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I

(Information)

COUNCIL

COUNCIL OPINION

of 7 March 2003

on the updated Stability programme of Luxembourg, 2001 to 2005

(2003/C 64/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1466/97 of 7 July 1997 on the strengthening of the surveillance of budgetary positions and the surveillance and coordination of economic policies ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 5(3) thereof,

Having regard to the recommendation of the Commission

After consulting the Economic and Financial Committee,

HAS DELIVERED THIS OPINION:

On 7 March 2003 the Council examined the updated stability programme for Luxembourg, which covers the period 2001 to 2005. The programme does not fully comply with the requirements of the code of conduct on the content and format of the programmes endorsed by the Ecofin Council on 10 July 2001; in particular it has been transmitted with a six week delay. The programme partly conforms with the recommendations of the BEPGs.

In 2002, real GDP growth decelerated further to an estimated 0,5 %, from 1,0 % in 2001, which is well below the forecast included in the 2001 stability programme. The slowdown is to a large extent due to adverse developments in financial services, which accounts for around a quarter of total value added. On the basis of a cautious macroeconomic scenario, which assumes a somewhat more muted recovery of economic activity than in the Commission Autumn 2002 forecast, real GDP growth is expected to pick up only gradually, to around 3 % in 2005.

The Council notes that government finances deteriorated markedly in 2002 as revenues decelerated in response to the combined impact of the tax reform and the economic slowdown, while expenditure growth remained very strong. Consequently, the general government budget balance is expected to show a deficit of 0,3 % of GDP in 2002, a sharp

deterioration compared to the large surplus of 6,1 % of GDP in 2001 ⁽²⁾. The general government balance is projected to remain in deficit by 0,3 % of GDP in 2003, to deteriorate slightly further in 2004 to a deficit of 0,7 % of GDP, and to reach a position close to balance in 2005, with a slight nominal deficit of 0,1 % of GDP. The underlying general government balance is expected to remain positive over the horizon covered by the stability programme. Consequently, the Council considers that Luxembourg continues to be in conformity with the requirement of the stability and growth pact to reach a budgetary position of close to balance or in surplus in the medium term.

The Council notes that sound management of public finances continues to be the guiding principle of the 2002 update; the Council welcomes the main elements of the budgetary framework currently in place, which *inter alia* encompasses the use of cautious macroeconomic projections as the basis for budgetary policy, as well as the principle to let net public sector lending be positive, to achieve a balanced budget for central government, and not to let the rise in current expenditure exceed the growth of total expenditure. The Council welcomes the reduction of the tax burden through the implementation of tax reform while aiming for a sound budgetary position in the medium term; in this context it encourages a future government to adhere to real expenditure ceilings that are compatible with achieving a budgetary position close to balance or in surplus in the medium term.

However, the Council expresses some concern over the rapid deterioration of the budget balance of the central government, which only accounts for part of the general government sector. The balance of central government was still in surplus by 2,6 % of GDP in 2001 but is projected to register a deficit of 2,2 % of GDP in 2002 and of 2,1 % of GDP in 2003, while the central government deficit is expected to deteriorate further to 2,8 % of GDP in 2004 and 2005. The Council notes that this is partly due to revenue shortfalls in response to the economic slowdown, while central government expenditure is projected to increase rapidly; although the starting position of public finances in Luxembourg is extremely sound, a continued fast increase of current expenditure might become a factor of risk should economic growth in the medium term slow significantly.

⁽²⁾ More recent data communicated on 1 March show that the central government deficit in 2002 was only 0,1 % of GDP, resulting in a general government surplus of 2,6 % of GDP in 2002. However, this information came too late to be reflected in the Commission's appraisal.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 209, 2.8.1997.

On the basis of current policies, the Council considers that public finances in Luxembourg are in a good position to meet the projected costs of an ageing population. However, the Council notes that the assessment of the sustainability of public finances in Luxembourg is very sensitive to developments as regards the number of cross-border workers. The

Council considers that the commitment to sustain a balanced budget position in coming years is broadly appropriate in light of the projected budgetary impact of ageing populations, and welcomes measures to improve the attractiveness of third pillar private pensions.

COUNCIL OPINION

of 7 March 2003

on the updated Stability programme for Portugal, 2003 to 2006

(2003/C 64/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1466/97 of 7 July 1997 on the strengthening of the surveillance of budgetary positions and the surveillance and coordination of economic policies ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 5(3) thereof,

Having regard to the recommendation by the Commission,

After consulting the Economic and Financial Committee,

HAS DELIVERED THIS OPINION:

On 7 March 2003 the Council examined the updated stability programme for Portugal, which covers the period 2003 to 2006. The updated programme projects general government finances to improve steadily, from a deficit of 2,8 % of GDP in 2002 to a deficit of 0,5 % of GDP in 2006. Government gross debt is expected to decrease from 58,8 % of GDP in 2002 to 52,7 % in 2006.

The Council notes that the updated programme broadly complies with the requirements of the revised 'code of conduct on the content and format of stability and converge programmes'. The updated programme was adopted by the government on 20 December and presented to parliament, which discussed it and adopted early in January a declaration of approval by a large majority, including the support of the main opposition party. The updated programme was then formally submitted to the Commission. The Portuguese authorities have thus effectively kept the commitment made to the Council on 5 November, in the framework of the recommendation under Article 104(7), to present before the end of the year an updated stability programme. The Council considers that the economic policies as reflected in the planned measures in the programme update broadly comply with the 2002 Broad Economic Policy Guidelines.

The update's macroeconomic scenario shows a small acceleration of GDP growth to 1,3 % in 2003 (from an estimated growth rate of 0,7 % in 2002), which in the light of the most recent information available, pointing to a further deceleration in economic activity in the second half of 2002, looks somewhat optimistic. For the period 2004 to 2006, the macroeconomic scenario presented in the programme update appears plausible as far as the pace of economic growth is concerned (an average growth rate of close to 3 % per year). The planned measures of structural reform should generate beneficial supply side effects, allowing the economy to rely on greater export strength.

The Council considers that regaining an appropriate level of external competitiveness is of paramount importance for Portugal in the light of the level of inflation and real wage developments over the last years. To that end, securing wage moderation and sustained increases in productivity are key requirements, also as a way to secure a decline in inflation. In this context, the Council welcomes the government's guideline to use, from 2003 onwards, the average inflation forecast for the euro-area as the benchmark for wage negotiations, as well as the freezing of most wages in the government sector in 2003. This latter measure should have favourable spill-over effects in the private sector of the economy.

