

difficulties in obtaining all the necessary information to do this in a strictly comparable way for all countries. As a result, there may be some areas where the level of State aid was under-valued.

#### *Existing Aid List*

2. No Czech State aid measure with regard to banking was included in the list attached to the Accession Treaty. The inclusion of aid measures granted by the Czech authorities to the existing aid list consists of two phases: The first phase consisted of the establishment of a list of aid measures to be attached to the Accession Treaty. A few banking measures had been notified for this list, however they did not qualify and were therefore not included. The second phase covers measures submitted to the Commission between 1 January 2003 and the actual date of accession (the so-called 'interim procedure'). This procedure covers aid measures which, prior to the date of accession, have been assessed by the State aid monitoring authority of the new Member State and found to be compatible with the *acquis*, and to which the Commission does not raise an objection on the ground of serious doubts as to the compatibility of the measure with the common market. Several aid measures to banking are currently under scrutiny of the Czech competition authorities (OPEC). Once the OPEC will have assessed the measures, and if it raises no objections, the Czech authorities may notify the granted aid to the Commission for inclusion in the existing aid list. The Commission will consequently assess the aid, and only if the Commission does not object to it on the grounds of serious doubts as to its compatibility with the common market, it will be regarded as existing aid.

The existing aid list exercise should be distinguished from the State Aid Scoreboard. The State Aid Scoreboard is not intended as an assessment of compatibility with the *acquis*, but an information tool.

3. Currently, the Commission cannot draw the conclusion that the figures are fundamentally inaccurate, since certain measures are still under scrutiny by the OPEC. However, in case figures prove to be inaccurate, they will need to be updated in the next score board.

(2004/C 65 E/023)

#### **WRITTEN QUESTION P-0260/03**

**by Giovanni Pittella (PSE) to the Commission**

(29 January 2003)

*Subject:* 'Compatible' projects

Pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999<sup>(1)</sup>:

- the reason for strengthening cohesion policy (which is supported by means of the Structural Funds) is to reduce disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions or islands;
- decentralised implementation of Structural Fund operations by the Member States should provide sufficient guarantees as to the details and quality of implementation and to results and the evaluation thereof;
- achievement of such objectives is ensured through the observance of certain principles (programming, concentration, integration and additionality) which justify the existence of an EU cohesion policy.

Furthermore:

- the first year in which the rule on automatic decommitment applied ended on 31 December 2002;
- in the case of Italy, only 70-80% of the expenditure certifications submitted by the regions by the above date relate to so-called 'support' projects (i.e. ones consistent with the programmes).

In view of the above, would the Commission answer the following questions?

- For each Italian Objective 1 programme and for each of the Structural Funds, what was the exact amount of the expenditure certified to the Commission in respect of projects which were not selected on the basis of a call launched in connection with a RGP or a NGP, and will the expenditure relating to such projects nonetheless be reimbursed under the ERDF, the ESF, the EAGGF and the FIFG?

- What additions to the programming have been amended in order to make expenditure which has already been disbursed outside the operational programmes retroactively admissible for the sole purpose of avoiding the rule on automatic decommitment? Is the Commission prepared to accept such a practice?
- Does the Commission intend to ascertain in what way the funds which may be released through the implementation of 'consistent' projects are used? If so, what conditions will it impose?
- Does the regions' recourse to such a high percentage of projects selected on the basis of calls which were not launched pursuant to the measures contained in the programmes adopted by the Commission not seriously jeopardise the achievement of the development objectives laid down in the Objective 1 CSF for Italy, and does it not also contravene Community rules on additionality, partnership, programming and information, in addition to thwarting the objectives themselves and undermining the cohesion policy?

(<sup>1</sup>) OJ L 161, 26.6.1999, p. 1.

(2004/C 65 E/024)

**WRITTEN QUESTION P-0261/03**

**by Giovanni Fava (PSE) to the Commission**

(29 January 2003)

*Subject:* 'Compatible' projects

Pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 (<sup>1</sup>):

- the reason for strengthening cohesion policy (which is supported by means of the Structural Funds) is to reduce disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions or islands;
- decentralised implementation of Structural Fund operations by the Member States should provide sufficient guarantees as to the details and quality of implementation and to results and the evaluation thereof;
- achievement of such objectives is ensured through the observance of certain principles (programming, concentration, integration and additionality) which justify the existence of an EU cohesion policy.

Furthermore:

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- in the case of Italy, only 70-80 % of the expenditure certifications submitted by the regions by the above date relate to so-called 'support' projects (i.e. ones consistent with the programmes).

In view of the above, would the Commission answer the following questions?

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- What additions to the programming have been amended in order to make expenditure which has already been disbursed outside the operational programmes retroactively admissible for the sole purpose of avoiding the rule on automatic decommitment? Is the Commission prepared to accept such a practice?
- Does the Commission intend to ascertain in what way the funds which may be released through the implementation of 'consistent' projects are used? If so, what conditions will it impose?