustainable inclusion in the labour market of job seekers and inactive people, preventing unemployment, in particular long-term and youth unemployment, encouraging active ageing and

longer working lives, and increasing participation in the labour market, in particular by promoting:

- (i) the modernisation and strengthening of labour market institutions, in particular employment services and other relevant initiatives in the context of the strategies of the European Union and the Member States for full employment;
- (ii) the implementation of active and preventive measures ensuring the early identification of needs with individual action plans and personalised support, such as tailored training, job search, outplacement and mobility, self-employment and business creation, including cooperative enterprises, incentives to encourage participation in the labour market, flexible measures to keep older workers in employment longer, and measures to reconcile work and private life, such as facilitating access to childcare and care for dependent persons;
- (iii) mainstreaming and specific action to improve access to employment, increase the sustainable participation and progress of women in employment and reduce gender-based segregation in the labour market, including by addressing the root causes, direct and indirect, of gender pay gaps;
- (iv) specific action to increase the participation of migrants in employment and thereby strengthen their social integration and to facilitate geographic and occupational mobility of workers and integration of cross-border labour markets, including through guidance, language training and validation of competences and acquired skills;
- (c) reinforcing the social inclusion of disadvantaged people with a view to their sustainable integration in employment and combating all forms of discrimination in the labour market, in particular by promoting:
 - (i) pathways to integration and re-entry into employment for disadvantaged people, such as people experiencing social exclusion, early school leavers, minorities, people with disabilities and people providing care for dependent persons, through employability measures, including in the field of the social economy, access to vocational education and training, and accompanying actions and relevant support, community and care services that improve employment opportunities;
 - (ii) acceptance of diversity in the workplace and the combating of discrimination in accessing and progressing in the labour market, including through awareness-raising, the involvement of local communities and enterprises and the promotion of local employment initiatives;

(d) enhancing human capital, in particular by promoting:

- (i) the design and introduction of reforms in education and training systems in order to develop employability, the improvement of the labour market relevance of initial and vocational education and training and the continual updating of the skills of training personnel with a view to innovation and a knowledge-based economy;
- (ii) networking activities between higher education institutions, research and technological centres and enterprises;

(e) promoting partnerships, pacts and initiatives through networking of relevant stakeholders, such as the social partners and non-governmental organisations, at the transnational, national, regional and local levels in order to mobilise for reforms in the field of employment and labour market inclusiveness.

2. Within the framework of the Convergence objective, the ESF shall support actions in Member States under the priorities listed below:

(a) expanding and improving investment in human capital, in particular by promoting:

- (i) the implementation of reforms in education and training systems, especially with a view to raising people's responsiveness to the needs of a knowledge-based society and lifelong learning;
- (ii) increased participation in education and training throughout the life-cycle, including through actions aiming to achieve a reduction in early school leaving and in gender-based segregation of subjects and increased access to and quality of initial, vocational and tertiary education and training;
- (iii) the development of human potential in research and innovation, notably through post-graduate studies and the training of researchers;

(b) strengthening institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services at national, regional and local level and, where relevant, of the social partners and non-governmental organisations, with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance especially in the economic, employment, education, social, environmental and judicial fields, in particular by promoting:

- (i) mechanisms to improve good policy and programme design, monitoring and evaluation, including through studies, statistics and expert advice, support for interde-

partmental coordination and dialogue between relevant public and private bodies;

- (ii) capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes in the relevant fields, including with regard to the enforcement of legislation, especially through continuous managerial and staff training and specific support to key services, inspectorates and socio-economic actors including social and environmental partners, relevant non-governmental organisations and representative professional organisations.

3. Within the priorities referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, Member States may concentrate on those which are the most appropriate to address their specific challenges.

4. The ESF may support actions set out in Article 3(2) of this Regulation throughout the territory of the Member States eligible for support or transitional support under the Cohesion Fund, as determined respectively in Articles 5(2) and 8(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

5. In implementing the objectives and priorities referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2, the ESF shall support the promotion and mainstreaming of innovative activities in the Member States.

6. The ESF shall also support transnational and interregional actions in particular through the sharing of information, experiences, results and good practices, and through developing complementary approaches and coordinated or joint action.

7. By way of derogation from Article 34(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, the funding of measures under the social inclusion priority referred to in paragraph 1(c)(i) of this Article and within the scope of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund ⁽¹⁾ may be raised to 15 % of the priority axis concerned.

Article 4

Consistency and concentration of support

1. The Member States shall ensure that the actions supported by the ESF are consistent with and contribute to actions undertaken in pursuance of the European Employment Strategy. In particular, they shall ensure that the strategy set out in the national strategic reference framework and the actions set out in the operational programmes promote the objectives, priorities and targets of the strategy in each Member State within the framework of the national reform programmes and national action plans for social inclusion.

⁽¹⁾ See p. 1 of this Official Journal.

The Member States shall also concentrate support, where the ESF can contribute to policies, on the implementation of the relevant employment recommendations made under Article 128(4) of the Treaty and of the relevant employment-related objectives of the Community in the fields of social inclusion, education, and training. Member States shall do so in a stable programming environment.

2. Within operational programmes, resources shall be directed towards the most important needs and focus on those policy areas where ESF support can have a significant effect in attaining the objectives of the programme. To maximise the efficiency of ESF support, operational programmes shall, where appropriate, take particular account of the regions and localities facing the most serious problems, such as deprived urban and outermost regions, declining rural and fisheries-dependent areas, and areas particularly adversely affected by business relocations.

3. Where appropriate, a concise section on the contribution of the ESF to promoting the relevant labour market aspects of social inclusion shall be included in Member States' national reports under the open method of coordination on social protection and social inclusion.

4. The indicators included in the operational programmes co-financed by the ESF shall be strategic in nature and limited in number and shall reflect those used in the implementation of the European Employment Strategy and in the context of the relevant Community objectives in the fields of social inclusion and education and training.

5. Evaluations undertaken in relation to ESF action shall also assess the contribution of the actions supported by the ESF to the implementation of the European Employment Strategy and to the Community objectives in the fields of social inclusion, non-discrimination and equality between women and men, and education and training in the Member State concerned.

Article 5

Good governance and partnership

1. The ESF shall promote good governance and partnership. Its support shall be designed and implemented at the appropriate territorial level taking into account the national, regional and local level according to the institutional arrangements specific to each Member State.

2. The Member States shall ensure the involvement of the social partners and adequate consultation and participation of other stakeholders, at the appropriate territorial level, in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of ESF support.

3. The managing authority of each operational programme shall encourage adequate participation of the social partners in actions funded under Article 3.

Under the Convergence objective, an appropriate amount of ESF resources shall be allocated to capacity-building, which shall include training, networking measures, strengthening the social dialogue and activities jointly undertaken by the social partners, in particular as regards adaptability of workers and enterprises referred to in Article 3(1)(a).

4. The managing authority of each operational programme shall encourage adequate participation and access by non-governmental organisations to the funded activities, notably in the domains of social inclusion, gender equality and equal opportunities.

Article 6

Gender equality and equal opportunities

The Member States shall ensure that operational programmes include a description of how gender equality and equal opportunities are promoted in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of operational programmes. Member States shall promote a balanced participation of women and men in the management and implementation of operational programmes at local, regional and national level, as appropriate.

Article 7

Innovation

In the framework of each operational programme, particular attention shall be paid to the promotion and mainstreaming of innovative activities. The managing authority shall choose the themes for the funding of innovation in the context of partnership and shall define the appropriate implementation arrangements. It shall inform the monitoring committee referred to in Article 63 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of the themes chosen.

Article 8

Transnational and interregional actions

1. Where Member States support actions in favour of transnational and/or interregional actions as set out in Article 3(6) of this Regulation as a specific priority axis within an operational programme, the contribution from the ESF may be increased by 10 % at the priority axis level. This increased contribution shall not be included in the calculation of the ceilings set out in Article 53 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

2. Member States shall, with the assistance of the Commission where appropriate, ensure that the ESF does not support specific operations being concurrently supported through other Community transnational programmes, in particular in the field of education and training.

Article 9

Technical assistance

The Commission shall promote, in particular, exchanges of experience, awareness-raising activities, seminars, networking and peer reviews serving to identify and disseminate good practice and encourage mutual learning and transnational and inter-regional cooperation with the aim of enhancing the policy dimension and contribution of the ESF to the Community objectives in relation to employment and social inclusion.

Article 10

Reports

The annual and final implementation reports referred to in Article 67 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 shall contain, where appropriate, a synthesis of the implementation of:

- (a) gender mainstreaming as well as of any gender-specific action;
- (b) action to increase participation of migrants in employment and thereby strengthen their social integration;
- (c) action to strengthen integration in employment and thereby improve the social inclusion of minorities;
- (d) action to strengthen integration in employment and social inclusion of other disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities;
- (e) innovative activities, including a presentation of the themes and their results, dissemination and mainstreaming;
- (f) transnational and/or interregional actions.

Article 11

Eligibility of expenditure

1. The ESF shall provide support towards eligible expenditure which, notwithstanding Article 53(1)(b) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 may include any financial resources collectively contributed by employers and workers. The assistance shall take the form of non-reimbursable individual or global grants, reimbursable grants, loan interest rebates, micro-credits, guarantee funds and the purchase of goods and services in compliance with public procurement rules.

2. The following expenditure shall not be eligible for a contribution from the ESF:

- (a) recoverable value added tax;
- (b) interest on debt;
- (c) purchase of furniture, equipment, vehicles, infrastructure, real estate and land.

3. The following costs shall be expenditure eligible for a contribution from the ESF as defined in paragraph 1 provided that they are incurred in accordance with national rules, including accountancy rules, and under the specific conditions provided for below:

- (a) the allowances or salaries disbursed by a third party for the benefit of the participants in an operation and certified to the beneficiary;
- (b) in the case of grants, indirect costs declared on a flat-rate basis, up to 20 % of the direct costs of an operation;
- (c) the depreciation costs of depreciable assets listed under paragraph 2(c), allocated exclusively for the duration of an operation, to the extent that public grants have not contributed towards the acquisition of those assets.

4. The eligibility rules set out in Article 7 of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 shall apply to actions co-financed by the ESF which fall within the scope of Article 3 of that Regulation.

Article 12

Transitional provisions

1. This Regulation shall not affect either the continuation or modification, including the total or partial cancellation, of assistance approved by the Commission on the basis of Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999 or any other legislation applying to that assistance on 31 December 2006, which shall consequently apply thereafter to that assistance or the projects concerned until their closure.

2. Applications made under Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999 shall remain valid.

Article 13

Repeal

1. Without prejudice to the provisions laid down in Article 12 of this Regulation, Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999 is hereby repealed with effect from 1 January 2007.

2. References to the repealed Regulation shall be construed as references to this Regulation.

Article 15

Article 14

Review clause

Entry in force

The European Parliament and the Council shall review this Regulation by 31 December 2013 in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 148 of the Treaty.

This Regulation shall enter into force on the day following its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Strasbourg, 5 July 2006.

For the European Parliament

The President

J. BORRELL FONTELLES

For the Council

The President

P. LEHTOMÄKI

II

(Acts whose publication is not obligatory)

COUNCIL

COUNCIL DECISION

of 6 October 2006

on Community strategic guidelines on cohesion

(2006/702/EC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

backwardness of the least favoured regions or islands, including rural areas.

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

(2) Pursuant to Article 25 of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, strategic guidelines on economic, social and territorial cohesion should be established to define an indicative framework for the intervention of the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund (hereinafter 'the Funds'), taking account of other relevant Community policies, with a view to promoting the harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of the Community.

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999⁽¹⁾, and in particular the first subparagraph of Article 25 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

(3) Enlargement results in a substantial widening of regional disparities in the Community, although some of the poorest parts of the new Member States have some of the highest growth rates. Enlargement therefore presents an unprecedented opportunity for improved growth and competitiveness in the Community as a whole which should be reflected in these strategic guidelines.

Having regard to the assent of the European Parliament,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee,

(4) The 2005 Spring European Council confirmed that the Community should mobilise all appropriate national and Community resources — including the cohesion policy — in pursuit of the objectives of the renewed Lisbon agenda, which consists of integrated guidelines, including the broad economic policy guidelines and the employment guidelines adopted by the Council.

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions,

Whereas:

(1) Pursuant to Article 158 of the Treaty, in order to strengthen its economic and social cohesion, the Community aims at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the

(5) In meeting the objectives set out in the Treaty, and in particular that of fostering real economic convergence, the actions supported with the limited resources available to cohesion policy should be concentrated on promoting sustainable growth, competitiveness and employment having regard to the renewed Lisbon agenda.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 25.

- (6) The purpose of these strategic guidelines should therefore be to foster an increase in the strategic content of cohesion policy with a view to strengthening synergies with, and helping to deliver, the objectives of the renewed Lisbon agenda.
- (7) The Spring European Council of 2005 concluded that greater ownership of the objectives of the new Lisbon agenda on the ground was necessary, involving regional and local actors and social partners, in particular, in areas where greater proximity is essential, such as in innovation, the knowledge economy and the new information and communication technologies, employment, human capital, entrepreneurship, support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and access to risk capital financing. These strategic guidelines recognise the importance of this involvement.
- (8) These strategic guidelines should also recognise that the successful implementation of cohesion policy depends on macroeconomic stability and structural reforms at national level together with a range of other conditions which favour investment, including effective implementation of the internal market, administrative reforms, good governance, a business-friendly climate, and the availability of a highly skilled workforce.
- (9) Member States have developed national reform programmes to improve the conditions for growth and employment taking account of the integrated guidelines. These strategic guidelines should give priority, for all Member States and regions, to those areas of investment that help to deliver the national reform programmes taking account of national and regional needs and situations: investment in innovation, the knowledge economy, the new information and communication technologies, employment, human capital, entrepreneurship, support for SMEs or access to risk capital financing.
- (10) The strategic guidelines should take account of the role of cohesion policy in delivering other Community policies consistent with the renewed Lisbon agenda.
- (11) In the case of regions and Member States eligible for support under the Convergence objective, the aim should be to stimulate growth potential, so as to achieve and maintain high growth rates, including addressing the deficits in basic infrastructure networks and strengthening institutional and administrative capacity.
- (12) The territorial dimension of cohesion policy is important and all areas of the Community should have the possibility to contribute to growth and jobs. Accordingly the strategic guidelines should take account of investment needs in both urban and rural areas in view of their respective roles in regional development and in order to promote balanced development, sustainable communities and social inclusion.
- (13) The European territorial cooperation objective has an important role to play in ensuring the balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the Community. The strategic guidelines should contribute to the success of the European territorial objective which depends on shared development strategies of the territories concerned at national, regional, and local level and on networking especially to ensure the transfer of ideas to mainstream national and regional cohesion programmes.
- (14) With a view to promoting sustainable development, the strategic guidelines should reflect the need to take environmental protection and improvement into account in preparing national strategies.
- (15) Equality between men and women and the prevention of discrimination on the basis of gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation are basic principles of cohesion policy and should be incorporated into all levels of the strategic approach to cohesion.
- (16) Good governance is essential at all levels for the successful implementation of cohesion policy. These strategic guidelines should take account of the role of a broadly drawn partnership in the elaboration and implementation of development strategies which is necessary in order to ensure that complex cohesion strategies can be managed successfully and of the need for quality and efficiency in the public sector.
- (17) These strategic guidelines represent a single indicative framework which Member States and regions are invited to use when developing national and regional programmes, in particular with a view to assessing their contribution to the Community's objectives in terms of cohesion, growth and jobs. Taking account of these strategic guidelines, each Member State should prepare its national strategic reference framework and the resulting operational programmes,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 2

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

Article 1

The Community strategic guidelines on economic, social and territorial cohesion (hereinafter 'the strategic guidelines') as set out in the Annex are hereby adopted as an indicative framework for the Member States for the preparation of the national strategic reference frameworks and operational programmes for the period 2007 to 2013.

Done at Luxembourg, 6 October 2006.

For the Council

The President

K. RAJAMÄKI

ANNEX

Community strategic guidelines on economic, social and territorial cohesion, 2007-2013

1. INTRODUCTION: GUIDELINES FOR COHESION POLICY, 2007-2013

In accordance with the integrated guidelines for growth and jobs of the renewed Lisbon agenda, the programmes supported by cohesion policy should seek to target resources on the following three priorities ⁽¹⁾:

- improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving the environment,
- encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, including new information and communication technologies, and
- creating more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital.

In taking on board the renewed Lisbon agenda in the new programmes, attention is drawn to the following principles:

First, in line with the re-launch of the Lisbon agenda itself, cohesion policy should focus to a greater extent on knowledge, research and innovation, and human capital. Accordingly, the overall financial effort in support of these fields of action should be significantly increased, as required by the new earmarking provisions ⁽²⁾. In addition, Member States and regions should be inspired by best practice where this has delivered visibly positive results in terms of growth and jobs.

Second, Member States and regions should pursue the objective of sustainable development and boost synergies between the economic, social and environmental dimensions. The renewed Lisbon strategy for Growth and Jobs and the National Reform Programmes emphasise the role of environment in growth, competitiveness and employment. Environmental protection needs to be taken into account in preparing programmes and projects with a view to promoting sustainable development.

Third, Member States and regions should pursue the objective of equality between men and women at all stages of the preparation and implementation of programmes and projects. This may be done through specific actions to promote equality, as well as by taking careful account of how other projects and the management of the Funds may affect men and women.

Fourth, Member States should take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination on the basis of gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the various stages of implementing the Funds. In particular, accessibility for disabled persons is one of the criteria to respect in defining operations cofinanced by the Funds and to take into account during the various stages of implementation.