On 5 November 2002, in the light of a government deficit of 4,1 % of GDP in 2001, the Council decided that an excessive deficit existed in Portugal and issued a recommendation to Portugal according to Article 104(7) of the Treaty. In the terms of this recommendation, the Portuguese authorities were urged to:

- (i) implement with resolve their budgetary plans for 2002 which aim at reducing the deficit to 2,8 % of GDP in that year. The Council established a deadline of 31 December 2002 for the Portuguese government to take all necessary measures to bring the excessive deficit to an end;
- (ii) adopt and implement the necessary budgetary measures to ensure that the government deficit in 2003 is further reduced clearly below 3 % of GDP and that the government debt ratio is kept below the 60 % of GDP reference value.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 209, 2.8.1997, p. 1.

The Council notes with satisfaction that, according to preliminary figures, the general government deficit has been reduced below 3 % of GDP in 2002, in spite of weaker-than-anticipated growth. The Council acknowledges the firm resolve of the Portuguese government in pursuing budgetary consolidation. Budgetary developments in the further course of 2002 turned out less favourable than expected in the rectifying budget adopted in June, mainly due to the further weakening in economic activity, but also to lower-than-expected proceeds from sales of government property. As a consequence, and with a view to reducing the deficit as recommended by the Council, the Portuguese authorities adopted a number of one-off measures at the end of the year, which in total are estimated to have raised additional revenue of about 1,5 % of GDP.

The Council notes that substantial challenges remain in 2003 to achieve the deficit target of 2,4 % of GDP and to put the deficit on a downward trajectory. Two factors appear particularly critical in this regard. First, in the light of recent economic data confirming the marked slowdown in economic activity in the second half of 2002, the programme's assumption for GDP growth of 1,25 % for 2003 appears somewhat optimistic, and further budgetary tightening might be necessary. Second, additional measures to be taken in 2003 may be necessary as the beneficial impact of the one-off measures implemented in 2002 wears off. The Council therefore urges the Portuguese authorities to ensure that the deficit remains well below 3 % of GDP in 2003. A sustained correction of the budgetary imbalance should help the revival of economic confidence. Moreover, the Council considers that an early and determined implementation of the comprehensive and ambitious programme of structural reform envisaged in the stability programme update should be conducive to greater confidence, enabling a faster recovery of economic growth.

The Council acknowledges the projected improvement in the underlying balance by more than 0,5 % of GDP per year, taking the underlying deficit from about 3,5 % of GDP in 2002 to a situation close-to-balance by 2005, in line with the commitments taken by Portugal in the recommendation adopted by the Council on 5 November 2002. In 2003, however, the improvement in the underlying deficit amounts to approximately 2 percentage points of GDP, the adjustment effort being considerably higher due to the need to replace the one-off measures adopted in 2002. The consolidation strategy envisaged is thus front-loaded and in compliance with the objectives of the Stability and Growth Pact.

The Council also notes with satisfaction that the consolidation strategy adopted rests mainly on the restraint of government expenditure, to be achieved partly by tighter control of the public sector wage bill, and partly by the effects of a comprehensive programme of structural reform. Such a strategy is in line with the general recommendations of the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines. The Council urges the Portuguese authorities to ensure that the implementation of this strategy offsets the revenue losses caused by the announced gradual phasing-in of a substantial lowering in corporate taxes, thereby leading to an underlying budgetary position close-to-balance at the end of the period. In this context, the Council draws attention to the potential budgetary risks associated with a significant tax reduction that is not matched by firm control over government expenditure, which could be facilitated by implementing expenditure ceilings. A sensitivity analysis suggests that in the event of the low growth scenario considered in the programme update materialising, the actual balance may deteriorate significantly in the absence of offsetting discretionary measures. In addition, the Council reaffirms that the commitment made by the Portuguese authorities to continue to improve the collection of government data is key to ensure an effective budgetary surveillance.

The Council notes that while remaining below the 60 % of GDP reference value, the government debt ratio has increased in recent years. The Council welcomes the Portuguese authorities' intentions to bring the debt level down to 52,7 % of GDP by 2006, unwinding the sharp deterioration registered between 2000 and 2002. The reduction in the debt ratio over the programme period is to be achieved by the gradual improvement of the primary surplus, together with the assumption of no major net financial operations taking place in the coming years.

On the basis of current policies, the risk of unsustainable public finances in the light of ageing populations cannot be excluded. If debt reduction is to make a noticeable contribution towards meeting the budgetary cost of ageing populations, then reaching a balanced position by 2006 is essential; this should be part of an ambitious three-pronged strategy to meet the long-term budgetary consequences of ageing and may have to include the running of surpluses. Running sound public finances over the long run will allow to achieve a significant reduction of the debt ratio prior to the budgetary impact of ageing populations taking hold. Therefore determined implementation of the structural reforms in order to curb the growth of age-related expenditure, to broaden the tax bases, and to increase the overall growth potential of the economy, is essential to achieve long-term stability.

COUNCIL DECISION**of 6 March 2003****renewing the Management Board of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training**

(2003/C 64/03)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75 of 10 February 1975 establishing the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, and in particular Article 4 thereof ⁽¹⁾,

Having regard to the lists of nominees submitted to the Council by the Governments of the Member States as regards their representatives and by the Commission as regards the employees' and employers' representatives,

Whereas:

- (1) By its Decision of 17 December 1999 ⁽²⁾, the Council appointed the members of the Management Board of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for the period from 17 December 1999 to 16 December 2002.
- (2) The members of the Management Board of that Centre should be appointed for a period of three years,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

The following are hereby appointed members of the Management Board of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training for the period from 6 March 2003 to 5 March 2006:

I. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES

Belgium	...
Denmark	Mr Villy HOVARD PEDERSEN
Germany	Mr Peter THIELE
Greece	Mr George KATROUGALOS
Spain	Ms María Dolores CANO RATIA
France	Mr Pierre LE DOUARON
Ireland	Mr Eamonn DARCY
Italy	Ms Aviana BULGARELLI
Luxembourg	Mr Gilles ESTGEN
Netherlands	...
Austria	Mr Peter KREIML
Portugal	...
Finland	Ms Eija ALHOJÄRVI
Sweden	Ms Carina LINDÉN
United Kingdom	Ms Franki ORD

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 39, 13.2.1975, p. 1. Regulation as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 354/95 (OJ L 41, 23.2.1995, p. 1).

