

This cost includes direct aid per hectare, export refunds and refunds for the production of wheat starch, as well as degressive special aid for Portuguese production.

This represents approximately 40% of farmers' gross income (based on the intervention price (EUR 119,19 per tonne) plus direct aid (EUR 54,34 per tonne)), which corresponds to the average for arable crops as a whole.

The world market price of wheat in 1999 was between USD 105 and USD 90 per tonne for common wheat of a quality comparable with Community quality, and between USD 160 and USD 185 for durum wheat.

(2000/C 330 E/042)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2664/99

by Proinsias De Rossa (PSE) to the Commission

(12 January 2000)

Subject: Information on the URBAN Programme

The URBAN Programme and URBAN Pilot have constituted a successful attempt by the Union to tackle the deep-seated problems of exclusion which are prevalent in urban areas.

1. Can the Commission outline its future plans in relation to a new URBAN Programme/Urban Pilot?
2. What funds are now available for this Programme/Pilot?
3. What are the guidelines?

Answer given by Mr Barnier on behalf of the Commission

(25 February 2000)

1. The URBAN Community initiative and the URBAN pilot project (UPP) scheme have been essential components of the Commission's efforts to assist Member States in enhancing the quality of life in depressed urban agglomerations. Taking into account the views of the Parliament during the discussion on the reform of the structural funds, the Commission has decided to launch a new URBAN Community initiative, which will cover about 50 urban areas during the period 2000-2006.

A draft of guidelines for the new URBAN initiative was adopted by the Commission on 13 October 1999⁽¹⁾. They are at present being discussed with Parliament and Member States. The Commission will therefore adopt the final guidelines in March 2000 or April 2000. Member States will be invited then to present proposals within six months of the publication of the guidelines in the Official journal.

The Commission does not envisage launching a new wave of UPPs for the programming period 2000-2006. However, most of them will continue until the end of 2000.

2. During the 1994-1999 programming period, URBAN funded programmes in 118 urban areas. The total Community contribution amounted to approximately € 900 million at 1999 prices. A further € 164 million between 1989 and 1999 supported 59 UPPs within the framework of the innovative actions under the European regional development fund (ERDF).

The total contribution by the ERDF to the URBAN Community initiative during the period 2000-2006 is fixed at € 700 million at 1999 prices.

3. The guidelines assist Member States in the preparation of their programmes to be funded under URBAN. They set out the objectives and principles of the Community initiative, define the priorities for action and criteria for the selection of eligible urban areas, and lay down the procedures for preparation, approval and implementation of the programmes. They also contain an indicative list of eligible measures that aim at social, economic and environmental regeneration of urban areas.

⁽¹⁾ COM(1999) 477 final.