In the following sections, key aspects of each of these broad areas are examined with specific guidelines under each heading. Not all of these more detailed guidelines will be relevant to all regions. The most appropriate mix of investments ultimately depends on the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each Member State and region and specific national and regional circumstances. The guidelines rather represent a single framework which Member States and regions are invited to use when developing national, regional, and local programmes, in particular with a view to assessing their contribution to the Community's objectives in terms of cohesion, growth and jobs.

⁽¹⁾ Communication to the Spring European Council 'Working Together for growth and jobs — a new start for the Lisbon Strategy', COM(2005) 24, 2.2.2005.

⁽²⁾ Article 9 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999. OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 25.

1.1. **Guideline: Making Europe and its regions more attractive places in which to invest and work**

One of the preconditions for growth and jobs is to ensure that the necessary infrastructure (e.g. transport, environment, energy) is available to businesses. A modern and secure infrastructure is an important factor in the performance of many enterprises, affecting the economic and social attractiveness of regions and cities. Infrastructure investment in regions that are lagging behind, especially in the new Member States, will encourage growth and thus reinforce convergence with the rest of the Union as well as improving quality of life. Resources should come not just from grants but also, where possible, from the private sector and from loans, for example from the European Investment Bank (EIB). For the next period, programme authorities in the Member States will have an opportunity to make greater use of EIB expertise to prepare suitable projects for European funding under the JASPERS initiative.

1.1.1. *Expand and improve transport infrastructures*

The provision of efficient, flexible, safe and clean transport infrastructure may be regarded as a necessary precondition for economic development as it boosts productivity and, thus, the development prospects of the regions concerned by facilitating the movement of people and goods. Transport networks boost opportunities for trade, while increasing efficiency. Furthermore, the development of Europe-wide transport infrastructures (notably the relevant parts of the thirty priority projects for Trans-European Transport Networks, 'TEN-T projects'), with a particular focus on cross-border projects, is essential to achieving greater integration of national markets, especially within the context of an expanded Union.

Infrastructure investment needs to be adapted to the specific needs and level of economic development of the regions and countries concerned. These needs are generally highest in the Convergence regions and in countries covered by the Cohesion Fund. Typically, infrastructure investments (as with other investments) show diminishing rates of return above a certain level of funding. The economic returns on such investments are high when infrastructure is scarce and basic networks have not been completed, but they are likely to decrease once a certain level has been reached.

The level of regional economic development and the existence of large infrastructure endowments should thus be taken into account. In the least developed regions and countries, international and interregional connections may offer higher returns over the longer term in the form of increased business competitiveness and also facilitate labour mobility. On the other hand, for regions with a dispersed, small-scale economic base and a settlement pattern based on small towns, the construction of a regional transport infrastructure may be more appropriate. In regions with inadequate road networks, funding should also be available to build economically vital road links. The challenges of mobility and accessibility in urban areas should also be tackled, supporting integrated management systems and clean transport solutions.

In order to maximise the benefits deriving from transport investments, assistance from the Funds should be based on a number of principles.

First, objective criteria should be used to determine the level and nature of the infrastructure investment to be undertaken. For instance, potential rates of return should be measured by the level of economic development and the nature of economic activities of the regions concerned, the prevailing density and quality of infrastructures or the degree of congestion. When determining the social rates of return, due account should also be taken of environmental and social implications of prospective infrastructure projects.

Second, the principle of environmental sustainability should be respected to the greatest possible extent, in accordance with the White Paper⁽¹⁾. Shifts to the more environmental friendly modes should be pursued. However, the environmental and general performance of each mode of transport should be optimised, in particular concerning the use of infrastructure within and across the different modes⁽²⁾.

Third, particular attention should be paid in the Convergence regions and in countries covered by the Cohesion Fund to modernising the railway system by carefully selecting the priority sections, ensuring their interoperability within the framework of the European Rail Transport Management System (ERTMS).

⁽¹⁾ 'European transport policy for 2010: time to decide', COM(2001) 370.

⁽²⁾ 'Keep Europe moving. Sustainable mobility for the European continent', COM(2006) 314, 22.6.2006.

Fourth, investments in transport infrastructure should be accompanied by proper traffic management, with particular attention to safety, in accordance with national and Community standards. National or regional strategies should take into account the need to achieve a balanced (and clean) modal split that serves both economic and environmental needs. Strategies should include, for example, intelligent transport systems, multi-modal platforms and, in particular, technology used for the ERTMS and for the Single European Sky ATM Research Programme (SESAR — for a more uniform air traffic management system in Europe).

Based on the abovementioned principles, the guidelines for action are as follows:

- Member States and regions eligible for funding under the Convergence objective ⁽¹⁾ or the Cohesion Fund, should give appropriate priority to those of the 30 projects of European interest where they fall within their territory. Within this group of projects, cross-border links merit special attention. Other TEN-T projects, and strategic transport links, should be supported where this presents a strong case in terms of their contribution to growth and competitiveness.
- Complementary investment in secondary connections will also be important in the context of an integrated regional transport and communications strategy covering urban and rural areas, in order to ensure that the regions benefit from the opportunities created by the major networks.
- Support for rail infrastructure should seek to ensure greater access. Track fees should facilitate access for independent operators. They should also enhance the creation of an EU-wide interoperable network. Compliance and applications of the interoperability and the fitting of ERTMS on board and on track should be part of all projects financed where appropriate.
- Promoting environmentally sustainable transport networks, particularly in urban areas. This includes public transport facilities (including park-and-ride infrastructures), mobility plans, ring roads, increasing safety at road junctions and soft traffic (cycle lanes, pedestrian tracks). It also includes actions providing for accessibility to common public transport services for certain target groups (the elderly, disabled persons) and providing distribution networks for alternative vehicle fuels. Inland navigation routes can also contribute to the sustainability of networks.
- In order to guarantee the optimum efficiency of transport infrastructures for promoting regional development, attention should be paid to improving the connectivity of landlocked, insular or outermost territories to the TEN-T projects. In this respect, the development of secondary links, with a focus on inter-modality and sustainable transport, will help. In particular, harbours and airports should be connected to their hinterland.
- More attention should be paid to developing the 'motorways of the sea' and to short-sea shipping as a viable alternative to long-distance road and rail transport.

Where Member States receive support at the same time from both the Cohesion Fund and the Structural Funds, a distinction should be made in the programmes between the types of actions funded by each of the Funds, with the Cohesion Fund playing the key role in support of Trans-European transport networks.

In turn, the Structural Funds should generally focus on the development of infrastructure linked to measures to stimulate economic growth (such as tourism development and improvements to increase the attractiveness of industrial sites). With regard to road infrastructure, investments shall also fit the overall goal of road safety.

Co-financing from the Funds should complement grants from the budget for Trans-European Networks while avoiding duplication in terms of Community assistance. Member States can make use of the coordinators as a means of shortening the time that elapses between designation of the planning of the network and the physical construction. Member States individually will need to determine in advance the instrument most suited to the planned projects. Cohesion policy funding can be combined with the loan guarantee part of the TEN-T instruments.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 167, 30.4.2004, p. 1.

1.1.2. *Strengthen the synergies between environmental protection and growth*

Environmental investments can contribute to the economy in three ways: they can ensure the long-term sustainability of economic growth, they decrease external environmental costs to the economy (e.g. health costs, clean-up costs or damage recovery) and they stimulate innovation and job creation. Future cohesion programmes should seek to strengthen potential synergies between environmental protection and growth. The provision of environmental services such as clean water supplies, waste and waste-water treatment infrastructures, management of natural resources, the decontamination of land to prepare it for new economic activities, and protection against certain environmental risks (e.g. desertification, droughts, fires and floods), should all have high priority in this context.

In order to maximise economic benefits and minimise costs, priority should be given to tackling environmental pollution at its sources. In the waste management sector, this implies focusing on waste prevention, recycling and biodegradation of waste which are cost-effective and help to create jobs.

Development strategies should be based on a prior evaluation of needs and specific issues faced by regions, where possible using appropriate indicators. Efforts should be made to promote the internalisation of external environmental costs, with support for the setting up and development of market-based instruments (see, for example, instruments proposed in the Environmental Technologies Action Plan). Attention is drawn in this context to the initiative Global Monitoring for Environment and Security, which from 2008 will provide Europe-wide, up-to-date information on land-cover/land-use and ocean properties as well as incident maps in case of disasters and accidents.

Accordingly, the recommended guidelines for action are the following:

- Addressing the significant needs for investment in infrastructure, particularly in the Convergence regions and especially in the new Member States, to comply with environmental legislation in the fields of water, waste, air, nature and species protection and bio-diversity.
- Ensuring that attractive conditions exist for businesses and their highly skilled staff. This can be ensured by promoting land-use planning which reduces urban sprawl, and by rehabilitating the physical environment, including the development of natural and cultural assets. Investments in this area should be clearly linked to the development of innovative and job-creating businesses on the sites concerned.
- Promoting, in addition to the investments in sustainable energy and transport covered elsewhere, investments that contribute to the EU-Kyoto commitments.
- Undertaking risk prevention measures through improved management of natural resources, more targeted research and better use of ICTs, and more innovative public management policies including, for example, preventive monitoring.

Where Member States receive support from both the Cohesion Fund and the Structural Funds, a clear distinction should be made in the programmes between the types of actions funded by each of the Funds, respectively.

1.1.3. *Address Europe's intensive use of traditional energy sources*

A related priority is the need to reduce traditional energy dependency through improvements in energy efficiency and renewable energies. Investments in these fields contribute to the security of energy supply for long-term growth, while acting as a source of innovation and providing opportunities for exports, and are cost effective especially if energy prices remain high.

Investment in traditional sources of energy is also needed, so as to ensure security of supply. In particular, the Funds should concentrate — where there is evidence of market failure and where it does not go against the liberalisation of the market — on the completion of interconnections, with special emphasis on the Trans-European networks, the improvement of electricity grids and the completion and improvement of gas transmission and distribution networks including, where appropriate, in insular and outermost regions.

Guidelines for action under this heading are the following:

- Supporting projects to improve energy efficiency, for example in buildings, and dissemination of low energy intensity development models.
- Supporting the development and use of renewable and alternative technologies (such as wind, solar, biomass), including for heating and cooling, which can give the EU a leading edge and thus strengthen its competitive position. Such investments also contribute to the Lisbon objective of ensuring that, by 2010, 21 % of electricity is generated from renewable sources.
- Concentrating investment in traditional energy sources to develop the networks where there is evidence of market failure. These investments mostly concern the Convergence regions.

1.2. **Guideline: Improving knowledge and innovation for growth**

The Community's aims of growth and job creation will require a structural shift in the economy towards knowledge-based activities. This calls for action on a number of fronts: to address low levels of Research and Technological Development (RTD), especially in the private sector; to promote innovation through new or improved products, processes and services which can withstand international competition; to increase regional and local capacities to generate and absorb new technologies (ICTs in particular); and to provide more support for risk-taking.

RTD expenditure as a percentage of GDP has been increasing, but only marginally and, at 1,9 % of GDP, remains well short of the Lisbon target of 3 %⁽¹⁾. While the shortfall in business investment in RTD remains significant, there are signs that public investment in this field is also coming under pressure. The RTD and innovation gap within and between countries, particularly in relation to business expenditure on RTD, is much bigger than the income gap. While a combination of national and Community initiatives has been undertaken, more action is needed to match business needs with RTD supply from public and private RTD institutions. Europe's innovation gap with other leading economies is widening. Also within Europe, the innovation gap persists, as the Union too often fails to transform knowledge and technological development into commercial products and processes. Cohesion policy can help to address the main problems behind Europe's underperformance in innovation, including ineffective innovation systems, insufficient entrepreneurial dynamism or slow business adoption of ICT.

In this context, it is necessary to enhance national and regional RTD capacities, to support investment in ICT infrastructure, and to disseminate technology and knowledge through appropriate technology transfer and knowledge exchange mechanisms. Awareness-raising to promote a better use of existing RTD potential could be encouraged through regional 'foresight' and other regional strategic planning methods, involving regular and systematic dialogue with key stakeholders. It is also important to enhance the RTD absorption capacity of firms, particularly SMEs, through actions to develop skills and competencies; to encourage the creation and exploitation of a larger pool of high-quality research talent in Europe; to increase private and public investment in RTD and innovation; and to encourage RTD partnerships across the different regions of the Union. European Technology Platforms, for example, offer the potential to better tailor research programmes to business needs; cohesion policy can play an important role in supporting implementation of their Strategic Research Agendas across the Union including in less developed regions.

⁽¹⁾ 'Investing in research: an action plan for Europe'. COM(2003) 226, 30.4.2003.

While direct grants remain important, notably in Convergence regions, there is a need to focus on the provision of collective business and technology services to groups of firms, in order to help them improve their innovative activity. Direct grants to individual firms should be targeted at improving the RTD and innovation capacity of the firm, rather than at a temporary reduction of its production costs generating high deadweight effects. This is particularly important in traditional sectors, particularly those exposed to global competition, which need additional efforts in order to remain competitive, as well as in SMEs which often represent the highest source of employment at the regional level. Most importantly, these policies need to be adapted to the particular conditions of each region, and in particular to the needs of SMEs. National, regional, and local strategies should be based on a comprehensive analysis of RTD investment opportunities.

Knowledge and innovation are at the centre of the Community's efforts to promote faster growth and more jobs. Two related framework programmes are proposed at Community level: the Seventh Framework programme for RTD and the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). Synergy between cohesion policy and these instruments is vital so that research and cohesion policies reinforce each other at regional level with national and regional development strategies showing how this will be achieved. Cohesion policy can help all regions to build up research and innovation capacity, thus contributing to the effective participation of those regions in the European Research Area and research and innovation activities of the Community in general. In particular, it has two important roles to play. The first is in helping regions to implement regional innovation strategies and action plans which potentially can have a significant impact on competitiveness, both at regional level and in the Union as a whole; the second is in contributing to raising the research and innovation capacity in the region up to a level where it can participate in transnational projects for research.

Regional strategies should thus concentrate on investing in RTD, innovation, human capital and entrepreneurship; ensuring that these investments respond to the economic development needs of the region and that the capacity exists to transform research into marketable product, process and service innovation; enhancing technology transfer and knowledge exchange; promoting the development, dissemination and uptake of ICTs within firms, and ensuring that enterprises willing to invest in high added value goods and services have access to finance. Such strategies should make specific provision for experimentation, with a view to increasing the capacity of policy interventions and intermediary organisations to stimulate regional and local actors, in particular SMEs, to innovate.

1.2.1. *Increase and better target investment in RTD*

The competitiveness of European enterprises crucially depends on their ability to bring new knowledge to the market as quickly as possible. Public support for RTD is justified because market failures exist and can also be justified by the public character of certain RTD investments. In addition, issues of ownership of research results and the need to achieve critical mass in certain research sectors provide justification for government support for RTD.

The specific nature of RTD should be considered when implementing regional policy. In particular, RTD requires close interaction between the players to encourage the formation of poles of excellence which are needed to reach critical mass. Geographical proximity through the existence of clusters of SMEs and innovation poles around public research institutions, for instance, can play a key role. As a result, RTD activities necessarily have to be spatially concentrated while the absorptive capacity of low RTD-intensive areas is fostered.

RTD in the less developed Member States and regions should be developed around existing poles of excellence and avoid the excessive spatial dispersion of resources. Here also, European Technology Platforms can help focus investments on priority areas for research. Investments should also complement European priorities set out in the Seventh Framework Programme and support the objectives of the renewed Lisbon agenda. Priority should be given to the development of new and marketable products, services and skills.

Actions in RTD should be aligned with Community RTD policy and the needs of regions in question. In terms of method, these need to be based on a sound analytical approach, such as foresight; as well as use of indicators, such as patents; human resources in RTD; location of private and public research institutions; and on the existence of clusters of innovative businesses.

The guidelines for action in the field of RTD can be identified as follows:

- Strengthening cooperation among businesses and between businesses and public research/tertiary education institutions, for example, by supporting the creation of regional and trans-regional clusters of excellence.
- Supporting RTD activities in SMEs and technology transfer (enabling SMEs to access RTD services in publicly funded research institutions).
- Support for regional cross-border and transnational initiatives aimed at strengthening research collaboration and capacity building in priority areas of Community research policy.
- Strengthening R&D capacity building, including ICT, research infrastructure and human capital in areas with significant growth potential.

Programmes — particularly for regions eligible under the Convergence objective — can contribute to developing RTD infrastructure (including regional high-speed data networks between and within research establishments), education infrastructure, equipment and instrumentation in both publicly funded research institutions and businesses, provided that these investments are directly linked to regional economic development objectives. This may include research infrastructure for which the feasibility studies have been financed from earlier Framework Programmes. Support for Seventh Framework Programme priorities should seek to develop the full potential of emerging and existing centres of excellence and to step up investment in human capital, particularly by training researchers at national level and by creating conditions to attract researchers trained abroad.

1.2.2. *Facilitate innovation and promote entrepreneurship*

Innovation is the result of complex and interactive processes, including the ability of enterprises to connect to complementary knowledge from other market players, organisations and institutions.

Investments in innovation represent an overarching priority for cohesion policy under both the Convergence and Regional competitiveness and employment programmes. Their co-financing should be a major priority in the regions covered under the latter, where limited financial resources need to be concentrated so as to reach critical mass and generate a leverage effect.