⁽²⁾ OJ C 4, 7.1.2000, p. 4.

II. REPRESENTATIVES OF EMPLOYEES' ORGANISATIONS

Belgium	...
Denmark	Ms Astrid DAHL
Germany	Mr Jochen LAUX
Greece	Mr George DASSIS
Spain	Ms Mar RODRÍGUEZ TORRES
France	Mr Jean-Claude QUENTIN
Ireland	Mr Peter RIGNEY
Italy	Mr Pietro GELARDI
Luxembourg	Mr Nico HOFFMAN
Netherlands	Mr Bart BRUGGEMAN
Austria	Mr Alexander PRISCHL
Portugal	Mr Augusto PRAÇA
Finland	Mr Jari-Pekka JYRKÄNNE
Sweden	Ms Jessica MANN
United Kingdom	Mr Paul MACKNEY

III. REPRESENTATIVES OF EMPLOYERS' ORGANISATIONS

Belgium	Mr Alfons DE VADDER
Denmark	Ms Lise SKANTING
Germany	Ms Barbara DORN
Greece	Mr Evangelos BOUMIS
Spain	Mr Juan María MENÉNDEZ-VALDÉS ÁLVAREZ
France	Mr Alain DUMONT
Ireland	Mr Pat O'TOOLE
Italy	...
Luxembourg	Mr Ted MATHGEN
Netherlands	Mr Jan BOERSMA
Austria	Mr Gerhard RIEMER
Portugal	Mr José SANCHEZ RAMIREZ
Finland	Mr Manu ALTONEN
Sweden	Mr Gert ASSEMARK
United Kingdom	Ms Margaret MURRAY

Article 2

The Council shall appoint at a later date the members not yet nominated from Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal.

Article 3

This Decision shall be published, for information, in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

Done at Brussels, 6 March 2003.

For the Council

The President

D. REPPAS

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

of 3 March 2003

on the promotion of entrepreneurship and small firms

(2003/C 64/04)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

and the Council Conclusions of 30 September 2002 on simpler legislation;

1. RECALLING:

- the Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council on the strategy for making the EU the world's most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion by 2010 and the further elaboration of this strategy by the Stockholm, Gothenburg and Barcelona European Councils;
- the European Charter for Small Enterprises, which calls for the creation of the best possible environment for small enterprises;
- the Maribor Declaration, which commits the candidate countries to implementing the European Charter for Small Enterprises;
- the Conclusions of the Barcelona European Council, inviting Member States to speed up the implementation of the European Charter for Small Enterprises and to learn from best practice, stating that the Council will meet before every Spring European Council to assess progress in creating a more favourable environment for entrepreneurship and the competitiveness of small enterprises;
- the Conclusions of the Seville European Council which welcomed the communications from the Commission on better lawmaking and, in particular, the Action Plan for simplifying and improving the regulatory environment;

- the Council Decision on a Multiannual Programme for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship, and in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (2001-2005) ⁽¹⁾;
- the Council Conclusions of 26 November 2002 on a more competitive environment for enterprises.

2. WELCOMES:

- the Green Paper 'Entrepreneurship in Europe';
- the 2003 Report from the Commission on the implementation of the European Charter for Small Enterprises;
- the Communication from the Commission 'Thinking small in an enlarging Europe' and related Staff Working Papers, which point to the need for providing a constantly improving environment for small businesses and exploiting the entrepreneurial potential in an enlarging Europe.

3. EMPHASISES:

- that the Green Paper on 'Entrepreneurship in Europe' is the starting point for an important, wide-ranging debate on the future of entrepreneurship policy;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 333, 29.12.2000, p. 84.

- the need for the European Union, in order to preserve its job creating potential, its competitive position and its economic future, to promote entrepreneurship, thus creating more new firms, making them grow and become more innovative and competitive. Particular attention should be paid to fostering women entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs in disadvantaged areas and socially excluded groups;
- the need for a coordinated approach to entrepreneurship policy, that involves all relevant policy-makers at European, national and regional level, to provide a coherent and consistent response to the needs of entrepreneurs and that concentrates on three pillars for action:
 - bringing down barriers to business development and growth,
 - balancing the risks and rewards of entrepreneurship,
 - fostering a society that values entrepreneurship;
- that learning from good practices can effectively improve Member States and candidate countries' small business policies;
- the need to improve opportunities for small firms to express their concerns in policy and law making;
- that education, in particular for the young, training and life-long learning can play a determinant role in fulfilling the Lisbon strategy, by promoting entrepreneurial culture, thus providing Europe with more successful entrepreneurs;
- that reducing administrative burdens for small firms, improving legislation and facilitating access to finance, information and knowledge is of utmost importance to foster a favourable business environment;
- that facilitating the transfer of business to new owners is essential, since one third of European enterprises will need successors in the next 10 years.

4. INVITES THE MEMBER STATES TO:

- actively consider the Green Paper 'Entrepreneurship in Europe' and formulate their responses as a positive contribution to furthering the entrepreneurship agenda in Europe;
- speed up implementation of the European Charter for Small Enterprises and give strong consideration to good practices, in particular those identified in the course of the Best

Procedure and the annual report on the Charter implementation; close performance gaps between different Member States; and include information in Member States' contribution to this report on the practical measures taken and envisaged as a consequence, in particular to:

- improve opportunities for small enterprises to express their concerns and opinions at all levels by developing consultation mechanisms, for example advisory/consultative groups to the government,
- promote education in entrepreneurial skills at all stages of the educational cycle taking inspiration from good practices identified,
- improve the quality of legislation, through the introduction of systematic regulatory impact assessment, taking into account national practices and legal systems,
- further simplify and reduce the cost and time of company registration for start-up, in particular through on-line registration and building on other good practices,
- improve access to risk and seed capital finance for small firms, such as guarantee schemes, venture capital funds and bank sector micro loans, in areas with financial market failures by increasingly focussing on incentives and risk-sharing,
- stimulate innovation and technology transfer, through promoting cooperation between universities, research and development centres and institutes and small firms, also through the use of intermediaries,
- remove barriers to the Internal Market by addressing the fragmentation of the internal market for services and complying with the targets set for transposing Directives and ensure that new barriers are not created by legal and administrative measures,
- further develop quantitative and qualitative targets on a voluntary basis in Charter areas where Member States consider it relevant and with due consideration to structural differences.

5. INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

- as a follow-up to the public debate on entrepreneurship policy propose an appropriate Action Plan on entrepreneurship by the end of 2003, taking full account of the reactions received and of existing instruments and programmes;

- establish projects, monitor developments and stimulate policy implementation, by applying the Best Procedure and other instruments, to help Member States improve their performance, in particular in the fields of:
 - better involvement and consultation of small businesses in policy and law making,
 - education and training for entrepreneurship,
 - improved access to risk and seed capital finance for small firms, such as guarantee schemes, venture capital funds and bank sector micro loans, to address financial market failures by increasingly focussing on incentives and risk-sharing,
 - innovation and technology transfer to small businesses,
 - small firms' access to the internal market, in particular with regard to services, as well as to international markets,
 - transfer of business;
 - provide the means for a continuous dialogue with small businesses, *inter alia*, through the activities of the SME Envoy, and to keep small and also medium-sized enterprises at the forefront of relevant Community policies;
 - continue progress on the effective implementation of the Action Plan for simplifying and improving the regulatory environment.
6. INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO:
- continue the work on a voluntary basis on quantitative and qualitative targets with the aim of further integrating their use in the implementation of the European Charter for Small Enterprises;
 - continue to involve candidate countries in the Charter process and to encourage them to exploit good practices and voluntary quantitative and qualitative targets as instruments to build up an enterprise culture;
 - strengthen the review of national developments by prioritising a selected number of Charter areas each year and, in the framework of the European Charter requirements, report on progress made in creating a more favourable environment for entrepreneurship and the competitiveness of small enterprises, using, *inter alia*, appropriate and effective indicators, in order to allow the Council, meeting before the Spring European Council, to assess progress over time and discuss future strategy on entrepreneurship and small firms policy;
 - continue and reinforce their work on identifying, benchmarking and exchanging best practices on entrepreneurship and in all areas of the Charter in a more coordinated and consistent approach, establishing synergies with other relevant Community and related international policies;
 - intensify diffusion of and discussions on small business policies in all areas of the Charter developed in the Member States by organising, from 2003 onwards, annual exchanges of experiences among Member States and by also giving consideration to the possibilities of organising, on a voluntary basis, peer reviews as a process of learning together.
-

COMMISSION

Euro exchange rates ⁽¹⁾

17 March 2003

(2003/C 64/05)

1 euro =

Currency			Exchange rate	Currency			Exchange rate
USD	US dollar		1,0801	LVL	Latvian lats		0,6254
JPY	Japanese yen		127,16	MTL	Maltese lira		0,4234
DKK	Danish krone		7,4282	PLN	Polish zloty		4,3725
GBP	Pound sterling		0,6827	ROL	Romanian leu	35 403	
SEK	Swedish krona		9,2223	SIT	Slovenian tolar		231,925
CHF	Swiss franc		1,4671	SKK	Slovak koruna		41,735
ISK	Iceland króna		84,45	TRL	Turkish lira	1 824 000	
NOK	Norwegian krone		7,804	AUD	Australian dollar		1,8011
BGN	Bulgarian lev		1,9488	CAD	Canadian dollar		1,5878
CYP	Cyprus pound		0,5836	HKD	Hong Kong dollar		8,4238
CZK	Czech koruna		31,691	NZD	New Zealand dollar		1,9528
EEK	Estonian kroon		15,6466	SGD	Singapore dollar		1,8975
HUF	Hungarian forint		244,85	KRW	South Korean won	1 346,34	
LTL	Lithuanian litas		3,4522	ZAR	South African rand		8,7688

⁽¹⁾ Source: reference exchange rate published by the ECB.

Information communicated by Member States regarding state aid granted under Commission Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 of 12 January 2001 on the application of Articles 87 and 88 of the EC Treaty to training aid

(2003/C 64/06)

(Text with EEA relevance)

Aid No: XT 04/02.

Member State: Spain.

Region: Extremadura.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Grants for training, creation of associations and technical assistance in the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector.

Legal basis: Decreto autonómico nº 169/2001, de 6 de noviembre (DOE nº 131 de 13.11.2001).

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company: The scheme has an annual budget of some ESP 100 364 000 (EUR 603 199,79) to finance the different aid measures provided for in Decree 169/2001 of 6 November 2001. That instrument covers not only training aid but also other measures which are not exempted from notification to the European Commission, and so the aid scheme has been duly notified and registered as aid No 836/2000.

Maximum aid intensity:

Where the beneficiary is an association of cooperatives or worker-owned companies:

75 % of the cost of the operation, with a ceiling of 1 500 000 ESP.

Where the beneficiary is a cooperative or worker-owned company:

1. *Specific training:* 35 % in the case of large firms and 45 % in the case of small and medium-sized firms,

2. *General training:* 60 % in the case of large firms and 80 % in the case of small and medium-sized firms,

with a ceiling of ESP 1 000 000 in both cases.

Date of implementation: Aid may be granted in respect of operations carried out following the entry into force of the legal basis for the scheme, i.e. from 14 November 2001.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: The scheme is to expire on 31 December 2006.

Objective of aid:

1. Organisation by aid beneficiaries of conferences, seminars or presentations to be attended by members and employees of cooperatives, worker-owned companies or associations, provided that the topics covered by such events are relevant to the activities of the organisers and/or to the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector.
2. Attendance of members and employees of cooperatives, worker-owned companies or associations at conferences, seminars or presentations organised by public or private entities, provided that the topics covered by such events are relevant to the activities of the organisers and/or to the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector.

Economic sector(s) concerned: All economic sectors, provided that applicants possess the requisite legal status to qualify as beneficiaries.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Consejería de Trabajo de la Junta de Extremadura
Avenida de Extremadura, 43
E-06800 Mérida, Badajoz

Other information: As regards the documentation establishing that operations eligible for aid under this scheme are to be classed as general training, since grants are to be provided for both general and specific training (Article 6.1 of Decree 169/2001 of 6 November 2001) the circumstances prompting classification in one category or the other are to be assessed in each specific case in the light of the documents included in each application submitted. No applications have so far been processed.

Aid No: XT 10/02.

Member State: United Kingdom.

Region: Northern Ireland.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Training aid for business management in less-favoured areas.

Legal basis:

Agriculture Act 1949,

Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1970.

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company:

2001/02: GBP 0,29 million,

2002/03: GBP 0,51 million,

2003/04: GBP 0,51 million,

2004/05: GBP 0,45 million,

total: GBP 1,8 million to cover 12 000 trainees.

No individual recipient will receive more than EUR 1 million.

The average aid per trainee amounts to GBP 150.

Maximum aid intensity: The actual aid intensity of the programme is 70 %. This is below the maximum allowable aid intensity of 80 %/90 %, based on:

- 70 % for general training for small and medium sized enterprises. All trainees come from SMEs as defined in Annex 1 of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001. The training is general as the qualification is transferable to other sectors and improves the employability of the individual. Eligibility of trainees will be monitored when they register for the course,
- 10 % regional aid. Northern Ireland qualifies for regional aid under Article 87(3)(a) of the Treaty,
- 10 % training aid support for 'disadvantaged workers'. Many of the trainees on this programme (> 70 %) will be over 45 years of age and will not have attained an upper secondary educational qualification or its equivalent. They could therefore qualify for an extra 10 % aid. However, this is not included because with the large number of trainees it is impossible to identify those who qualify for the aid.

Date of implementation: February 2002.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: February 2002 to March 2005.

Objective of aid:

- To provide 'general training' in business management to improve the competence of the trained individual and provide a stepping stone to higher qualifications.
- to provide business management training (NVQ 2/3) integrating use of a simplified business recording system.
- to encourage businesses to adopt basic business management practices such as financial management and record keeping.
- the programme will be targeted at farmers and members of the farming family in small and medium-sized enterprises within less-favoured areas and will provide the following number of training places:
 - 2001/02: 1 500,
 - 2002/03: 3 500,
 - 2003/04: 3 500,
 - 2004/05: 3 500.
- Total training places: 12 000.

Economic sector(s) concerned: Agriculture, including forestry and land-based businesses.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Mr Ian Duff, Head of Technical Support, Agri-Food Development Service, Education and Finance Division, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Room 544, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Rd, Belfast BT4 3SB, Northern Ireland.

Other information: The 'Training aid for business management in less-favoured areas' initiative will improve the business management and enterprise skills of farmers and members of the farming family. It will raise and broaden the skill levels of the workforce and hence improve the employability of the trainees. The aim of the programme will be to encourage businesses to adopt basic business management practices through integrating the use of a simplified business recording system.

Those who successfully complete the course will be awarded a certificate and will be offered the opportunity to undergo assessment and receive accreditation through the Northern Ireland Open College Network. On completion of this initial course participants will be able to progress on to an intermediate level programme within their local areas.

Participants applying for the programme provide farm registration details that enable us to verify that trainees are from small and medium-sized enterprises within the LFA and qualify for general training.

Throughout the training DARD staff will monitor the programme and ensure it is being delivered in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 and within the permissible aid intensities for general training in small and medium-sized enterprises.

Aid No: XT 11/02.

Member State: United Kingdom.

Region: Northern Ireland.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Training in environmental best practice in less-favoured areas.

Legal basis:

Agriculture Act 1949,

Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (Northern Ireland) 1970.

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company:

2001/2002: GBP 0,29 million,

2002/2003: GBP 0,82 million,

2003/2004: GBP 0,74 million,

2004/2005: GBP 0,75 million,

Total: GBP 2,6 million to cover 12 000 trainees.

No individual recipient will receive more than EUR 1 million.

The average aid per trainee amounts to GBP 216.

Maximum aid intensity: The actual aid intensity of the programme is 79 %. This is below the maximum allowable aid intensity of 80 %/90 %, based on:

- 70 % for general training for small and medium-sized enterprises. All trainees come from SMEs as defined in Annex 1 of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001. The training is general as the qualification is transferable to other sectors and improves the employability of the individual. Eligibility of trainees will be monitored when they register for the course,
- 10 % Regional Aid. Northern Ireland qualifies for regional aid under Article 87(3)(a) of the Treaty,

- 10 % training aid support for 'disadvantaged workers'. Many of the trainees on this programme (> 70 %) will be over 45 years of age and will not have attained an upper secondary educational qualification or its equivalent. They could therefore qualify for an extra 10 % aid. However, this is not included because with the large number of trainees it is impossible to identify those who qualify for the aid.

Date of implementation: February 2002.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: February 2002 to March 2005.

Objective of aid:

- To provide 'general training' to increase environmental management competences and skills that potentially improve the employability of the trainees and provide a stepping stone to higher qualifications.
- to increase competences relating to environmental issues such as biodiversity, water quality (including eutrophication) and the protection of Northern Ireland's land-based heritage.
- to encourage and enable participants to take informed decisions about the future of their businesses based on objective information.
- the programme will be targeted at farmers, family members and farm employees from small and medium-sized enterprises within the LFA and will provide the following number of training places:
 - 2001/2002: 1 500,
 - 2002/2003: 3 500,
 - 2003/2004: 3 500,
 - 2004/2005: 3 500,
- Total training places: 12 000.

Economic sector(s) concerned: Agriculture, including forestry and land-based businesses.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Mr Ian Duff, Head of Technical Support, Agri-Food Development Service, Education and Finance Division, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Room 544, Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Rd, Belfast BT4 3SB, Northern Ireland.

Other information: The 'Training in environmental best practice in less-favoured areas' programme aims to enhance competences in the application of management practices relating to environmental issues. This initially centres on environmental requirements such as biodiversity, water quality and the protection of land-based heritage. Central to the programme are the key skills of interpreting and applying concepts within existing environmental legislation, auditing, benchmarking and problem solving. While the training is demonstrated on farms, the environmental skills acquired by the trainees can be easily transferred to other sectors such as local councils, environmental organisations and private environmental companies.

Good environmental practice is an EU requirement for Member States, forming an integral part of the new LFA support and agri-environment schemes within the Northern Ireland Rural Development Regulation Plan.

Participants applying for the programme provide farm registration details that enable us to verify that trainees are from small and medium-sized enterprises within the LFA and qualify for general training. Those who successfully complete the course will be awarded a certificate and will be offered the opportunity to undergo assessment and receive accreditation through the Northern Ireland Open College Network.