The main objective should be to foster a business climate which promotes the production, dissemination and use of new knowledge by firms. In order to create efficient regional innovation systems, economic, social and political actors need to be brought into contact with the leading edge of technology and business practice in the world, beyond the national or local levels. In this respect, cooperation should also be sought with the Innovation Relay centres and the Euro-Info-Centres which are financed under the CIP, especially in the field of trans-national technology and diffusion of information.

Start-up companies, particularly those linked to RTD, need to be supported with the aim of developing partnerships with research institutions based on a longer-term vision and clear market orientation. Cohesion policy should seek to compensate for market failure that hampers innovation and entrepreneurship. Actions should seek to build on existing poles of activity in order to exploit regional potential for RTD and to foster networking and technological cooperation within and between regions.

Public authorities should ensure that research institutions, the private sector and the public sector exploit to the full the potential synergies between them.

In terms of method, economic development strategies would be improved by the collection of data on existing innovative activities in the regions concerned, for example, on private patenting or on the nature, scope and development potential of existing clusters of innovative activities, including those which involve both private and public research institutions. The Community Innovation Surveys and the European Innovation Scoreboard are also helpful in this regard.

The guidelines for action under this heading are the following:

- Making regional RTD innovation and education supply more efficient and accessible to firms, in particular SMEs, for example by establishing poles of excellence, bringing together high technology SMEs around research and technological institutions, or by developing and creating regional clusters around large companies.
- Providing business support services to enable enterprises, and in particular SMEs, to increase competitiveness and to internationalise, in particular by seizing the opportunities created by the internal market. Business services should prioritise the exploitation of synergies (for example, technology transfer, science parks, ICT communication centres, incubators and related services, cooperation with clusters) and give more traditional support in the areas of management, marketing, technical support, recruitment, and other professional and commercial services.
- Ensuring full exploitation of European strengths in the area of eco-innovations. Eco-innovations should be promoted, together with the improvement of SME practices through the introduction of environmental management systems. By investing in this area now, EU businesses will be in a strong position in the near future when other regions appreciate the need for such technologies. This is an area with a clear link to the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme.
- Promoting entrepreneurship and facilitating the creation and development of new firms. Emphasis should also be placed on promoting spin-out and spin-off companies from research institutions or firms using a variety of techniques (for example, awareness raising; prototyping; tutoring and the provision of managerial and technological support to potential entrepreneurs).

It is important to ensure that companies, including SMEs, can make commercial use of research results.

Business services should preferably be delivered by the private sector or by mixed public-private organisations. The services should be top-class, readily available, easy to access and responsive to the needs of SMEs. The quality of the services should be defined and monitored and there should be coherence between service providers, e.g. by establishing public-private partnerships and one-stop shops.

Administrative procedures are often too complex. Information and initial support should be available from a network of one-stop shops, which could provide the interface between the public sector and the grant applicant; this should include the various actions cofinanced by cohesion policy. These providers should have competence for the full range of State aids — independently of national or regional responsibilities — and targets for the efficiency of their operation which are monitored regularly.

Whenever the circumstances are appropriate, tailored support should be made available to specific categories of business (e.g. start-ups or recently transferred companies) or entrepreneurs (e.g. young people, women, older workers or those from ethnic minority communities). Entrepreneurship education should also be encouraged in schools.

1.2.3. *Promote the information society for all*

The dissemination of ICT across the Union's economy represents a major lever for improving both productivity levels and the competitiveness of regions. The dissemination of ICT also encourages the re-organisation of production methods and the emergence of new business and private services. The efficient and effective delivery of public services — in particular e-government and e-health — has a significant potential for economic growth and for enabling new services. Technology dissemination can contribute to regional development by favouring the creation and growth of poles of excellence in ICT activities and developing connectivity and networking among enterprises and SMEs in particular. Measures should encourage the development of products and services with a view to facilitating and stimulating private investment in ICT while guaranteeing competition in the ICT sector.

Policy measures should therefore focus on connectivity. This includes improving innovation support services for SMEs with the particular objective of boosting technology transfer between research institutions and enterprises. It also requires the development of the skills needed in the knowledge economy and to develop content through the delivery of applications and services (such as e-government, e-business, e-learning and e-health), which provide interesting alternatives to other, often more costly, service delivery models. This is particularly relevant for remote and sparsely populated areas, as well as for the outermost regions, islands or areas with natural handicaps. Clearly the use and development of products and content-based services can work only if the appropriate infrastructure is available and capable of supporting broadband services. It is therefore important that an appropriate broadband communication infrastructure be available across the Union at an accessible cost.

As a general rule, investment in ICT infrastructure should take into account rapid technological development, respect for the principles of technological neutrality and open access. Compliance with competition rules and with the implementation of the regulatory framework for electronic communications is essential.

Actions need to be based on context indicators related to the existing economic structure (including industrial specialisation; level of economic development; quality of connectivity to ICTs and potential synergies between regional poles of economic activity). The identification of regional needs should take into account existing Community initiatives in favour of ICTs, in particular the i2010 — a European Information Society for growth and employment⁽¹⁾.

Given that ICTs cut across all sectors of economy and society, it is imperative that Member States and regions develop compatible information society strategies which ensure coherence and integration among sectors, by balancing supply and demand measures on the basis of local requirements, stakeholders' participation, and strong public political support.

The guidelines for action are as follow:

- Ensuring uptake of ICTs by firms and households and promoting development through balanced support for the supply and demand of ICT products and both public and private services, as well as through increased investment in human capital. These actions should increase productivity, promote an open and competitive digital economy and an inclusive society (for example, improving accessibility for disabled and elderly people), and thus boost growth and jobs.
- Ensuring availability of ICT infrastructure and related services where the market fails to provide it at an affordable cost and to an adequate level to support the required services, especially in remote and rural areas and in new Member States.

1.2.4. *Improve access to finance*

Another key ingredient for the promotion of knowledge and innovation is to facilitate access to finance. For the purpose of fostering growth and job creation, it must be sufficiently rewarding for entrepreneurs and enterprises to invest in the development and production of goods and services rather than to focus efforts, for example, on rent-seeking activities.

Access to finance in this context is often difficult, thus creating an obstacle to growth and job-creation. Improving access to capital both for RTD activities and for start-ups is important. Risk capital markets related to innovation activities need to be developed in conjunction with a better regulatory environment that makes entrepreneurship easier.

These programmes could be undertaken in close cooperation with the European Investment Fund (EIF) under the JEREMIE initiative in order to develop financial resources in areas where entrepreneurship is hampered by market failures owing to the high risks associated with RTD activities. Due account must also be taken of the impact of government support for business creation, in order to avoid the crowding-out of private investment and measures that are damaging to competition. Coordination between funds should also be enhanced.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2005) 229.

Private equity and venture capital and rotating funds for innovative start-ups should play the essential role as an engine for entrepreneurship, innovation and job creation; public sector institutions are not always best suited to risk-taking. The priority should be to create or expand specialised providers of risk capital and bank guarantees, where there is market failure. Typically, they will be more effective if they provide an integrated package of support, starting with training before the business start-up or expansion.

Based on these principles, the guidelines for action are:

- Supporting non-grant instruments such as loans, secured debt financing for subordinate debt, convertible instruments (mezzanine debt) and risk capital (e.g. seed capital and venture capital). Grants should be used to build and maintain infrastructures that facilitate access to finance (e.g. technology transfer offices, incubators, 'business angels' networks, investment readiness programmes). Guarantee and mutual guarantee mechanisms could also be supported to facilitate access to micro-credit by SMEs. The EIB and the EIF could provide valuable input in this regard.
- Developing an integrated approach that simultaneously supports innovation, its transfer into new commercial activity and the availability of risk capital.
- Outreaching to certain specific groups, for example, young or female entrepreneurs or disadvantaged groups.

It is particularly important to work closely with the EIF in view of the expertise it has developed over a number of years, in order to give SMEs the required support, while developing the European risk capital market at the same time. This could involve participation in the JEREMIE initiative.

1.3. Guideline: More and better jobs

In relaunching the Lisbon strategy, the European Council endorsed a single set of Guidelines bringing together the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines ⁽¹⁾ and the Guidelines of the European Employment Strategy, thereby integrating macro-economic, micro-economic and employment policies for growth and jobs. In accordance with the Fund regulations ⁽²⁾, in the sphere of employment and human resources the priorities of the Community strategic guidelines on cohesion are those of the European Employment Strategy ⁽³⁾ supplemented by the EU Employment Recommendations which provide country-specific priorities.

The drive for full employment and higher productivity depends on a wide variety of actions, including those already discussed above. Investment in infrastructure, business development and research improve job opportunities, both in the short run as a result of first round effects and in the longer run as a result of their positive effect on productivity and competitiveness. To maximise employment and create high quality permanent jobs from these investments, human capital should be further developed and enhanced.

In terms of human capital development, the Employment Guidelines highlight three priorities for action for Member States' policies:

- attract and retain more people in employment and modernise social protection systems,
- improve adaptability of workers and enterprises and the flexibility of the labour markets,
- increase investment in human capital through better education and skills.

In addition to these priorities, appropriate attention should be given to investments to improve efficiency in public administration, as well as to education, social, health and cultural infrastructures.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 205, 6.8.2005, p. 21.

⁽²⁾ Article 2 of Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999. OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 12.

⁽³⁾ COM(2005) 141, 12.4.2005.

Cohesion policy should focus on addressing the specific challenges of the European Employment Strategy in each Member State, by supporting actions under the convergence and the regional competitiveness and employment objectives, taking into account the scope of activities defined in the legislative framework. The range of eligible actions and financial resources is greater for the former objective. For the latter, Community resources will need to be much more focused to achieve a significant impact.

Employment and human resource development programmes should take into account the country specific challenges and priorities as highlighted in Employment Recommendations and in National Reform Programmes. The programmes, whether managed at national or regional level, should effectively address territorial disparities and be adapted to needs in different areas.

Finally, one of the most visible aspects of European value added in the 2000-2006 period of the Structural Funds was the support to Member States and regions to exchange experiences, and build up networks, thus promoting innovation. In this context, the experience gained through the EQUAL Community initiative should be capitalised through the mainstreaming of the principles upon which it was built — innovation; transnationality; partnership; gender mainstreaming.

1.3.1. *Attract and retain more people in employment and modernise social protection systems*

Widening the base of economic activity, raising employment levels and reducing unemployment are vital to sustain economic growth, promote socially inclusive societies and combat poverty. Increasing participation in employment is all the more necessary because of the expected decline in the working age population. In the framework of the Employment Guidelines, Guidelines for action under this heading are the following:

- Implement employment policies aimed at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.
- Promote a life-cycle approach to work.
- Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantaged people, and the inactive.
- Improve matching of labour market needs.

Actions should be based on prior identification of needs by, for instance, using relevant national and/or regional indicators such as unemployment and participation rates, long-term unemployment rates, population at risk of poverty rates and level of income. Attention should be paid to the local level, where acute disparities may fail to be picked up by regional level statistics.

The presence of efficient and effective labour market institutions, notably employment services that can respond to the challenges of rapid economic and social restructuring and demographic ageing, is essential in order to support service delivery to job seekers, the unemployed and disadvantaged people and could be supported by the Structural Funds. These institutions have a pivotal role to play in implementing active labour market policies and providing services on a personalised basis with a view to promoting occupational and geographical mobility and matching labour supply and demand, including at local level. They should help to anticipate shortages and bottlenecks in the labour market and occupational and skills requirements. Positive management of economic migration would also be assisted as a result. Easy access to, and transparency of, the services on offer are crucial. The EURES network is central to increasing occupational and geographic mobility, both at European level and nationally ⁽¹⁾.

An important priority should be to strengthen active and preventive labour market measures to overcome obstacles to entering, or remaining in, the labour market and to promote mobility for job seekers, the unemployed and inactive, older workers as well as those at risk of becoming unemployed, with particular attention to low-skilled workers. Action should focus on the provision of personalised services, including job search assistance, job placement and training to adjust the skills of job-seekers and employees to the needs of local labour markets. The potential for self-employment and business creation, ICT skills and digital literacy should be fully taken into account. Special attention should be paid to:

⁽¹⁾ Set up in 1993, EURES is a cooperation network between the European Commission and the Public Employment Services of the EEA Member States (EU Member States plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and other partner organisations.

- implementing the European Youth Pact, by facilitating access to employment for young people, by easing the transition from education to work, including through career guidance, assistance in completing education, access to appropriate training and apprenticeships,
- implementing the European Pact for gender equality by mainstreaming and by specific actions to increase women's participation in employment, to reduce occupational segregation and address gender pay gaps and gender stereotyping and to promote more family-friendly working environments, and the reconciliation of professional and private life. Facilitating access to childcare and care services for dependent persons is crucial, alongside gender mainstreaming in policies and measures, awareness raising and dialogue among stakeholders,
- specific action to strengthen access of migrants to the labour market and facilitate their social integration, through training and validation of competences acquired abroad, personalised guidance, language training, appropriate support for entrepreneurship and raising awareness among employers and migrant workers of their rights and obligations, and strengthening the enforcement of anti-discrimination rules.

Another important priority should be to ensure inclusive labour markets for people at a disadvantage or at risk of social exclusion, such as early school-leavers, the long-term unemployed, minorities and people with disabilities. This calls for an even broader range of support to build pathways to integration and combat discrimination. The aim should be to:

- improve their employability by enhancing participation in vocational education and training, rehabilitation and appropriate incentives and working arrangements, as well as the necessary social support and care services, including through the development of the social economy,
- combat discrimination and promote the acceptance of diversity in the workplace through diversity training and awareness-raising campaigns, in which local communities and enterprises would be fully involved.

1.3.2. *Improve adaptability of workers and enterprises and the flexibility of the labour market*

In the light of increasing pressures from globalisation, including sudden and unexpected trade shocks, and the continual introduction of new technologies, Europe must increase its capacity to anticipate, trigger and absorb economic and social change. In the framework of the Employment Guidelines, Guidelines for action under this heading are the following:

- Promote flexibility combined with employment security, and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of the social partners.
- Ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage-setting mechanisms.

The main focus should be on actions to promote investment in human resources by enterprises, especially SMEs, and workers through the provision of lifelong learning strategies and systems which equips employees, in particular low-skilled and older workers, with the necessary skills to adapt to the knowledge economy and to prolong their working life. Attention should be given in particular to:

- the development of lifelong learning strategies and systems including mechanisms such as regional and sector funds, with the aim of increasing investment by enterprises and participation of workers in training,
- implementation of such strategies by contributing to the funding of schemes and training activities. Priority should be given to entrepreneurship and SMEs, including facilitating their access to external sources of competence, financial engineering, such as the JEREMIE instrument and training solutions — with emphasis being placed on ICT and management skills. Particular attention should be paid to increasing the participation of the low-skilled and older workers in training and re-training.

Better anticipation and positive management of economic restructuring, especially as a result of changes linked to the opening-up of trade, are particularly important. Consideration should be given to creating monitoring systems involving the social partners, enterprises and local communities, to scrutinising socio-economic changes at national, regional and local level, and assessing future economic and labour market trends. Support for the programmes aimed at modernisation of labour markets and anticipation of gradual changes throughout the Union particularly in sectors such as agriculture, textiles, automobiles and mining, needs to be put in place, alongside active measures to reinforce the economic well-being of regions. There is also a role for specific employment, training and support services for workers in the context of company and sector restructuring, such as rapid response schemes in the case of collective lay-offs.

Attention should also be given to developing and disseminating knowledge on innovative and adaptable forms of work organisation to take advantage of new technologies — including teleworking, improving health and safety at work (e.g. industrial safety), increasing productivity and promoting better reconciliation of work and family life. This may also include raising awareness of corporate social responsibility, developing consciousness as regards employment rights, initiatives for respecting the labour code, reducing the grey economy and ways to transform undeclared work into regular employment.

Social partners have an important role to play in setting up mechanisms that ensure the flexibility of the labour market. Therefore Member States should encourage the participation of social partners in activities under this priority. Further, under the Convergence objective, an appropriate amount of the European Social Fund (ESF) resources shall be allocated to capacity-building, which shall include training, networking measures, strengthening the social dialogue and activities jointly undertaken by the social partners.

1.3.3. Increase investment in human capital through better education and skills

Europe needs to invest more in human capital. Too many people do not enter, or remain in, the labour market, because of lack of skills including in basic literacy and numeracy, or due to skills mismatches. To enhance access to employment for all ages and to raise productivity levels and quality at work, there is a need to step up investment in human capital and to develop and implement effective national lifelong learning strategies for the benefit of individuals, enterprises, the economy and society. In the framework of the Employment Guidelines, Guidelines for action under this heading are the following:

- Expand and improve investment in human capital.
- Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements.

Reforms in labour market training to attract more people into employment and increase adaptability of workers and enterprises need to be coupled with reforms in education and training systems. In previous programming periods, the Structural Funds have invested substantially in education and training systems. In the next programming period, the investment in human capital should be reinforced by focusing on the Lisbon objectives in line with the integrated guidelines for growth and employment. The following general priorities should be addressed:

- expanding and improving investment in human capital including the development of appropriate incentives and cost-sharing mechanisms for enterprises, public authorities and individuals,
- supporting coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies, with particular attention given to addressing the skill needs of the knowledge economy, including support to cooperation and the establishment of partnerships between Member States, regions and cities in terms of education and training to facilitate the exchange of experience and good practice, including innovative projects. Particular attention should be given to addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups,
- supporting the design and introduction of reforms in education and training systems using, where relevant, common European references and principles, in particular to raise the labour-market relevance of education and training,

- strengthening the links between universities, research and technological centres and enterprises, in particular through networking activities and joint actions.