Throughout the training DARD staff will monitor the programme and ensure it is being delivered in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 and within the permissible aid intensities for general training in small and medium-enterprises.

Aid No: XT 21/01.

Member State: Italy.

Region: Tuscany.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Aid for firms operating in Tuscany in sectors exposed to international competition in connection with initial training, retraining and refresher training for their employees.

Legal basis: Delibera della giunta regionale della Toscana n. 383 del 13 aprile 2001. Modificata con deliberazione della giunta regionale della Toscana n. 909 del 6 agosto 2001.

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company: EUR 9 726 604,933 per year in the period 2001-06, amounting in total to EUR 58 359 629,597 in the form of reimbursements of eligible expenditure actually incurred in respect of training programmes and supported by documentary evidence.

Maximum aid intensity: In accordance with Article 4(2) to (6) of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001, the maximum admissible aid intensities (as %) are:

Large enterprises	Specific training	General training
Non-assisted areas	25	50
Assisted areas under Article 87(3)(c)	30	55

SMEs	Specific training	General training
Non-assisted areas	35	70
Assisted areas under Article 87(3)(c)	40	75

The above intensities are increased by 10 percentage points if the training is given to disadvantaged workers, as defined in Article 2(g) of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001.

Where the aid is granted in the maritime transport sector, it may reach an intensity of 100 %, regardless of whether the training project concerns specific or general training, provided that the following conditions are met:

- the trainee may not be an active member of the crew but must be supernumerary on board, and
- the training must be carried out on board ships on Community registers.

Date of implementation: 13 April 2001.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: Until December 2006.

Objective of aid: The aid scheme covers general and specific training.

General training within the meaning of Article 2(e) of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 involves training which is not applicable only or principally to the employee's present or future position in the assisted firm but which provides qualifications that are largely transferable to other firms or fields of work and thereby substantially improve the employability of the employee.

For the purposes of implementing this aid scheme, 'general' training means:

- inter-enterprise training, i.e. training organised jointly by different independent enterprises (under the Community rules defining SMEs) or in which employees of different enterprises may take part. Checks are made on supporting documents during the project selection procedure to ensure that these requirements are fulfilled (the training is inter-enterprise and the enterprises are independent);

- company training relating to job profiles included in the regional classification or training relating to profiles for which inclusion in the catalogue is requested. The relevant certificate is issued by the region or province concerned. The legal basis for the certification system is Regional Law No 70 of 31 August 1994 (new rules on vocational training), and more specifically Article 11 thereof, which provides for the issue of a vocational training or specialisation certificate for certain training activities following an aptitude test, and Article 18 thereof, which confers on the Regional Council the powers to determine the job profiles included in the regional classification and in respect of which the vocational training or specialisation certificate is issued.

Economic sector(s) concerned:

- Farming,
- fisheries and aquaculture,
- coalmining,
- steel,
- shipbuilding,
- synthetic fibres,
- motor vehicle industry,
- other manufacturing industries,
- all services.

Comments: The aid scheme applies to all sectors covered by Regulation (EC) No 68/2001. Secondly, it does not apply to aid for the training or retraining of workers of firms 'in difficulty' within the meaning of the Community guidelines on State aid for rescuing and restructuring firms in difficulty (OJ C 288, 9.10.1999), as part of rescuing and restructuring measures. Such aid will be assessed in the light of the above guidelines. Thirdly, the aid scheme does not apply if the amount of aid granted to one enterprise for a single training project exceeds EUR 1 million, in which case the individual aid grant must be notified to the Commission for its approval.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Regione Toscana
Dipartimento delle Politiche formative e dei beni culturali
Servizio FSE e sistema della formazione professionale
Piazza della Libertà 15
I-50129 Firenze.

Aid No: XT 32/02.

Member State: Italy.

Region: Autonomous Province of Trento.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Funding for company, sectoral and regional training schemes — 2002.

Legal basis: Deliberazione della Giunta provinciale n. 480 del 15 marzo 2002 avente ad oggetto «Procedure e criteri di attuazione, gestione e rendicontazione dei piani formativi aziendali, settoriali e territoriali riferibili alla gestione dei fondi di cui all'articolo 9, comma 3, della legge 19 luglio 1993, n. 236 — anno 2002.» (pubblicata sul BURTA n. 14 del 2.4.2002), in attuazione decreto direttoriale n. 511/V/2001 «Interventi di promozione di piani formativi aziendali, settoriali, territoriali e sviluppo della prassi di formazione continua per l'esercizio finanziario 2001, di cui all'articolo 118 della legge n. 338 del 23 dicembre 2000» (GU 12 del 15.1.2002) che ripartisce tra le Regioni italiane le risorse derivanti dal contributo integrativo di cui all'articolo 25 della legge 21 dicembre 1978 n. 845.

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company: EUR 1 394 433,63 for the Autonomous Province of Trento.

Maximum aid intensity:

- Specific training for large enterprises: Intensity not exceeding 25 %,
- Specific training for SMEs: Intensity not exceeding 35 %,
- General training for large enterprises: Intensity not exceeding 50 %,
- General training for SMEs: Intensity not exceeding 70 %.

The above intensities are increased by ten percentage points where the training is given to disadvantaged workers as defined in Article 2(g) of Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 of 12 January 2001.

Date of implementation: 15 March 2002.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: 31 December 2002.

Objective of aid: The aid is intended for general and special training.

The definition of general training given in Regulation (EC) No 68/2001 has been adopted as it is considered sufficiently clear and exhaustive: "general training" shall mean training involving tuition which is not applicable only or principally to the employee's present or future position in the assisted firm, but which provides qualifications that are largely transferable to other firms or fields of work and thereby substantially improve the employability of the employee'.

Economic sector(s) concerned: All sectors.

Aid No: XT 33/02.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Member State: United Kingdom.

Provincia Autonoma di Trento — Servizio Addestramento e Formazione professionale, via Gilli, 3 — I-38100 Trento.

Region: West Midlands.

Other information: Since this is an aid scheme, it is not possible to give a description of the content of each project in order to confirm that it corresponds to the definition of general training.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Alstom Transport Limited 2002.

The prior verification procedure applied by the Province to ensure that the highest aid intensity is granted only to general training projects comprises the following steps:

Legal basis: Employment Act 1973 Section 2(1) and 2(2), as substantiated by Section 25 of the Employment and Training Act 1998 and the Industrial Development 1982, Section 11.

- on submitting the project, the applicant declares whether it involves general or specific training;
- as provided for by point 5 of the operative part of Decision No 480 adopted by the Provincial Council on 15 March 2002, a committee makes a prior assessment of whether individual projects are to be classed as general or specific training; its findings are set out on an assessment grid signed by the experts and attached to the minutes of the committee meeting;
- on the basis of the above assessment, the Province determines the intensity of the funding to be granted to each individual project;
- the Province then adopts the project-funding decision, which also reproduces the committee's assessment of the nature of each project (general or specific training);
- the Province notifies the individual applicants of the outcome of the committee's assessment and, consequently, the intensity of the funding allocated to them.

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company: Total public assistance will be GBP 70 000 under this scheme.

Maximum aid intensity: 25 %.

Date of implementation: April 2002.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: 11 months.

Objective of aid: The objective of the aid is to encourage the company to give individually targeted training to meet the needs of the individual employees of the company rather than general training plans. The company has 1 200 employees and undertakes regular training. However, the funds will provide individual skills diagnostics and individual training plans so that employees can choose which nationally agreed national vocational qualifications (NVQs) would be most beneficial to them. This service will also be provided to the employees of SMEs in the company's supply chain. The company will then support in the delivery of the NVQs, but will provide most of the cost of the training delivery themselves.

Economic sector(s) concerned: Transport services.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Birmingham and Solihull Learning Skills Council,
Chaplin Court,
80 Hurst Street,
Birmingham B5 4TG.

The committee is composed of:

Other information:

- three experts on training and the assessment of training activities from outside the Province (all highly qualified university lecturers),
- one official from the Province, appointed by the Provincial Council.

Contact officer:

Paul Cornick.

Aid No: XT 38/01.

Member State: Spain.

Region: Basque Country.

Title of aid scheme or name of the company receiving an individual aid: Training aid scheme for undertakings in the Álava Province.

Legal basis: Decreto Foral nº 45/2001 del Consejo de Diputados de la Diputación Foral de Álava de 3 de abril, publicado en el *Boletín Oficial del Territorio Histórico de Álava* (BOTH) nº 41 de 9 de abril de 2001.

Annual expenditure planned under the scheme or overall amount of individual aid granted to the company: The expenditure scheduled for 2001 is EUR 601 012,1.

Maximum aid intensity: The aid provided for under the present scheme may be awarded up to the following limits:

Retraining courses:

- (a) for SMEs: up to a maximum of 75 % and 40 % of the approved expenditure on general training and specific training measures respectively.
- (b) for all other undertakings: up to a maximum of 55 % and 30 % of the approved expenditure on general training and specific training measures respectively.

The maximum total grant that may be awarded to any one applicant for the range of retraining courses offered is EUR 30 050,61.

Work-related training courses: up to a maximum of 85 % of approved expenditure, with a limit of EUR 30 050,61 per applicant and range of courses offered, although this figure may be exceeded for those projects judged to be of particular interest.

Exploratory studies: the aid granted may amount to 50 % of approved expenditure, with a limit of EUR 6 010,12 per

applicant for the study itself. This figure may be increased to EUR 18 030,36 in the case of a group of undertakings.

The percentages referred to may be increased by a further 10 % for courses involving certain disadvantaged groups or with particular difficulties entering the labour market, although the total amount granted in aid may not exceed 100 % of approved expenditure. The aid will be increased in proportion to the number of people from the disadvantaged groups on the courses.

Date of implementation: Aid was first granted under the present scheme on 14 September 2001.

Duration of scheme or individual aid award: Aid may be granted under the present scheme until 31 December 2001.

Objective of aid: The scheme applies to both general and specific training.

As laid down in Commission Regulation (EC) No 68/2001, the training aid scheme for firms in the Álava Province 2001 has taken general training to cover training relating to quality control, management and administrative systems, IT, occupational safety and health, etc. This is because the training provided is relevant outside the undertaking in question, and can be applied throughout the sector concerned and even beyond.

By contrast, specific training has been deemed to cover courses on subjects that are highly particular to the recipient, such as internal training, i.e. training provided by in-house experts in areas directly related to the business.

Economic sector(s) concerned: All industrial sectors.

Name and address of the granting authority:

Diputación Foral de Álava
Dirección de Economía
Plaza de la Provincia, 4, 3ª planta
E-01001 Vitoria-Gasteiz, Álava.

NOTIFICATION FROM SPAIN CONCERNING DIRECTIVE 98/27/EC: 'QUALIFIED ENTITIES'

(2003/C 64/07)

INSTITUTO NACIONAL DEL CONSUMO (National Consumers' Institute)

This is an autonomous body coming under the Ministry for Health and Consumer Affairs which, in keeping with Article 51 of the Constitution and Act 26/84 on Consumer and User Protection, promotes and fosters consumer and user rights.

Chairman: The Under-Secretary for Health and Consumer Affairs
Address: Príncipe de Vergara, 54
E-28006 Madrid
Tel. (34) 91 575 49 30.

ASOCIACIÓN DE USUARIOS DE LA COMUNICACIÓN (AUC) (Association of Media Users)

The purpose of the association is to defend the general interests and basic rights of consumers as laid down by law, both individual and collective ones. To this end, it has set itself the goal of promoting education and training for consumers and users, especially as regards rational consumption of goods and use of services, thus making it easier for them to understand the information directed at them by the mass media.

Chairman: Alejandro Perales Albert
Address: Cavanilles, 29, 6º B
E-28007 Madrid
Tel. (34) 91 501 67 73.

CONFEDERACIÓN ESPAÑOLA DE ORGANIZACIONES DE AMAS DE CASA, CONSUMIDORES Y USUARIOS (CEACCU) (Spanish Confederation of Organisations of Housewives, Consumers and Users)

The Confederation's tasks include defending the interest of housewives, consumers and users via the channels laid down in the applicable legislation, promoting and drawing up reliable and useful information for housewives, consumers and users, promoting education to improve their ability to make sound choices and decisions, and coordinating its member organisations' action plans.

Chairwoman: Isabel Ávila Fernández-Monge
Address: San Bernardo, 97/99
E-28015 Madrid
Tel. (34) 91 594 50 89.