Under the Convergence objective, many Member States and regions are faced with very significant education and training challenges. Financial resources should be used for the implementation of reforms, which should address the following specific priorities:

- ensuring an adequate supply of attractive, accessible and high quality education and training provision at all levels, including the improvement of staff competences and qualification, promoting flexible learning pathways and new options starting as early as the school and preschool stage, actions to achieve a significant decline in early school-leaving and higher completion rates of upper secondary education and improved access to pre-school and school education,
- supporting the modernisation of tertiary education and the development of human potential in research and innovation, through post-graduate studies, further training of researchers, and attracting more young people into scientific and technical studies,
- promoting the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training, including apprenticeships and entrepreneurship education,
- ensuring, where appropriate, greater mobility at regional, national or transnational level, and promoting frameworks and systems to support the transparency and recognition of qualifications and the validation of non-formal and informal learning,
- investment in education and training infrastructure including ICTs, where such investments are necessary for the implementation of reform and/or where they can significantly contribute to increasing the quality and effectiveness of the education and training system.

1.3.4. *Administrative Capacity*

In previous programming periods, the Funds have, through technical assistance, reinforced the management capacity of Member States and managing authorities in implementing the regulations. This will also apply for the period 2007-2013.

Above and beyond the management of the Funds, effective administrative capacity of public administrations and public services, i.e. smart administration, is a fundamental requirement for economic growth and jobs. Thus, in line with the revised Lisbon Strategy which calls for better legislation, policy design and delivery to create the conditions for economic growth and job creation, the Funds will support investment in the human capital and related ICT facilities of administrative and public services at all territorial levels.

For Cohesion countries and regions under the Convergence objective, increasing productivity and quality at work in the public sector — especially in the economic, employment, social, educational, health, environmental and judicial areas — is essential to pursue and accelerate reforms, to raise productivity and growth in the wider economy and to promote social and territorial cohesion and sustainable development. The Structural Funds can play an important role in supporting effective policy design and implementation, which involves all relevant stakeholders, in a broad range of fields.

Therefore, Cohesion countries and regions falling under the Convergence Objective are called upon to build up public administrations and public services at national, regional and local level. Actions in this field should take into account the specific situation of each Member State. Thus, in line with the principle of concentration, Member States are invited to conduct a comprehensive analysis to identify the policy areas requiring the most support for administrative capacity. Investment should concentrate on those policy areas where there are the greatest obstacles to socio-economic development and on the key elements of administrative reforms.

Member States should ensure that the need to increase efficiency and transparency in public administrations and to modernise public services is adequately addressed. Guidelines for action under this heading are the following:

- Support good policy and programme design, monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment, through studies, statistics, expertise, and foresight, support for interdepartmental coordination and dialogue between relevant public and private bodies;
- Enhance capacity building in the delivery of policies and programmes, including with regard to the crime proofing and enforcement of legislation, especially through mapping of training needs, career development review, evaluation, social audit procedures, implementation of open government principles, managerial and staff training and specific support to key services, inspectorates and socio-economic actors.

1.3.5. *Help maintain a healthy labour force*

In the light of the EU's demographic structure, ageing population and a likely decline in the labour force in years to come, it is essential that the Union take steps to increase the number of healthy years of work for members of its workforce. Investment in health promotion and disease prevention will help to maintain active participation in society for as many workers as possible, thus maintaining their economic contribution and reducing dependency levels. This has a direct effect on productivity and competitiveness, as well as having important positive spin-offs for quality of life in general.

There are major differences in health status and access to health care between European regions. It is therefore important for cohesion policy to contribute to health care facilities, thereby helping to increase the number of healthy years of work in particular in the less prosperous Member States and regions. Community-based health improvement and preventive action have an important role to play in reducing health inequalities. Good health care translates into greater participation in the labour market, longer working life, higher productivity and lower healthcare and social costs.

It is important for cohesion policy, especially in regions lagging behind, to contribute to the improvement of long-term care facilities and invest in the improvement of health infrastructure, in particular when their absence or insufficient development represents a major barrier to economic development. Member States should ensure that the need to increase efficiency in health care systems is addressed through investment in ICT, knowledge and innovation. Guidelines for action under this heading are the following:

- Preventing health risks to help raise productivity levels by means of health information campaigns and by ensuring a transfer of knowledge and technology and ensure that health services have the necessary skills, products and equipment to prevent risks and minimise their potential damage.
- Filling the gaps in health infrastructure and promoting efficient provision of services where the economic development of the less prosperous Member States and regions is being affected. This action should be based on a thorough analysis of the optimal level of services provision and appropriate technology, such as telemedicine and the cost-saving potential of e-health services.

2. THE TERRITORIAL DIMENSION OF COHESION POLICY

One of the features of cohesion policy — in contrast to sectoral policies — lies in its capacity to adapt to the particular needs and characteristics of specific geographical challenges and opportunities. Under cohesion policy, geography matters. Accordingly, when developing their programmes and concentrating resources on key priorities, Member States and regions should pay particular attention to these specific geographical circumstances.

Taking on board the territorial dimension will help to develop sustainable communities and to prevent uneven regional development from reducing overall growth potential. Such an approach also requires that the specific problems and opportunities of urban and rural areas may need to be addressed as well as those of particular territories such as cross-border and broader transnational areas, or regions suffering from other handicaps due to their insularity, remoteness (such as the outermost or Arctic regions), sparse population or mountainous character. The environmental and demographic constraints faced by coastal areas may also need to be addressed. The successful implementation of actions to promote territorial cohesion requires implementing mechanisms that can help to guarantee fair treatment for all territories based on their individual capacities as a factor of competitiveness. Thus, good governance is important to successfully addressing the territorial dimension.

In fact, for the next generation of programmes, promoting territorial cohesion should be part of the effort to ensure that all of Europe's territory has the opportunity to contribute to the growth and jobs agenda. More specifically, this means that a different meaning should be given to territorial cohesion, linked to each Member State's history, culture or institutional situation.

The development of high-quality partnerships is also essential, bringing aboard actors at all levels, national, regional, urban, rural and local. Success in the area of territorial cohesion depends on a comprehensive strategy which sets the framework within which specific objectives and actions are pursued.

Under the new legislative framework, Member States have the possibility to delegate to cities, funds addressing urban issues within the new programmes. To reap the full benefits of partnership, cities should be involved throughout the process. This could include responsibility for the design and implementation of the sub-delegated portion of the programme.

The new legislative framework also provides for special assistance to outermost regions in order to address the high costs of distance that they face. A particular challenge will be to ensure that this assistance contributes to the realisation of the strategy of the programme as whole in terms of helping to generate sustainable growth and jobs.

2.1. The contribution of cities to growth and jobs

As outlined in the Commission Communication on cohesion policy and cities, over 60 % of the population in the European Union lives in urban areas of over 50 000 inhabitants⁽¹⁾. Cities, and urban areas in general, are the home of most jobs, businesses and higher education institutions and are key to achieving social cohesion. European cities and metropolitan areas tend to attract the highly skilled, often creating a virtuous circle that stimulates innovation and business adding to their attractiveness to new talent.

Cities and urban areas concentrate not only opportunities but also challenges, and account should be taken of the specific problems facing urban areas, such as unemployment and social exclusion (including the problem of the 'working poor'), high and rising crime rates, increased congestion and the existence of pockets of deprivation within city boundaries.

Programmes with a focus on urban areas can take several different forms. First, there are actions to promote cities as motors of regional development. Such actions should target improvements in competitiveness, for example, through clustering. Actions supported include measures to promote entrepreneurship, innovation and the development of services, including producer services. Attracting and retaining very highly skilled personnel is also important (with measures relating to accessibility, the supply of cultural services, etc).

Second, there are actions to promote internal cohesion inside the urban areas that seek to improve the situation of crisis districts. Not only does this bring direct benefit to the districts themselves, it helps to relieve some of the pressure towards excessive suburban sprawl in pursuit of a better quality of life.

⁽¹⁾ Communication to the Council and Parliament 'Cohesion Policy and cities: the urban contribution to growth and jobs in the regions'. COM(2006) 385 final, 12.7.2006.

In this context, measures are important that seek to rehabilitate the physical environment, redevelop brownfield sites especially in old industrial cities, and preserve and develop the historical and cultural heritage with potential spin-offs for tourism development in order to create more attractive cities in which people want to live. The regeneration of existing public spaces and industrial sites can play an important role in avoiding suburbanisation and urban sprawl, thereby helping to create the conditions necessary for sustainable economic development. More generally, by improving the planning, design and maintenance of public spaces, cities can 'plan out' crime, helping to create attractive streets, parks and open spaces which are safe and feel safe. In urban areas, the environmental, economic and social dimensions are strongly interlinked. A high quality urban environment contributes to the priority of the renewed Lisbon Strategy to make Europe a more attractive place to work, live and invest ⁽¹⁾.

Third, there are actions to promote a more balanced, polycentric development by developing the urban network at national and Community level including links between the economically strongest cities and other urban areas including small and medium-sized cities. This will require the making of strategic choices in identifying and strengthening growth poles and, just as important, putting in place the networks that link them in both physical (infrastructure, information technologies, etc.) and human (actions to promote cooperation, etc.) terms. Since these poles serve wider territories, including the immediate rural hinterland, they contribute to a sustainable and balanced development of the Member State and the Community as a whole. In a similar way, rural areas provide services to the wider society, for example, in the form of recreational opportunities and highly valued landscapes. Focus should therefore also be put on the urban rural interface.

Based on previous experience, there are a number of key principles in urban actions. First, the key partners in the cities and local authorities have an important role to play in achieving these objectives. As mentioned above, Member States may delegate responsibility to cities for urban development. This is particularly important where proximity matters, for example, in order to respond to the challenges of a mostly local nature such as social exclusion or lack of access to key services.

Second, the preparation of a medium- to long-term development plan for sustainable urban development is generally a precondition for success as it ensures the coherence of investments and of their environmental quality. This will also help to secure the commitment and participation of the private sector in urban renewal. In general, a multi-disciplinary or integrated approach is needed. For area-based actions, for example, to promote social inclusion, this requires that actions seeking to improve the quality of life (including the environment and housing) or the level of services to citizens are combined with actions to promote the development of new activities and job creation in order to secure the long-term future of the areas concerned. The new JESSICA initiative is designed to promote and facilitate the development of financial engineering products to support projects included in integrated urban development plans.

In general, integrated support services and programmes should have a focus on those groups which are most in need, such as immigrants, young people and women. All citizens should be encouraged to participate in both the planning and delivery of services.

2.2. **Support the economic diversification of rural areas, fisheries areas and areas with natural handicaps**

Cohesion policy can also play a key role in support of the economic regeneration of rural areas, complementing the actions supported by the new rural development fund (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development — EAFRD) ⁽²⁾. This complementary approach should seek to support the restructuring and diversification of the economy in Europe's rural areas.

The synergy between structural, employment and rural development policies needs to be encouraged. In this context, Member States should ensure synergy and consistency between actions to be financed by the ERDF, Cohesion Fund, ESF, European Fisheries Fund (EFF) and EAFRD on a given territory and in a given field of activity. The main guiding principles as regards the demarcation line and the coordination mechanisms between actions supported by the different Funds should be defined at the level of national strategic reference framework/national strategy plan.

⁽¹⁾ Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment. COM(2005) 718 final.

⁽²⁾ Council Regulation (EC) No 1685/2005. OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, p. 1.

For cohesion policy, action in favour of rural areas or for areas with natural handicaps, including many island regions, should contribute to the creation of new opportunities through the diversification of the rural economy. This includes efforts to support the provision of a minimum level of access to services of general economic interest in order to attract firms and qualified personnel and to limit out-migration. In this context, connectivity to the main national and European networks is necessary. In addition, cohesion policy should support the endogenous capacity of rural territories by promoting, for example, product marketing at national and global level, and favouring process and product innovation in existing economic activities.

Achieving the necessary critical mass to deliver services efficiently — including services for a healthy workforce referred to above — is a particular challenge. Ensuring universal access to all services, particularly in very sparsely populated areas, may be achieved by investing in development poles in rural areas (for example in small and medium-sized towns) and by developing economic clusters based on local assets combined with the use of new information technologies.

Many rural regions depend heavily on tourism. These regions require an integrated approach dedicated to quality, focusing on consumer satisfaction and based on the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Actions should take advantage of, and seek to preserve and develop natural and cultural assets which can have important positive spin-offs by protecting habitats and supporting investment in biodiversity. The integrated approach should aim to have a positive impact on the tourism sector, the local economy, the people working in the tourism sector, visitors and the local population, as well as the natural and cultural heritage.

With regard to the fisheries sector, the economic restructuring of fisheries-dependent coastal areas and the smaller islands is often a particular challenge for geographic reasons, and cohesion policy can play an important role as a complement to the actions supported by the EFF.

2.3. Cooperation

Measures to promote cross-border, transnational, and interregional cooperation, including maritime cooperation where appropriate, should complement the three priorities indicated above. As a consequence, closer cooperation across EU regions should help speed up economic development and the achievement of higher growth. National borders are often an obstacle to the development of European territory as a whole, and can restrict its potential for full competitiveness. In the cross-border and transnational context, transport, water management and environment protection are clear examples of challenges requiring a focused and integrated approach that goes beyond national boundaries. In terms of implementation, Member States may wish to examine the possibility of creating a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation to take on the role of managing authority for certain cooperation programmes.

2.4. Cross-border cooperation

The aim of cross-border cooperation in Europe is to integrate areas divided by national borders that face common problems requiring common solutions. Such challenges are faced by all border regions in the Union as a result of the fragmentation of markets for labour and capital, infrastructure networks, fiscal capacity, and institutions.

Though cooperation programmes should be tailored according to the particular situation faced by each border region, it is important that an effort be made to concentrate the assistance on the main priorities in support of growth and job creation.

Generally applicable recommendations for future cross-border cooperation are not always relevant owing to the large diversity of situations. At the same time, in view of the obstacles created by borders, a useful starting point is the improvement of existing transport and communication infrastructure and the development, where necessary, of new links. These are pre-conditions for establishing or developing cross-border contacts.

Cross-border cooperation should focus on strengthening the competitiveness of the border regions. In addition, it should contribute to economic and social integration, especially where there are wide economic disparities on either side. Actions include promoting knowledge and know-how transfer, the development of cross-border business activities, cross-border education/training and healthcare potential and integrating the cross-border labour market; and joint management of the environment and common threats. Where the basic conditions for cross-border cooperation are already in place, cohesion policy should focus assistance on actions that bring added value to cross-border activities: for example, increasing cross-border competitiveness through innovation and research and development; connecting intangible networks (services) or physical networks (transport) to strengthen cross-border identity as a feature of European citizenship; the promotion of cross-border labour market integration; cross-border water management and flood control; joint management of natural and technological risks.

Particular attention needs to be paid to the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing external borders of the Union following enlargement. Here, there is a need to promote coherent cross-border actions that encourage economic activity on both sides, and remove obstacles to development. To this end, cohesion policy and the new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument and, where appropriate, the new Instrument for Pre-Accession, need to create a coherent framework for such actions.

2.5. **Transnational cooperation**

In transnational areas there is a need to increase economic and social integration and cohesion. Transnational cooperation programmes seek to increase cooperation across Member States on matters of strategic importance.

Support should therefore be given to actions which seek to improve the physical interconnection of territories (e.g. investments in sustainable transport) as well as intangible connections (networks, exchanges between regions and between the parties involved).

The actions envisaged include the creation of European transport corridors (particularly cross-border sections) and actions for the prevention of natural risks (e.g. fire, drought and flood), water management at river basin level, integrated maritime cooperation, promotion of sustainable urban development and R&D/innovation networks.

The map of the current zones for transnational cooperation has been modified to ensure that they create the conditions for implementing basic structural actions. They have been drawn up taking account of territorial coherence and functional criteria of a geographical nature, for example, sharing the same river basin or coastal zone, belonging to the same mountainous area or being crossed by a major transport corridor. Other criteria, such as history or institutional structures, or existing cooperation or Conventions, are also pertinent.

2.6. **Interregional cooperation**

Interregional cooperation programmes should focus on the renewed Lisbon strategy: strengthening innovation, SMEs and entrepreneurship, the environment and risk prevention. In addition, exchange of experiences and best practices regarding urban development, modernisation of public sector services (such as health and government using ICT) and the implementation of cooperation programmes as well as studies and data collection will be encouraged. Interregional cooperation may also be supported within programmes for Convergence and Regional competitiveness and employment. In addition, exchange of experiences and best practices regarding urban development, social inclusion, relationship between cities and rural areas, and the implementation of cooperation programmes will be encouraged.

II

(Acts whose publication is not obligatory)

COUNCIL

COUNCIL DECISION

of 12 July 2005

on Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States

(2005/600/EC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

long term employment targets, but five years later the objectives of the strategy remain far from being achieved.

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 128(2) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament ⁽¹⁾,Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee ⁽²⁾,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions,

Having regard to the opinion of the Employment Committee,

Whereas:

(1) Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union sets the Union the objective, *inter alia*, of promoting economic and social progress and a high level of employment. Article 125 of the Treaty establishing the European Community states that Member States and the Community shall work towards developing a coordinated strategy for employment and particularly for promoting a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce and labour markets responsive to economic change.

(2) The Lisbon European Council in March 2000 launched a strategy aimed at sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, with

(3) The presentation of an integrated package of Employment Guidelines and Broad Economic Policy Guidelines contributes to refocusing the Lisbon Strategy on growth and employment. The European Employment Strategy has the leading role in the implementation of the employment objectives of the Lisbon strategy. The strengthening of social cohesion also constitutes a key element for the success of the Lisbon Strategy. Conversely, as set out in the Social Agenda, the success of the European Employment Strategy will contribute to the achievement of greater social cohesion.

(4) In line with the conclusions of the Spring European Council of 22 and 23 March 2005, the Union must mobilise all appropriate national and Community resources – including the cohesion policy – in the Lisbon Strategy's three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) so as better to tap into their synergies in a general context of sustainable development.

(5) The objectives of full employment, job quality, labour productivity and social cohesion must be reflected in clear priorities: to attract and retain more people in employment, increase labour supply and modernise social protection systems; to improve adaptability of workers and enterprises; and to increase investment in human capital through better education and skills.

(6) The Employment Guidelines should be fully reviewed only every three years, while in the intermediate years until 2008 their updating should remain strictly limited.

⁽¹⁾ Opinion delivered on 26 May 2005 (not yet published in the Official Journal).

⁽²⁾ Opinion delivered on 31 May 2005 (not yet published in the Official Journal).

- (7) The Employment Committee and the Social Protection Committee have formulated a joint opinion on the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005 to 2008).
- (8) The Council recommendation of 14 October 2004 on the implementation of Member States' employment policies ⁽¹⁾ remains valid as background reference,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

The guidelines for Member States' employment policies as set out in the Annex are hereby adopted.

Article 2

The guidelines shall be taken into account in the employment policies of the Member States, which shall be reported upon in the national reform programmes.

Article 3

This decision is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels, 12 July 2005.

For the Council

The President

G. BROWN

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 326, 29.10.2004, p. 47.

ANNEX

THE EMPLOYMENT GUIDELINES (2005 to 2008)

(Integrated Guidelines Nos 17 to 24)

- Guideline No 17: Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion
- Guideline No 18: Promote a lifecycle approach to work
- Guideline No 19: Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantaged people, and the inactive
- Guideline No 20: Improve matching of labour market needs
- Guideline No 21: Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of the social partners
- Guideline No 22: Ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage-setting mechanisms
- Guideline No 23: Expand and improve investment in human capital
- Guideline No 24: Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements

Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States

Member States, in cooperation with the social partners, shall conduct their policies with a view to implementing the objectives and priorities for action specified below. Reflecting the Lisbon strategy, the Member States' policies shall foster in a balanced manner:

- *Full employment*: Achieving full employment, and reducing unemployment and inactivity, by increasing the demand for and supply of labour, is vital to sustain economic growth and reinforce social cohesion;
- *Improving quality and productivity at work*: Efforts to raise employment rates go hand in hand with improving the attractiveness of jobs, quality at work and labour productivity growth, and reducing the share of working poor. Synergies between quality at work, productivity and employment should be fully exploited;
- *Strengthening social and territorial cohesion*: Determined action is needed to strengthen social inclusion, prevent exclusion from the labour market and support integration in employment of people at a disadvantage, and to reduce regional disparities in terms of employment, unemployment and labour productivity, especially in regions lagging behind.

Equal opportunities and combating discrimination are essential for progress. Gender mainstreaming and the promotion of gender equality should be ensured in all action taken. As part of a new intergenerational approach, particular attention should be paid to the situation of young people, implementing the European Youth Pact, and to promoting access to employment throughout working life. Particular attention must also be paid to significantly reducing employment gaps for people at a disadvantage, including disabled people, as well as between third-country nationals and EU citizens, in line with any national targets.

In taking action, Member States should ensure good governance of employment policies. They should establish a broad partnership for change by involving parliamentary bodies and stakeholders, including those at regional and local levels. European and national social partners should play a central role. A number of targets and benchmarks which have been set at EU level in the framework of the European Employment Strategy in the context of the 2003 guidelines are included at the end of this Annex and should continue to be followed up with indicators and scoreboards. Member States are also encouraged to define their own commitments and targets, for which they should take these into account, as well as the 2004 recommendations agreed at EU level.

Good governance also requires greater efficiency in the allocation of administrative and financial resources. In agreement with the Commission, Member States should target the resources of the Structural Funds, in particular the European Social Fund, on the implementation of the European Employment Strategy and report on the action taken. Particular attention should be paid to strengthening institutional and administrative capacity in the Member States.

Guideline No 17: Implement employment policies aiming at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work, and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.

Policies should contribute to achieving an average employment rate for the European Union (EU) of 70 % overall, of at least 60 % for women and of 50 % for older workers (55 to 64) by 2010, and to reduce unemployment and inactivity. Member States should consider setting national employment rate targets.

In addressing these objectives, action should concentrate on the following priorities:

- attract and retain more people in employment, increase labour supply and modernise social protection systems,
- improve adaptability of workers and enterprises,
- increase investment in human capital through better education and skills.

1. ATTRACT AND RETAIN MORE PEOPLE IN EMPLOYMENT, INCREASE LABOUR SUPPLY AND MODERNISE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Raising employment levels is the most effective means of generating economic growth and promoting socially inclusive economies whilst ensuring a safety net for those unable to work. Promoting an increased labour supply in all groups, a new lifecycle approach to work and modernising social protection systems to ensure their adequacy, financial sustainability and responsiveness to changing needs in society are all the more necessary because of the expected decline in the working-age population. Special attention should be paid to tackling the persistent employment gaps between women and men, and the low employment rates of older workers and young people, as part of new intergenerational approach. Action is also required to tackle youth unemployment which is on average double the overall unemployment rate. The right conditions must be put in place to facilitate progress in employment, whether it is first time entry, a move back to employment after a break or the wish to prolong working lives. The quality of jobs, including pay and benefits, working conditions, employment security, access to lifelong learning and career prospects, is crucial, as are support and incentives stemming from social protection systems.

Guideline No 18: Promote a lifecycle approach to work through:

- a renewed endeavour to build employment pathways for young people and reduce youth unemployment, as called for in the European Youth Pact,
- resolute action to increase female participation and reduce gender gaps in employment, unemployment and pay,
- better reconciliation of work and private life and the provision of accessible and affordable childcare facilities and care for other dependants,
- support for active ageing, including appropriate working conditions, improved (occupational) health status and adequate incentives to work and discouragement of early retirement,
- modern social protection systems, including pensions and healthcare, ensuring their social adequacy, financial sustainability and responsiveness to changing needs, so as to support participation and better retention in employment and longer working lives.

See also integrated guideline 'To safeguard economic and fiscal sustainability as a basis for increased employment' (No 2).

Facilitating access to employment for job seekers, preventing unemployment and ensuring that those who become unemployed remain closely attached to the labour market and increase their employability are essential to increase participation and combat social exclusion. This requires breaking down barriers to the labour market by assisting with effective job searching, facilitating access to training and other active labour market measures and ensuring that work pays, as well as removing unemployment, poverty and inactivity traps. Special attention should be paid to promoting the inclusion of disadvantaged people, including low-skilled workers, in the labour market, including through the expansion of social services and the social economy, as well as the development of new sources of jobs in response to collective needs. Combating discrimination, promoting access to employment for disabled people and integrating immigrants and minorities are particularly essential.

Guideline No 19: Ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantaged people, and the inactive through:

- active and preventive labour market measures including early identification of needs, job search assistance, guidance and training as part of personalised action plans, provision of necessary social services to support the inclusion of those furthest away from the labour market and contribute to the eradication of poverty,
- continual review of the incentives and disincentives resulting from the tax and benefit systems, including the management and conditionality of benefits and a significant reduction of high marginal effective tax rates, notably for those with low incomes, whilst ensuring adequate levels of social protection,
- development of new sources of jobs in services for individuals and businesses, notably at local level.

To allow more people to find better employment, it is also necessary to strengthen the labour market infrastructure at national and EU level, including through the EURES network, so as to better anticipate and resolve possible mismatches. In this context, mobility of workers within the EU is key and should be fully ensured within the context of the Treaties. Full consideration must also be given on the national labour markets to the additional labour supply resulting from immigration of third-country nationals.

Guideline No 20: Improve matching of labour market needs through:

- the modernisation and strengthening of labour market institutions, notably employment services, also with a view to ensuring greater transparency of employment and training opportunities at national and European level,
- removing obstacles to mobility for workers across Europe within the framework of the Treaties,
- better anticipation of skill needs, labour market shortages and bottlenecks,
- appropriate management of economic migration.

2. IMPROVE ADAPTABILITY OF WORKERS AND ENTERPRISES

Europe needs to improve its capacity to anticipate, trigger and absorb economic and social change. This requires employment-friendly labour costs, modern forms of work organisation and well-functioning labour markets allowing more flexibility combined with employment security to meet the needs of companies and workers. This should also contribute to preventing the emergence of segmented labour markets and reducing undeclared work.

In today's increasingly global economy with market opening and the continual introduction of new technologies, both enterprises and workers are confronted with the need, and indeed the opportunity, to adapt. While this process of structural changes is overall beneficial to growth and employment, it also brings about transformations which are disruptive to some workers and enterprises. Enterprises must become more flexible to respond to sudden changes in demand for their goods and services, adapt to new technologies and be in a position to innovate constantly in order to remain competitive. They must also respond to the increasing demand for job quality which is related to workers' personal preferences and family changes, and they will have to cope with an ageing workforce and fewer young recruits. For workers, working life is becoming more complex as working patterns become more diverse and irregular and an increasing number of transitions need to be managed successfully throughout the lifecycle. With rapidly changing economies and attendant restructuring, they must cope with new ways of working, including enhanced exploitation of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and changes in their working status, and be prepared for lifelong learning. Geographical mobility is also needed to access job opportunities more widely and in the EU at large.

Guideline No 21: Promote flexibility combined with employment security and reduce labour market segmentation, having due regard to the role of the social partners, through:

- the adaptation of employment legislation, reviewing where necessary the different contractual and working time arrangements,
- addressing the issue of undeclared work,
- better anticipation and positive management of change, including economic restructuring, notably changes linked to trade opening, so as to minimise their social costs and facilitate adaptation,
- the promotion and dissemination of innovative and adaptable forms of work organisation, with a view to improving quality and productivity at work, including health and safety,
- support for transitions in occupational status, including training, self-employment, business creation and geographic mobility.

See also integrated guideline 'To promote greater coherence between macroeconomic, structural and employment policies' (No 5).

To maximise job creation, preserve competitiveness and contribute to the general economic framework, overall wage developments should be in line with productivity growth over the economic cycle and should reflect the labour market situation. Efforts to reduce non-wage labour costs and to review the tax wedge may also be needed to facilitate job creation, especially for low-wage employment.

Guideline No 22: Ensure employment-friendly labour cost developments and wage-setting mechanisms by:

- encouraging social partners within their own areas of responsibility to set the right framework for wage bargaining in order to reflect productivity and labour market challenges at all relevant levels and to avoid gender pay gaps,
- reviewing the impact on employment of non-wage labour costs and where appropriate adjust their structure and level, especially to reduce the tax burden on the low-paid.

See also integrated guideline 'To ensure that wage developments contribute to macroeconomic stability and growth' (No 4).

3. INCREASE INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL THROUGH BETTER EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Europe needs to invest more in human capital. Too many people fail to enter or to remain in the labour market because of a lack of skills, or due to skills mismatches. To enhance access to employment for all ages, raise productivity levels and quality at work, the EU needs higher and more effective investment in human capital and lifelong learning for the benefit of individuals, enterprises, the economy and society.

Knowledge-based and service-based economies require different skills from traditional industries; skills which also constantly need updating in the face of technological change and innovation. Workers, if they are to remain and progress in work, need to accumulate and renew skills regularly. The productivity of enterprises is dependent on building and maintaining a workforce that can adapt to change. Governments need to ensure that educational attainment levels are improved and that young people are equipped with the necessary key competences, in line with the European Youth Pact. All stakeholders should be mobilised to develop and foster a true culture of lifelong learning from the earliest age. To achieve a substantial increase in public and private investment in human resources per capita and guarantee the quality and efficiency of these investments, it is important to ensure fair and transparent sharing of costs and responsibilities between all actors. Member States should make better use of the Structural Funds and the European Investment Bank for investment in education and training. To achieve these aims, Member States commit themselves to establishing comprehensive lifelong learning strategies by 2006 and implementing the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme.

Guideline No 23: Expand and improve investment in human capital through:

- inclusive education and training policies and action to facilitate significantly access to initial vocational, secondary and higher education, including apprenticeships and entrepreneurship training,
- significantly reducing the number of early school leavers,
- efficient lifelong learning strategies open to all in schools, businesses, public authorities and households according to European agreements, including appropriate incentives and cost-sharing mechanisms, with a view to enhancing participation in continuous and workplace training throughout the life-cycle, especially for the low-skilled and older workers.

See also integrated guideline 'To increase and improve investment in R & D, in particular by private business' (No 7).

Setting ambitious objectives and increasing the level of investment by all actors is not enough. To ensure that supply meets demand in practice, lifelong learning systems must be affordable, accessible and responsive to changing needs. Adaptation and capacity-building of education and training systems is necessary to improve their labour market relevance, their responsiveness to the needs of the knowledge-based economy and society and their efficiency. ICT can be used to improve access to learning and better tailor it to the needs of employers and employees. Greater mobility for both work and learning purposes is also needed to access job opportunities more widely in the EU at large. The remaining obstacles to mobility within the European labour market should be lifted, in particular those relating to the recognition and transparency of qualifications and competences. It will be important to make use of the agreed European instruments and references to support reforms of national education and training systems, as is laid down in the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme.

Guideline No 24: Adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements by:

- raising and ensuring the attractiveness, openness and quality standards of education and training, broadening the supply of education and training opportunities and ensuring flexible learning pathways and enlarging possibilities for mobility for students and trainees,
- easing and diversifying access for all to education and training and to knowledge by means of working time organisation, family support services, vocational guidance and, if appropriate, new forms of cost sharing,
- responding to new occupational needs, key competences and future skill requirements by improving the definition and transparency of qualifications, their effective recognition and the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Targets and benchmarks set in the framework of the European Employment Strategy

The following targets and benchmarks were agreed in the context of the European Employment Strategy in 2003:

- that every unemployed person is offered a new start before reaching 6 months of unemployment in the case of young people and 12 months in the case of adults in the form of training, retraining, work practice, a job or other employability measure, combined where appropriate with on-going job search assistance,
- that 25 % of long-term unemployment should participate by 2010 in an active measure in the form of training, retraining, work practice, or other employability measure, with the aim of achieving the average of the three most advanced Member States,
- that jobseekers throughout the EU are able to consult all job vacancies advertised through Member States' employment services,
- an increase by five years, at EU level, of the effective average exit age from the labour market by 2010 (compared to 59,9 in 2001),
- the provision of childcare by 2010 to at least 90 % of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33 % of children under 3 years of age,
- an EU average rate of no more than 10 % early school leavers,
- at least 85 % of 22-year olds in the EU should have completed upper secondary education by 2010,
- that the EU average level of participation in lifelong learning should be at least 12,5 % of the adult working-age population (25 to 64 age group).

PEDAGOGICAL MATERIALS

ETUI-REHS EDUCATION COURSE:

TRAINING FOR DESIGNING AND DELIVERING ESF PROJECTS, JUNE 2007, ESCUELA SINDICAL JUAN MUÑIZ ZAPICO, MADRID

- ▶ Course programme
- ▶ Activity sheets
- ▶ ETUC comments: Communication from the Commission: Cohesion Policy in Support of Growth and Jobs - Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013 – COM(2005)299
- ▶ ETUC's proposals: The new architecture for EU Cohesion Policy after 2006
- ▶ Trade unions and the European Social Fund 2007-2013, Roberto Pettenello, CGIL
- ▶ ESF programming round 2007-2013: ESF support for social partners, Dominique Be, DG Employment, European Commission

<p align="center">Programme Training for designing and delivering ESF projects 2007-2013 ETUC and ETUI-REHS-Education Venue: Madrid, Escuela Muñiz Zapico Working languages: English ,French</p>					
Time	Sunday 10 June	Monday 11 June	Tuesday 12 June	Wednesday 13 June	
08.00		Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	
09.00 10.00		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome - Presentation : - ETUC and ETUI-REHS - Participants + course - Information Service EU Programmes 	Best practices: trade union experiences In the previous ESF 2000-2006 Working groups - Reports back, comments and discussion	Partnership and ESF support to social partners - D. Be, DG Empl, EC, C. Denagtergal, ETUC Discussion and debate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final tips • Evaluation of the training course 	
12.00		Structural Funds and ETUC Strategy - J. Niemiec, ETUC Political Secretary - Discussion and debate		End	
		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	
15.00	A R R I V A L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Unions and ESF - R. Pettenello, CGIL - Discussion and debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to design a quality project? - Introduction, S. Pennella - Working groups - Reports back, comments and discussion 	Departure	
18.00					
20.00	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner		

ACTIVITY SHEETS



Personal presentation

<p>Training for designing ESF projects, Madrid, 10-13.06.2007</p>	<p>→ Aims</p> <p>To enable the participants to get to know each other</p> <p>→ Tasks</p> <p>You will be asked to interview a colleague, working in pairs. Please ask the following questions and then introduce him/her to the plenary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Name ◆ Organisation and country ◆ Post (type of job) ◆ Have you already been involved in the preparation and/or management of projects funded by European grants, such as those under the Structural Funds, budget lines, education programmes, etc.? If so, what was your particular role in the project (e.g. coordinator, partner, trainer or accountant)? ◆ What are your expectations from this course?
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Good practices

<p>Training for designing and delivering ESF projects 2007-2013 Madrid, 10-13.6.2007</p>	<p>→ Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the participants to use previous experience to identify and develop a trade union strategy in the use of the ESF <p>→ Tasks</p> <p>Following the information gathered before the course</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain how your trade union was or was not involved in the previous ESF 2000-2006 2. Identify the problems and underline how they were solved 3. Describe the results and impact on national policies 4. Define the priorities of your organization within the new period 2007-2013 <p>→ Report</p> <p>Choose 1 person from the group to give a report to the plenary meeting.</p> <p>⌚ 15 minutes per presentation</p>
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How to put together a high-quality project

<p>Training for designing and delivering ESF projects 2007-2013 Madrid, 10-13 June 2007</p>	<p>➤ Objective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable the participants to clarify, define and develop the essential elements of a project proposal <p>♣ Tasks</p> <p>In your working group, please carry out the following tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Based on the information received during previous meetings, identify a joint project idea for the whole of your group. • After choosing the theme, draw up a full list of the elements that form an essential part of a project proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - title, - objectives and content of the initiative, - the schedule, - the partners and their tasks, - the results and - the spreading of those results, etc. 2. Based on this list, expand on the objectives and content of the initiative and the project methodology. <p>➤ Method</p> <p>Each group will present the full list of the elements of the project proposal, the objectives, the content and the project methodology.</p> <p>⌚ 20 minutes per presentation</p>
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ETUC COMMENTS

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

COHESION POLICY IN SUPPORT OF GROWTH AND JOBS

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC GUIDELINES 2007-2013 – COM(2005)299

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Article 159 of the Treaty, every three years the Commission evaluates the status of cohesion and the contribution of other policies.

The Second Report (2001) launched a debate on cohesion policy after enlargement. The Third Report (February 2004) used the conclusions of this debate as the basis for presenting the Commission's proposals for a reformed cohesion policy after 2006 and, on 14 July 2004, the Commission adopted the proposals for new Structural Funds regulations for the period 2007-2013.

ETUC's first contribution to the debate on the future of economic and social cohesion policy in the enlarged European Union, adopted by its Executive Committee of 19-20 November 2002, pressed for Community structural policies in an enlarged Europe to be reinforced, since the principles of cohesion and solidarity are enshrined in the Treaty and are two of the most important vehicles for the integration of peoples and territories.

In ETUC's view, enlargement represents first and foremost a unique historical opportunity to unite the peoples of Europe on the basis of fundamental democratic values. This guarantees peace and political stability in Europe and contributes to economic and social progress, as well as to improving living and working conditions. Besides reunifying Europe, enlargement makes it possible to expand the European job market and internal market by increasing the overall volume of production and consumption level of the new Member States and developing new products and services that are competitive on the world market.

This represents an unprecedented political, economic and social challenge that will benefit the entire European Union. However, unlike previous enlargements, there is no escaping the fact that this one has widened the economic development gap, caused a geographic shift of disparities eastwards and made the employment situation more difficult.

Furthermore, the EU is concerned about some other major challenges identified by recent European Council summits, which also require joint and coordinated responses and actions.

ETUC wants to reiterate that future cohesion policy must help to provide responses to these challenges and, in so doing, help to reduce disparities between regions and promote a society of full employment, equal opportunities, social inclusion and cohesion and hence, more broadly, the European Social Model.

Referring to economic and social cohesion policy, ETUC underlines the role and the importance of social protection systems and namely the importance to have quality public (opposed to "private") social security systems based on solidarity which through the mechanisms of "redistribution" contribute to ensure and/or guarantee social cohesion.

To achieve this, the current reform must guarantee even greater complementarity between the Union's structural policies and other areas of Community policy, whilst also ensuring that all EU policies include the crucial aspects of economic and social cohesion and boosting quality employment. In addition to this coordination of Community policies, taxation policies must also be coordinated in order to prevent any sort of social and fiscal dumping.

ETUC therefore deems the explicit reference to the Lisbon and Göteborg agendas in the Commission's proposal for a General Regulation to be of vital importance. Above all, ETUC believes that cohesion policy should include the Lisbon and Göteborg objectives and become an essential medium for achieving them by means of national and regional development programmes.

In the same vein, ETUC considers it very important for the Commission Communication to also make explicit reference to the Conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council of March 2005, stressing the need to relaunch the Lisbon Strategy. In particular, ETUC agrees that "the Union must mobilise all appropriate national and Community resources – including cohesion policy".

ETUC wants to stress that the Structural Funds should be made real key instruments for ensuring implementation of the Social Policy Agenda 2006-2010.

2. NEW FRAMEWORK FOR COHESION POLICY

In its proposals on "The New Architecture for EU Cohesion Policy after 2006", adopted by its Executive Committee of 13 and 14 October 2004, ETUC supported the Commission's proposed strategic approach and, in particular, the establishment of an annual strategic dialogue with the European institutions to examine progress with respect to the strategic priorities and the results achieved.

ETUC welcomes the fact that the European social partners have been consulted on the overall strategic document for cohesion policy to allow them to make their contribution, although it regrets that this consultation has been made merely as part of the Commission's "public" consultation.

ETUC once again urges that the social partners should be properly consulted at national level on the National Strategic Reference Framework to be established by the Member States.

In the above-mentioned proposals, ETUC stressed certain aspects of the new framework for cohesion policy. Whilst it welcomes the fact that a certain number of aspects have been taken up, ETUC wishes to stress the following points.

Concentration

ETUC welcomes the fact that the main line which the Commission intends to defend when it negotiates the different national and regional programmes in future will be to guarantee concentration and to include only elements that contribute to growth and jobs, whilst at the same time taking into consideration the priorities of other Community policies.

Subject to the following points, ETUC is also in favour of focusing the implementation of priority themes on three key concepts: convergence, regional competitiveness and employment, and European territorial cooperation.

❖ 1. Convergence

ETUC reiterates its concern to prevent a two-speed cohesion policy, even if it recognises that certain priorities may differ according to whether they involve the most disadvantaged regions of the EU-15 or those of the new Member States.

Whereas infrastructure development has progressed in the EU-15, this has not been the case in the new

Member States. A balance must be found between investments in infrastructure and investments in human capital, whilst averting the risk of fragmenting support measures. At the same time, infrastructure projects must integrate the “employment” objective and be linked with a human resources policy containing a capacity for anticipation.

...✦ 2. Regional competitiveness and employment

It is clear that the persistence and proliferation of structural problems, unexpected shocks, processes of industrial restructuring or economic diversification, and company mergers in several regions of the EU require the provision of continued support to these problem areas.

Since the present Objectives 2 and 3 are merged under the new key concept “regional competitiveness and employment”, the social dimension of regional development must be clearly defined. Similarly, it is very important for the Member States to ensure a proper link with the National Action Plans for Employment and National Action Plans for Inclusion.

ETUC welcomes the Commission’s proposed dual approach, provided that the two parts are really implemented in all Member States. Firstly, regional development programmes should help the regions to anticipate and promote economic change by boosting their competitiveness and attractiveness; and secondly, programmes defined at the suitable territorial level should help people to prepare for, and adapt to, economic change.

However, where the eligibility of regions is concerned, whilst it is true that the Member States, in close cooperation with the regions, are in the best position to identify areas in greatest need of assistance, ETUC feels it is important to reiterate that the Structural Funds are a Community policy whose application has deliberately been based on a number of common objectives and principles, in order to prevent this policy from drifting towards renationalisation. It is essential to define objective criteria of eligibility, as well as to guarantee linkage and an optimum balance between the three levels concerned: European, national and regional, including the local, levels.

ETUC therefore supports the Commission’s proposal in its Communication on “Restructuring and Employment. Anticipating and accompanying Restructuring: the Role of the European Union” (COM(2005)120), to use Community financial instruments, particularly the European Social Fund, to improve the anticipation and management of restructuring.

...✦ 3. European territorial cooperation.

ETUC welcomes the fact that, on the strength of the experience gained with the current INTERREG initiative, the Commission has proposed to create a new Objective to pursue the balanced and harmonious integration of the Union’s territory by supporting cooperation between its various components in cross-border, transnational and interregional issues of Community importance.

...✦ 4. Partnership principle

ETUC is convinced that partnership is a fundamental principle in guaranteeing the success of Structural Fund measures. The aim of quality partnerships should be pursued, involving the social partners at every phase of the Funds’ interventions.

ETUC therefore reiterates its desire for the future Structural Funds Regulations to clearly define the partnership principle, rather than relying on national rules and practices, as the Commission has once again proposed.

As regards the composition of the Monitoring Committee, ETUC welcomes the Commission’s proposal that the social partners be included.

Similarly, with regard to the European Social Fund, ETUC supports the Commission’s proposal that, under the Convergence Objective, at least 2% of the ESF’s resources be allocated to developing capacity as well as to joint activities by the social partners. At the same time, ETUC is pressing for a clear reference to be made to social dialogue, in accordance with the Commission Communication “Partnership for Change in an Enlarged Europe – Enhancing the Contribution of European Social Dialogue” (COM(2004)557).

However, ETUC regrets that, in the Commission's proposal, the European Social Fund is the only fund that relies on the active participation of the social partners within its European Committee. ETUC feels that their participation represents considerable added value. It is therefore essential for the same type of participation be provided for in the other structural funds, at both European and national levels.

The social partners must also have access to technical assistance to build their capacity, particularly in the new Member States, to make it easier for them to participate in the management and implementation of projects financed by the Structural Funds.

Concerning Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), ETUC takes note of the Commission's proposal to search for additional financial resources to carry out public sector projects. Indeed PPP permit the involvement of the private sector in projects of general interest. Nevertheless, it is necessary to draw the lessons from those experiences which have not been positive and to take into account the risks that PPP agreements might create. ETUC wants to stress that clear criteria should be defined, namely the criteria to use funds to support PPP. ETUC remains critical about PPP as long as citizens are not involved in the selection process of the infrastructures and services they finance and use every day.

3. GUIDELINES FOR COHESION POLICY 2007-2013

In view of the above, ETUC strongly supports the Commission's proposal that, in line with the new momentum given to the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs, cohesion policy must focus more on knowledge, research and innovation, as well as on human capital, and that, to achieve this aim, the overall financial effort in these areas of action must be significantly increased.

ETUC supports the Commission's proposal that Member States and regions should pursue the objective of equality between men and women at all stages in the development and implementation of programmes and projects.

Indeed, ETUC wants to point out that past experience has shown us that Community initiatives play a key role in reinforcing the European identity, providing opportunities for experimentation and developing partnership. ETUC also deems the transnational and innovative aspects of Community initiatives to be important.

So, whilst stressing the importance of the Commission's proposals to guarantee both equal opportunities and transnational cooperation, ETUC reiterates its wish to maintain the Community initiative EQUAL or to integrate it explicitly into the new Objective 2, based on its positive results in promoting equal opportunities for all women and men in a rapidly evolving labour market, and in fighting discrimination of every kind.

ETUC supports the Commission's proposal that programmes cofinanced by the cohesion policy must target resources on three priorities, laid down in specific guidelines forming a framework for Member States and regions to use to set up future national and regional programmes.

However, ETUC urges that the Commission, as Guardian of the Treaties, should make sure that the Member States and regions set up the National Strategic Reference Framework, as well as national and regional programmes, in line with the reformed Lisbon Strategy.

In addition to the above comments, ETUC is anxious to stress the following points regarding the four Strategic Guidelines proposed in the Communication, which will serve as a framework for the use of Member States and regions in future.

GUIDELINE 1. Making Europe and its regions more attractive places to invest and work

ETUC supports the Commission's proposal on the role of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in financing the implementation of cohesion policy.

First and foremost, ETUC is pressing for infrastructure projects to integrate the "employment" objective by linking them with a human resources policy containing a capacity for anticipation.

Transport infrastructure projects must be defined in line with European transport policy. ETUC therefore supports the proposal that Structural Funds cofinance should supplement funding from the Trans-European Networks budget.

Whilst it agrees on the importance of guaranteeing attractive conditions for business, with respect to workers, ETUC considers that it should not focus on highly skilled workers alone, but should involve all workers.

ETUC considers that investments aiming to improve the energy efficiency of housing should be supported because they permit, at the same time, to create jobs, to contribute to the objectives of limiting emissions of greenhouse gases and to answer social demands by diminishing households' energy bill.

GUIDELINE 2. Improving knowledge and innovation for growth

ETUC has called upon the Council of the European Union to establish a new guideline proposing a new European Growth Initiative, inviting Member States to draw up national recovery plans by investing 3% of their GDP in Lisbon Strategy priorities such as research, education and training, active labour market policies, social housing, clean technology and renewable energy sources.

Research and development are crucial to the success of the Lisbon Strategy. The environment and potential sources of new jobs must also be taken into account.

GUIDELINE 3. More and better jobs

ETUC backs the Commission's proposal to implement employment policies aimed at achieving full employment, improving quality and productivity at work and strengthening social and territorial cohesion.

In ETUC's view, it is essential to invest in knowledge and quality jobs. ETUC is keen to stress that the real path to progress for Europe lies not in casualising the most insecure jobs, but in increasing the number and quality of jobs.

ETUC also draws attention to the fact that one quarter of those at risk of sinking below the poverty line are in work, aptly demonstrating that more jobs and more growth do not necessarily mean less poverty.

Policies must be developed for supporting excluded and vulnerable people, which means taking action both upstream and downstream, especially in employment incentive measures.

The cohesion policy must help to create a genuine European labour market, chiefly by promoting solidarity between regions and mobility. ETUC agrees that the EURES network, in which ETUC has played an active part since its launch in 1994, is an essential tool for promoting occupational and geographical mobility at both European and national levels.

It is ETUC's view that an integrated approach, linked with the implementation of an anticipation strategy, is required to respond positively to the challenges of demographic change. This must involve a wide range of instruments, policies and actors.

Active and inclusive labour market policies targeted at young people and older workers must be defined in close cooperation with the social partners. This calls for better policies to be defined for working life as a whole, which must be tied in with lifelong learning. This means active youth policies that attract young people into the labour market, as well as voluntary policies allowing older workers to wind down their careers gradually but actively.

ETUC believes that measures should be taken to improve the quality of youth employment by fighting job insecurity. These measures must include promoting more secure jobs for young people, improving health and safety standards and equal access to social security, in order to prevent young people from falling into the informal economy.

A programme of positive measures must be developed to increase the labour market participation rate and create the right conditions for older workers to continue working up to retirement age.

ETUC is also of the view that immigration is only a partial solution to Europe's demographic problems. The main concern will be to develop a more proactive immigration policy, aimed at managing rather than preventing immigration, as well as to ensure that the people of Europe support this policy.

With regard to economic restructuring, ETUC welcomes the Commission's proposal to set up permanent monitoring systems involving the social partners, businesses and local authorities, the role of which will be to review economic and social change at national, regional and local levels, and to anticipate future economic and labour market trends.

ETUC believes that an Employment Policy Guideline should be added, requiring Member States to ensure that any worker made redundant has the right to return to the labour market (retraining, careers guidance, placement services). Moreover, it is necessary to put in place measures for the "social accompaniment", such as "early retirements", of the oldest workers and those who cannot benefit from measures of reintegration. Likewise, during these periods of reintegration, social and wage guarantees must be foreseen for these workers, namely guarantees to maintain income but also social rights (access to health systems, pension rights). The Structural Funds should support the conclusion of collective bargaining agreements establishing these rights.

Lastly, ETUC supports the Commission's proposal to improve long-term health facilities and health infrastructure, which are of paramount importance to EU citizens, at the same time stressing the need to bear in mind that Member States have differing financing systems.

GUIDELINE 4. Taking account of the territorial dimension of cohesion policy

ETUC supports the Commission's proposal that Member States and regions should take into account specific territorial needs when developing their programmes, while specifying that this should be done in order to fight against and not only to prevent uneven regional development. This is all the more important since Commission Reports show that, in spite of progress in terms of results, especially in the least prosperous regions, genuine convergence is far from a reality and that, in some countries, disparities between regions have actually widened further.

Account must be taken of problems specific to urban areas and to rural areas. With regard to rural areas, ETUC shares the Commission's view that cohesion policy must be limited, where appropriate, to supplementing actions supported by the new Rural Development Fund (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development–EAFRD).

As mentioned earlier, ETUC welcomes the fact that, on the strength of the experience gained with the current INTERREG initiative, the Commission has proposed to create a new Objective to pursue the balanced and harmonious integration of the Union's territory by supporting cooperation between its various components in cross-border, transnational and interregional issues of Community importance.

Indeed, cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation and interventions should be stepped up. The trade unions' positive experience of actions conducted by the 40 Interregional Trade Union Councils (ITUCs), including in regions bordering with the new Member States, shows that this is the route to follow.

With regard to cross-border cooperation, ETUC supports and specifically underlines the following Commission proposals to:

- Integrate the cross-border labour market.
- Contribute to economic and social integration.
- Focus on strengthening the competitiveness of border regions.

In ETUC's view, the EU should pay special attention to the outermost regions and sparsely-populated outlying regions at risk of depopulation by promoting both their attractiveness and competitiveness.

Furthermore, since enlargement, the EU's external borders have shifted, also shifting structural problems towards these new regions. ETUC believes that special attention should be paid to these regions, by optimising the use of the New Neighbourhood Instrument, without neglecting efforts to assist border regions inside the EU.

4. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

ETUC wants to reiterate the acknowledged fact that the current level of investment of the Union's budget resources is relatively modest compared with the positive results achieved, especially in view of the improved situation in the less favoured regions and the start of genuine convergence.

Bearing in mind Member States' ambitions for the EU, compared with the objectives of enlargement and of the reformed Lisbon Strategy, resources cannot be maintained at the current level.

ETUC therefore reiterates that, if success is to be guaranteed, current efforts to stimulate the growth, employment, competitiveness and sustainable development of the less developed regions must be stepped up.

In the light of the Commission's proposed limit (1.24%), based on the financial outlook for the 2007-2013 period, ETUC feels that the 0.41% allocated to the cohesion policy is not enough for the EU to achieve the ambitious goals that have been set for continuing to build Europe.

ETUC'S PROPOSALS: THE NEW ARCHITECTURE FOR EU COHESION POLICY AFTER 2006

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE ETUC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN THEIR MEETING HELD IN BRUSSELS ON 13-14 OCTOBER 2004

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Article 159 of the Treaty, every three years the Commission evaluates the status of cohesion and the contribution of other policies.

The Second Report (2001) launched a debate on cohesion policy after enlargement. The Third Report (February 2004) used the conclusions of this debate as the basis for presenting the Commission's proposals for a reformed cohesion policy after 2006, and on 14 July 2004 the Commission adopted the proposals regarding the new rules for the Structural Funds for the period 2007-2013⁵.

ETUC's first contribution to the debate on the future of economic and social cohesion policy in the enlarged European Union, adopted by its Executive Committee of 19-20 November 2002⁶, emphasised the strengthening of Community structural policies in an enlarged Europe insofar as the principles of cohesion and solidarity are enshrined in the Treaty and constitute two of the most important vehicles for the integration of peoples and territories.

For ETUC, enlargement represents first and foremost a unique historical opportunity to unify the peoples of Europe on the basis of fundamental democratic values. This guarantees peace and political stability in Europe and contributes to economic and social progress and the improvement of living and working conditions. Besides the reunification of Europe, enlargement makes it possible to expand the European job market and internal market by increasing the overall volume of production and consumption level of the new Member States, and developing new and competitive products and services on the world market.

This represents an unprecedented political, economic and social challenge that will benefit the entire European Union. However, unlike previous enlargements it should be noted that this one has resulted in a widening of the economic development gap, caused a geographic shift of disparities towards the East, and made the employment situation more difficult.

Furthermore, the EU is concerned about some other major challenges that were identified at recent European Council summits, which also require joint and coordinated responses and actions.

The EU's future cohesion policy must contribute to give answers to these challenges, and in so doing help to reduce existing disparities between regions and promote a society of full employment, equal opportunities, inclusion and social cohesion, and so more widely the European Social Model.

To achieve this, the reform under way must guarantee greater complementarity between the Union's structural policies and other areas of Community policy, whilst also ensuring that all EU policies take on board the crucial aspects of economic and social cohesion and the need to boost employment of quality. In addition to the coordination of Community policies, it is of the outmost importance to coordinate taxation policies in order to avoid any social and taxation dumping.

In this respect, ETUC deems the explicit reference to the Lisbon and Göteborg Agendas in the proposed general Regulation presented by the Commission to be of vital importance. Above all, ETUC believes that cohesion policy must integrate the Lisbon and Göteborg objectives and become an essential medium for their realisation by means of national development programmes.

⁵ http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/newreglo713_en.htm

⁶ http://www.etuc.org/a/1637?var_recherche=%20economic%20and%20social%20cohesion%20policy%20in%20the%20enlarg

2. MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE REFORM

2.1. Concentration on three Community objectives

As regards operational programmes, ETUC favourably welcomes the Commission's proposals to have a limited list of key themes; namely, innovation and the knowledge economy, the environment and risk prevention, accessibility and services of general economic interest, while specifying that these themes must refer to jobs creation and regional development.

At the same time, subject to the stipulations set out below, ETUC is in favour of focussing the implementation of priority themes on three key concepts: convergence, regional competitiveness and employment, and European territorial cooperation.

2.1.1. Convergence

ETUC believes that the least-developed regions of the enlarged Union, those which are lagging behind the Community average, must remain the priority, as is the case in the Commission's proposal. ETUC also maintains that this objective will primarily concern the regions with a per capita GDP below 75% of the Community average.

Furthermore, ETUC supports the proposal to grant temporary assistance to regions with a per capita GDP below 75% of the average calculated for the EU-15 (referred to as the "statistical effect" of enlargement) and which did not become rich "suddenly". In the same way, temporary, transitional assistance should be granted to the countries receiving resources from the Cohesion Fund and which will also be affected by the "statistical effect" of enlargement.

However, ETUC reiterates its concern to avoid a two-speed cohesion policy, even if we recognise that certain priorities can differ according to whether they involve the most disadvantaged regions of the EU-15 or those of the new Member States.

Whereas the development of infrastructure has made progress in the EU-15, this has not been the case in the new Member States. Even as we avoid the risk of fragmentation of support measures, a balance must be found between investments in infrastructure and investments in favour of human capital. At the same time the projects concerning infrastructures must integrate the objective "employment" and be linked with a human resources policy including a capacity of anticipation.

2.1.2. Regional competitiveness and employment: anticipating and promoting changes

It is clear that the persistence of structural problems, unexpected shocks, processes of industrial restructuring or economic diversification, and company mergers in several regions of the EU all necessitate the continued provision of support to these areas.

ETUC believes that in the current programming, Objective 2 can indeed present difficulties at the implementation level. It is highly complex, not flexible enough, and only limited - and sometimes somewhat unreliable - statistical data are available.

Since the present objectives 2 and 3 are merged under the new key concept "regional competitiveness and employment", the social dimension of regional development must be clearly defined. In a similar vein, it is highly important that the Member States actually ensure a link with the National Action Plans for Employment and the National Action Plans for Inclusion.

ETUC welcomes the dual approach proposed by the Commission provided that the two parts are really implemented in all the Member States. Firstly, that regional development programmes should help the regions anticipate and promote economic change by strengthening their competitiveness and attractiveness; and secondly, that programmes defined at the suitable territorial level should help people to prepare for and adapt to economic change.

However, where regions' eligibility is concerned, whilst it is true that the Member States, in close coopera-

tion with the regions, are in the best position to identify the areas in greatest need of assistance, we feel it is important to reiterate that the Structural Funds are the Community policy whose application is based on a number of common objectives and principles, and that this arrangement is designed to prevent any potential drift by this policy towards renationalisation. Bearing this in mind, it is vital on the one hand to define objective criteria of eligibility and on the other hand to guarantee linkage and an optimal balance between the three levels (European, national and regional) concerned.

2.1.3. European territorial cooperation

ETUC approves the fact that, on the strength of the experience gained with the current INTERREG initiative, the Commission is proposing to create a new Objective with a view to continuing the balanced, harmonious integration of the Union's territory by supporting cooperation between its various components on issues of Community importance at the cross-border, transnational and interregional levels.

Cooperation and support measures at these three levels indeed need to be strengthened. The unions' positive experience associated with the actions conducted by the 41 Interregional Trade Union Councils (ITUCs), including in the border regions with the new Member States, demonstrates that this is the path to follow.

Furthermore, since enlargement the EU's external borders have shifted, likewise pushing structural problems towards these new regions. Consequently, ETUC believes that particular attention needs to be paid to these regions by optimizing the use of the New Neighbourhood Instrument, without reducing the efforts in favour of the border regions inside the E.U.

2.2 Taking account of specific territorial characteristics

ETUC believes that the outermost regions and sparsely populated peripheral regions that risk becoming deserted, merit particular attention on the part of the EU, consisting of promoting both their attractiveness and their competitiveness.

Along these lines, ETUC welcomes the Commission's proposal for a specific allocation designed to offset the particular constraints experienced by the outermost regions as part of the "Convergence" Objective.

By the same token, just as the Commission proposes, it is important that any allocation of resources for the "regional competitiveness and employment" Objective take account of the specific problems of accessibility and distance from major markets faced by many islands, mountain regions and sparsely populated areas.

In any case the criteria of eligibility must be clearly defined.

2.3 Simplification: "a stronger delivery system"

ETUC supports the strategic approach proposed by the Commission, and more particularly the establishment of an annual strategic dialogue with the European institutions to examine the progress as regards strategic priorities and obtained results. To be able to provide its contribution, ETUC believes the European social partners should be consulted on the overall strategic document for cohesion policy. By the same token, at national level, the social partners should be actually consulted on the National Strategic Reference Framework worked out by the Member States.

The fact is that much of the reform involves simplifying the delivery system.

First of all, ETUC welcomes the Commission's proposal to maintain the basic principles of the Community's structural policy after 2006, namely concentration, programming, additionality and partnership.

ETUC also feels that the procedures and programmes need to be further simplified and rationalised, though care should be taken to ensure that this does not impair the quality of support measures. Similarly, ETUC can support the Commission's proposal aimed at greater decentralisation by delegating more

responsibilities to the Member States and regions, whilst maintaining financial rigour, provided that the Commission guarantees consistency with European policies and objectives and linkage between the European, national and regional levels in order to avoid any risk of disparities between and within the Member States.

Finally if the proposed system of “single Fund” may simplify the delivery system, it is necessary to ensure a comprehensive view and parallelisms between the Funds, namely in order to avoid any double use of the Funds. Moreover the efforts towards an integrated implementation of the Funds must continue.

2.4. Community Initiatives

Past experience shows us that Community Initiatives play a vital role in shoring up Europe's identity, in possibilities for experimentation and in the development of partnership. In addition to this, ETUC deems the aspects related to the transnational and innovative character of these initiatives to be equally important.

Consequently, whilst emphasising the importance of the Commission's proposals aimed at ensuring equal opportunities and transnational cooperation, ETUC wishes to see the Community Initiative EQUAL maintained or explicitly included under the new Objective 2, given the positive results achieved in terms of promoting equal opportunities for everyone on a labour market that is undergoing radical change and in attempts to combat all forms of discrimination.

2.5. The principle of partnership

ETUC is convinced that the partnership principle is a fundamental principle in guaranteeing the successful operation of structural fund measures. High-quality partnerships should be pursued, involving the social partners in every phase of the funds' interventions.

Along these lines, ETUC would like to see the future structural funds rules set out the partnership principle clearly, rather than relying on national rules and practices, as the Commission has once again proposed.

As regards the composition of the Monitoring Committee, ETUC welcomes the Commission's proposal that the social partners be included.

Similarly, with regard to the European Social Fund, ETUC supports the Commission's proposal that under the 'Convergence' Objective, at least 2% of the ESF's resources be allocated both to developing capacity to activities undertaken jointly by the social partners. At the same time, ETUC insists that a clear reference be made to the social dialogue in accordance with the Commission Communication "Partnership for change in an enlarged Europe - Enhancing the contribution of European social dialogue" (COM(2004)557⁷).

However, ETUC regrets the fact that in the Commission's proposal, the European Social Fund is the only fund that depends on active participation by the social partners within its European Committee. ETUC feels that such participation constitutes important added value. Consequently, it is essential that the same type of participation be provided where the other structural funds are concerned at European and national levels.

In a similar vein, ETUC feels that in future the annual meetings between the European Commission and the social partners must entail genuine consultation and insists that other forums of debate with the Member States and the Commission be set up.

The social partners must have access to technical assistance to strengthen their capacities, more particularly in the new Member States, in order to enable them to participate more easily in the management and implementation of the projects financed by the Structural Funds.

⁷ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2004/com2004_0557eno1.pdf

3. FINANCIAL RESOURCES

It is a fact that the current level of investment of the Union's budget resources is relatively modest compared with the positive results obtained, notably as regards the level of improvement of the situation of the less fortunate regions and the start of genuine convergence.

Furthermore, bearing in mind the Member States' ambitions for the EU, compared with the objectives of enlargement and the Lisbon and Göteborg Strategies, the level of resources cannot be maintained at the present level.

Consequently, ETUC feels that if success is to be guaranteed, the efforts being made to stimulate the growth, employment, competitiveness and sustainable development of less developed regions must be stepped up.

In the light of the limit proposed by the Commission (1.24%) in the financial perspective for the 2007-2013 period, ETUC feels that the 0.41% allocated to cohesion policy is inadequate if the EU is to attain the ambitious goals proposed in the ongoing pursuit of European construction.

TRADE UNIONS AND THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND 2007-2013

- Main characteristics of the ESF 2007-2013
- The mission of the ESF
- The scope of application
- Programming tools
- What is the role of the trade unions?

THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND 2007-2013

Main characteristics

- Greater integration with the European priorities in the field of employment and social inclusion
- Greater integration with the FEDER objectives
- Mainstreaming of innovative actions and transnational cooperation

NB: From the point of view of the trade unions, the ESF must be used in synergy with:

- The new LLL programme 2007-2013
- The 7th R and D programme
- National, regional and local European policies

THE MISSION OF THE ESF

1) To strengthen economic and social cohesion by boosting employment and employment possibilities (quantity and quality)

- Full employment
- Labour quality and productivity
- Social inclusion
- Reduce the national, regional and local disparities in the field of employment

See  Employment policy guidelines 2005-2008
“Education and training 2010” objectives

EMPLOYMENT POLICY GUIDELINES 2005-2008 AND ESF

- n°17 Implement employment policies that set out to achieve full employment, to improve the quality and productivity of labour and to reinforce social and territorial cohesion
- n°18 Promote a lifecycle approach to employment
- n°19 Ensure that labour markets encourage insertion, make jobs more attractive and work financially attractive for job seekers, including underprivileged and non-working groups of the population

- n°20 Improve the response to the needs of the labour market
- n°21 Promote flexibility by reconciling it with job security and reduce the segmentation of the labour market, taking into account the role of the social partners
- n°22 Ensure the evolution of labour costs and introduce wage fixing mechanisms that trigger employment
- n°23 Increase and improve investment in human capital
- n°24 Adapt the education and training systems to the new requirements in terms of skills.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING OBJECTIVES 2010

THE QUANTITATIVE OBJECTIVES

- Reduce the early school dropout rate to no more than 10%
- Increase by 15% the number of students enrolling in mathematics, science and technology courses
- Increase to 85% the percentage of young people aged 22 having completed at least higher secondary studies
- Reduce by 20% the percentage of pupils with skills equal or lower than the level 1 PISA reading standard
- Increase to 12.5% the percentage of the population between 25 and 64 having participated in an education and training measure in the 4 weeks preceding the survey

THE "POLITICAL" OBJECTIVES

- Draw up and test a European certification framework, founded on learning outcomes
- Draw up and test a system of learning credits
- Step up the cooperation in the field of quality by the European network on quality assurance in education and vocational training.
- Promote the use of Europass

SCOPE OF APPLICATION OF ESF 2007-2013

In terms of the convergence and competitiveness objectives

a) Adaptability of workers and companies

- 1) LLL, access to training, in particular of low-qualified and elderly workers, development of qualifications and skills, dissemination of ITCs
- 2) Dissemination of innovative methods of work organisation, health and safety, identification of professional needs (including during re-structuring exercises)

b) Improve access to employment

- 1) Reinforce employment services
- 2) Active and preventive measures to identify needs: made-to-measure training, job-seeking, setting up in business, elderly workers, work-life balance
- 3) Actions to improve access to employment, long-term employment and prospects of working women suffering less segregation and removing pay inequity
- 4) Actions to encourage the participation of migrants in employment and their integration and to facilitate worker mobility.

c) Social inclusion and the fight against discrimination

- 1) Insertion programme for the employment, education and training of underprivileged groups
- 2) Combating discrimination on the labour market

d) Human capital

- 1) Reforms of the education and training systems (employability, adaptation to the labour needs, innovation)
- 2) Networking of higher education establishments, research and technology centres and companies

e) Partnerships and agreements with social partners and NGOs at national, regional, local and transnational level

SCOPE OF APPLICATION OF ESF 2007-2013

Only for the convergence objective

a) Investment in human capital

- 1) Reforms of the education and training system for the knowledge society and LLL
- 2) Reinforce participation in education and LLL (school dropout rate, sexual segregation, quality)
- 3) Human capital in research and innovation (universities and researchers)

b) Reinforce the capacity and efficiency of the authorities, the social partners and NGOs to ensure good governance

- 1) Studies, statistics and experts to improve the design, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programmes
- 2) Specific training for the personnel of the relevant authorities, social partners and NGOs.

NB1: the authority in charge of managing each Operational Programme shall encourage the appropriate participation of the social partners in the actions financed by the ESF

NB2: art. 5p3 of the ESF regulation: an appropriate volume of the resources of the ESF is allocated to the development of the capacities of the social partners (training, networking, social dialogue, in particular for the adaptation of workers and companies)

NB3: The ESF can support transnational and interregional actions (sharing of information, good practices, etc.)

TOOLS FOR THE PROGRAMMING OF THE FUNDS

- 1) Community strategic guidelines promoting cohesion
- 2) National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRFs) (a single overview and a single strategy for the objectives and the funds)
- 3) Operational Programmes (OP) of the Member State or region

ESF 2007-2013 – WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE TRADE UNIONS?

- 1) To focus the objectives of the trade unions relating to the application of the ESF missions at the (sectoral and cross-sectoral) transnational, national, regional and local levels
- 2) To use the exchange forums and opportunities offered by the ESF
- 3) To ensure broader dissemination of this knowledge (training/information) among trade unions and workers

1) To focus the objectives relating to the application of ESF missions

- Access to education and to LLL
- Investments
- The organisation of work and training time
- Analysis of vocational and training needs
- Validation and recognition of skills
- Innovation in education and training
- Links with the world of work (traineeships, sandwich courses, apprenticeships)
- Equal opportunities
 - the social dialogue
 - broad” partnership at local level, in particular
 - negotiation of training

2) To use the exchange forums and the opportunities offered by the ESF

a) The monitoring committees

- Preparation
- Implementation of the Operational Programmes (OP)
- Follow-through (in accordance with national standards)
- Evaluation

b) Article 5.3 of the ESF regulation

3) Disseminate knowledge among the trade unions

- Synergies between the different departments
- Use ICTs
- Try to insert a module on the structural funds 2007-2013 into existing (or “standard”) trade union training programmes
- Reinforce the potential for transnational activities, by using the CES/ETUI-REHS networks

THE BACKGROUND PAPERS THAT THE TRADE UNION DECISION-MAKERS NEED TO BE FAMILIAR WITH

- The community strategic guidelines in favour of cohesion 2007-2013
- The employment policy guidelines 2005-2008
- The guidelines in the 2007-2013 ESF regulations
- The National Strategic Framework (summary) 2007-2013
- The national or regional OP
- Other national, regional, local programming documents (Pact, Agreement, etc.)

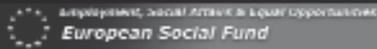
Roberto Pettenello
CGIL, Italy

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
50 years investing in people

ESF

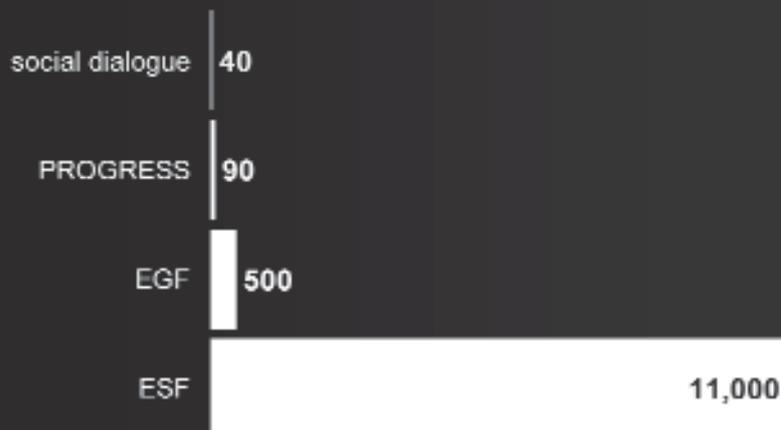
Programming Round 2007-2013

ESF SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL PARTNERS

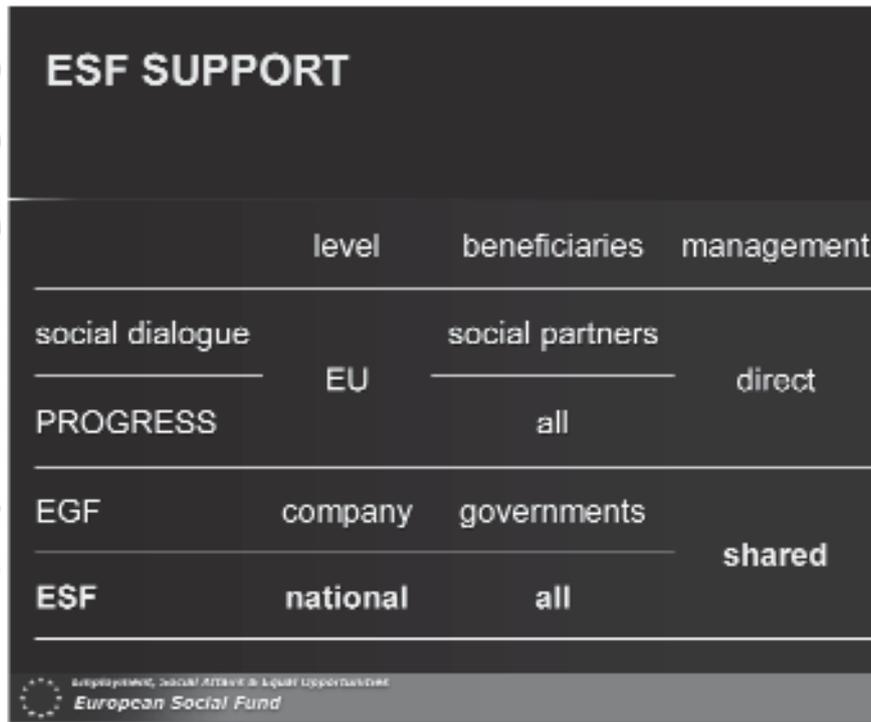


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50 years investing in people

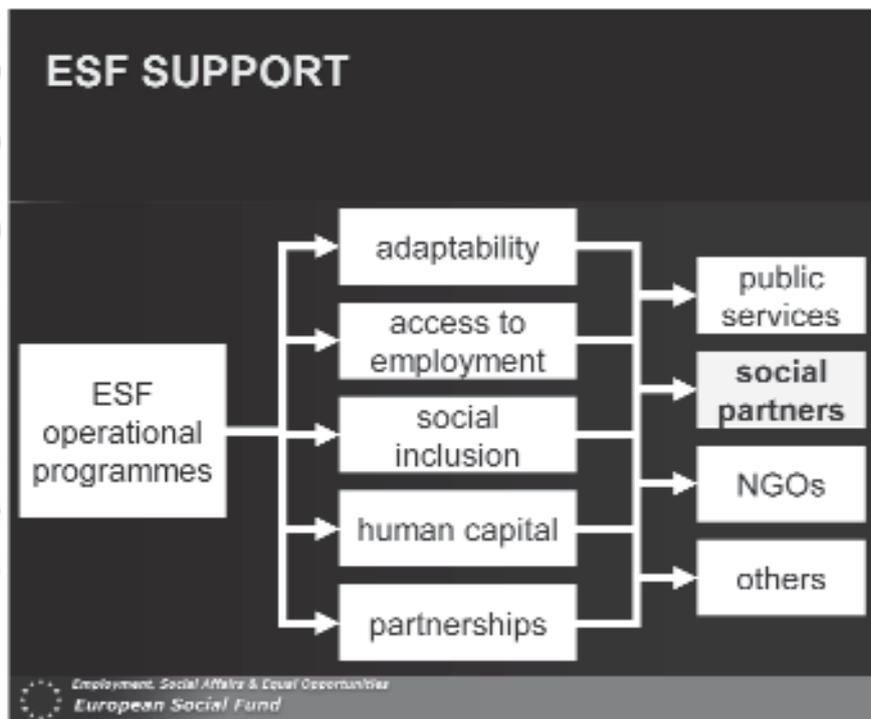
ESF SUPPORT



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ESF REGULATION Art. 3 §1.e partnership

1. Within the framework of the Convergence & Regional competitiveness & employment objectives, the ESF shall support actions in Member States under the priorities listed below:

(...)

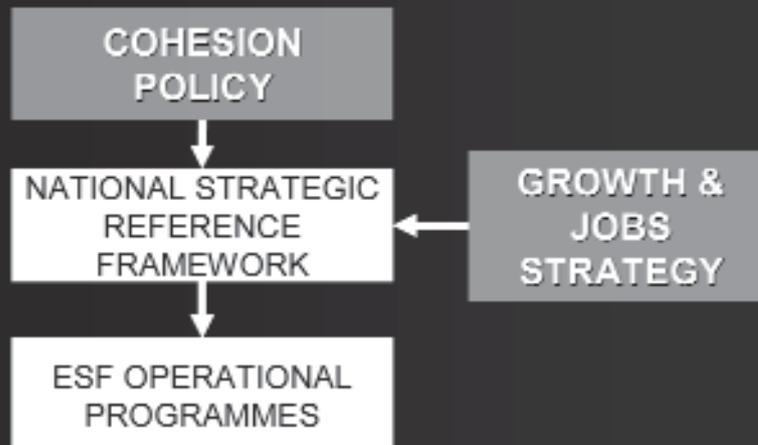
(e) promoting partnerships, pacts & initiatives through networking of relevant stakeholders, such as the social partners & NGOs, at the transnational, national, regional & local levels in order to mobilise for reforms in the field of employment & labour market inclusiveness



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ESF REGULATION Art. 3 §2.b capacity building



2. Within the framework of the Convergence objective (incl. transitional regions), the ESF shall support actions (...):
 - (b) strengthening institutional capacity & the efficiency (...), where relevant, of the social partners (...), in particular by promoting:
 - (ii) capacity building in the delivery of policies & programmes in the relevant fields, including with regard to the enforcement of legislation, especially through (...) specific support to (...) social (...) partners (...)

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ESF REGULATION Art. 5 governance



2. The Member States shall ensure the involvement of the social partners & adequate consultation & participation of other stakeholders, at the appropriate territorial level, in the preparation, implementation & monitoring of ESF support.
3. The managing authority of each operational programme shall encourage adequate participation of the social partners in actions funded under Art. 3.



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ESF REGULATION Art. 5 partnership



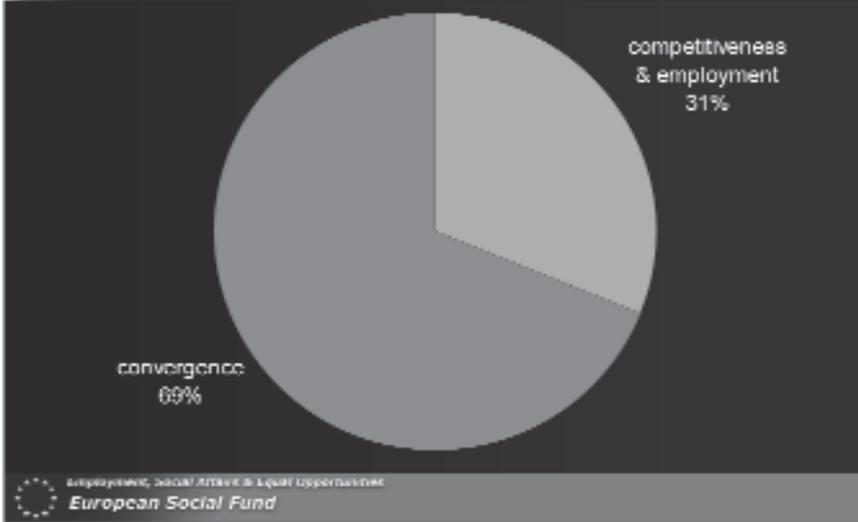
3. *(continued)*
Under the Convergence objective, an appropriate amount of ESF resources shall be allocated to capacity-building, which shall include:
 - training
 - networking measures
 - strengthening the social dialogue & activities jointly undertaken by the social partners, in particular as regards adaptability of workers & enterprises referred to in Article 3(1)(a).



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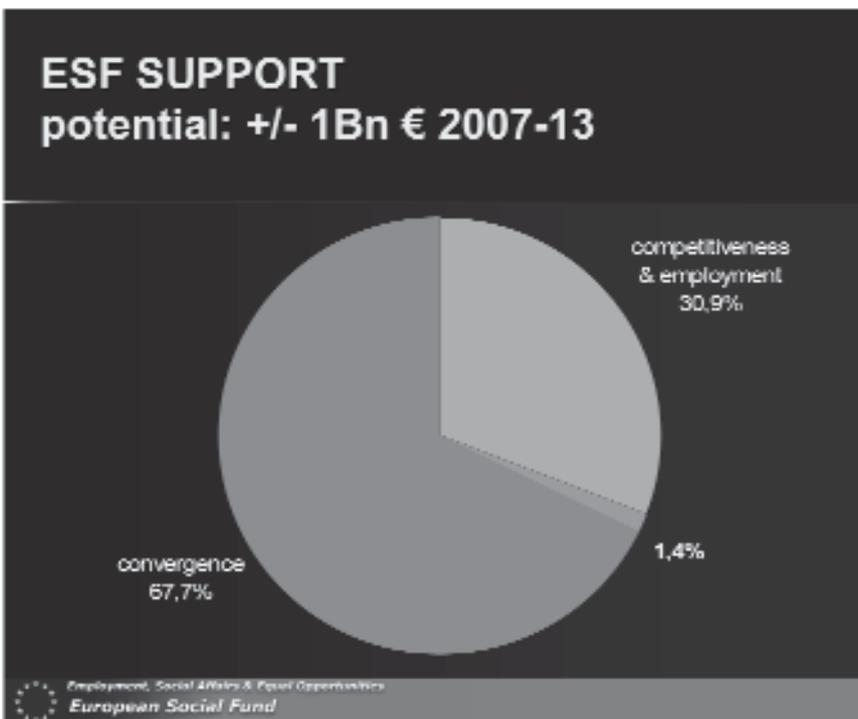
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ESF SUPPORT



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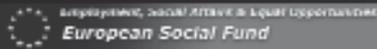
ESF SUPPORT potential: +/- 1Bn € 2007-13



EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
50 years investing in people

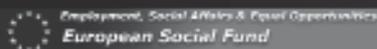
ESF SUPPORT IN OPs SURVEY – 13 REPLIES

Austria	Finland
Germany	Luxembourg
Greece	Netherlands
Italy	
Spain	
Malta	
Hungary	
Poland	
Estonia	
Lithuania	



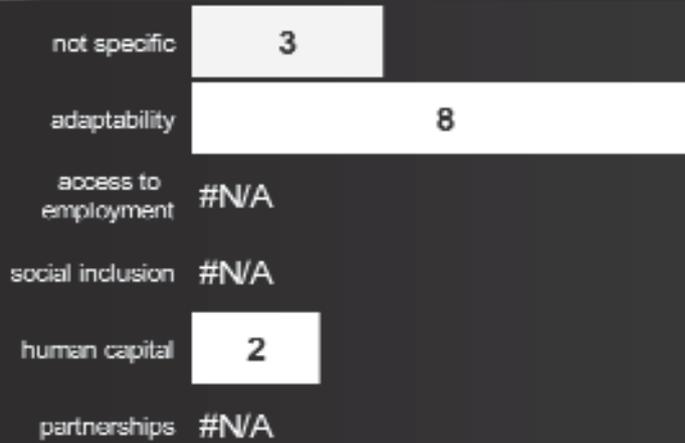
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ESF SUPPORT IN OPs appropriate amount?



EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
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ESF SUPPORT IN OPs which priority?



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ESF SUPPORT IN OPs

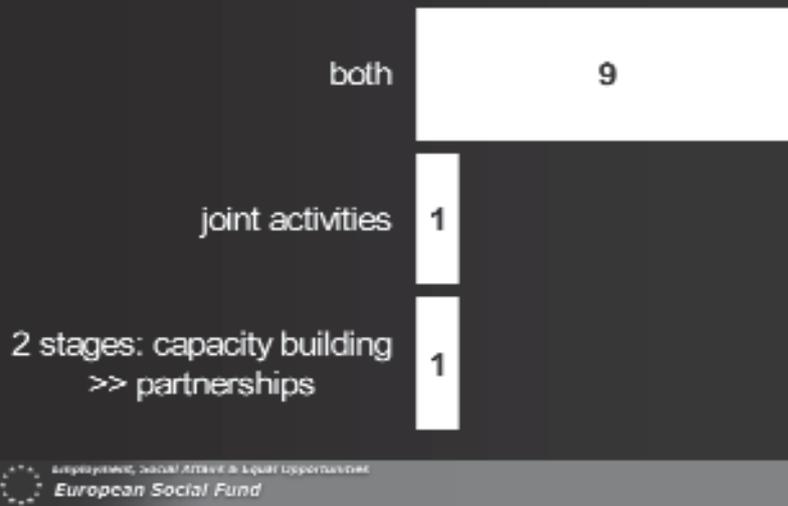
Eligible activities

- webpage
- research projects & studies
- legal aid services
- capacity building
- training systems
- development of professional qualification system
- training / counselling
- collection & dissemination of best practices
- social dialogue at sectoral level
- etc.

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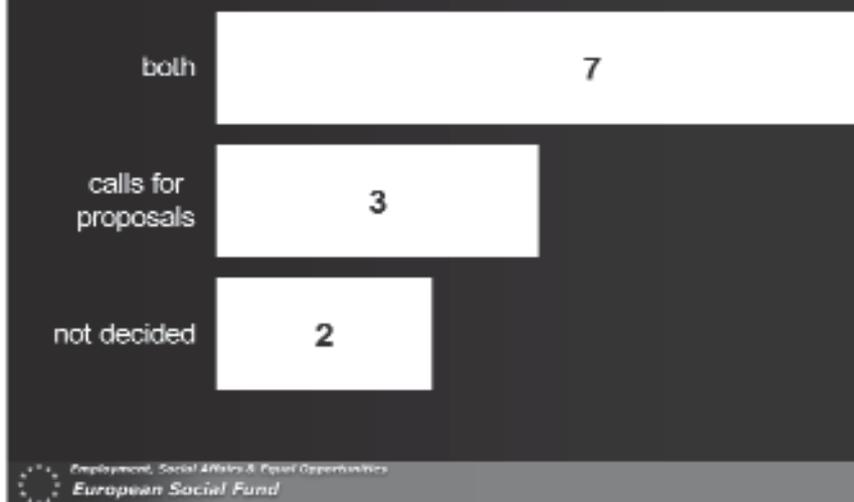
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ESF SUPPORT IN OPs capacity-building / joint activities



EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
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ESF SUPPORT IN OPs calls for proposals / tenders



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MORE INFO

[HTTP://EC.EUROPA.EU/ESF](http://ec.europa.eu/esf)

 employment, social affairs & equal opportunities
European Social Fund

Dominique Be
DG Employment, European Commission

USEFUL WEBSITES

- ESF:** http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/
- EUIS:** http://www.etui-rehs.org/education/eu_information_service
- Progress:** http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/progress/index_en.html



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