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with Turkey on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/08)

On 29 October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of Turkey on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with Slovenia on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/09)

On 29 October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of Slovenia on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with the Slovak Republic on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/10)

On 29 October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of the Slovak Republic on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with Romania on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/11)

On 29 October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of Romania on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with the Czech Republic on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/12)

On 29 October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of the Czech Republic on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with Poland on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/13)

On 29 October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of Poland on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with Lithuania on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/14)

On 29th October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of Lithuania on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with Latvia on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/15)

On 29th October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of Latvia on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with Hungary on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/16)

On 29 October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of Hungary on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with Estonia on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/17)

On 29th October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of Estonia on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with Cyprus on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/18)

On 29th October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of Cyprus on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with Bulgaria on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/19)

On 29 October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of Bulgaria on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) and in the sixth framework programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) for nuclear research and training activities, also contributing to the creation of the European Research Area (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

Conclusion of Memorandum of Understanding with Malta on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006)

(2003/C 64/20)

On 29th October 2002, the Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission, on behalf of the European Community, and the Government of Malta on its participation in the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006) has been signed.

The full text in English of the Memorandum of Understanding can be found on the following web page:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/ocp/ocp_index.htm

III

(Notices)

COUNCIL

Texts published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* C 64 E

(2003/C 64/21)

These texts are available on:

EUR-Lex: <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex>**CELEX:** <http://europa.eu.int/celex>

Notice No	Contents	Page
Council		
2003/C 64 E/01	Common Position (EC) No 7/2003 of 21 January 2003 adopted by the Council, acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 251 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, with a view to adopting a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on computerising the movement and surveillance of excisable products	1
2003/C 64 E/02	Common Position (EC) No 8/2003 of 21 January 2003 adopted by the Council acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 251 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, with a view to adopting a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council, amending for the twenty-fifth time, Council Directive 76/769/EEC on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States relating to restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (substances classified as carcinogens, mutagens or substances toxic to reproduction — c/m/r) ⁽¹⁾	6
2003/C 64 E/03	Common Position (EC) No 9/2003 of 3 February 2003 adopted by the Council, acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 251 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, with a view to adopting a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council adopting a multiannual programme for action in the field of energy: 'Intelligent Energy — Europe' (2003 to 2006) ⁽¹⁾	13
2003/C 64 E/04	Common Position (EC) No 10/2003 of 6 February 2003 adopted by the Council, acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 251 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, with a view to adopting a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down a series of guidelines for trans-European energy networks and repealing Decision No 1254/96/EC	22

⁽¹⁾ Text with EEA relevance

COMMISSION

Community incentive measures in the field of employment (EIM)

(2003/C 64/22)

1. **Name of programme:** Community incentive measures in the field of employment (EIM).

2. **Budget Line:** B5-5020.

3. **Is it a successor to any other programme?** Partly, it is a successor to the programme Community activities concerning analysis, research and cooperation in the field of employment and the labour market (Council Decision 98/171/CE, OJ L 63, 4.3.1998, p. 26).

4. **General objectives:** Each of the following objectives are being part of the EIM programme. However, due to their specificity, it is foreseen that the three objectives are covered by three different calls for proposal.

(a) *'Modernisation of PES'*

A substantial impact on achievements in the follow-up to a number of employment guidelines may be expected from public employment services, among them the prevention and reduction of long-term unemployment. This restricted call for proposal seeks to support public employment services of the EU Member States in organising some specific transnational projects and events that will contribute to progress in the ongoing modernisation process.

(b) *'The development of evaluation practice in the European Employment Strategy'*

To gather complementary evaluation evidence on the employment policies promoted through the European Employment Strategy, notably in areas which were not well covered by the previous call VP/2001/011, and to develop national evaluation practice.

(c) *'Awareness raising for the European Employment Strategy'*

To support dissemination and awareness raising initiatives concerning the EES (European Employment Strategy). Such initiatives should aim at providing information of a general nature on the EES (objectives and rationales, results achieved, implementation and monitoring, respective roles of institutions involved), while clearly indicating the interplay between the European context and employment policies at national, regional and local levels and for the relevance for specific target groups.

5. **Types of action:**

(a) actions concerning the 'Modernisation of PES':

- the organising of two meetings of the heads of public employment services, one in Greece before 1 July and one in Italy during the second half of the year,
- the organising of a joint seminar/conference of public and private employment services on the emerging mixed market of public and private providers of employment services,
- the organising of a seminar of experts on profiling unemployed jobseekers.
- development of common performance indicators for public employment services;

(b) actions contributing to 'the development of evaluation practice in the European Employment Strategy':

- seminars to discuss national and/or international experiences on thematic evaluations,
- networking or fact-finding projects focusing on either specific employment policies or specific beneficiaries;

(c) actions concerning the 'Awareness raising for the European Employment Strategy':

all relevant media and instruments can be used for that purpose, e.g. conferences, seminars, workshops, Internet, written and audio-visual material, special events. Initiatives should ideally allow for interactive flow of information, thus stimulating discussion instead of bottom-down provision of information only. On the basis of self-assessment and evaluation, projects should come up with proposals for future information and dissemination strategies.

6. **Start and end dates of programme:**

(a) 'Modernisation of PES': duration of each project is 12 months maximum. Estimated starting date: third quarter 2003;

- (b) 'Development of evaluation practice in the European Employment Strategy': duration of each project is 12 months maximum. Estimated starting date: third quarter 2003;
- (c) 'Awareness raising for the European Employment Strategy': duration of each project is 12 months maximum. Estimated starting date: third quarter 2003.

7. Total available budget:

- (a) 'Modernisation of PES': maximum of EUR 400 000;
- (b) 'Development of evaluation practice in the European Employment Strategy': maximum of EUR 500 000;
- (c) 'Awareness raising for the European Employment Strategy': maximum of EUR 500 000.

8. Legal Basis for the funding: Decision No 1145/2002/EC of 10 June 2002, on Community incentive measures in the field of employment (OJ L 170, 29.6.2002).

9. Nature of Community contribution: Grants.

10. Level of Community contribution: The Community contribution is made by cofinancing, with maximum 75 % of eligible costs.

11. Organisations(s) which may benefit from the programme:

- (a) 'Modernisation of PES'

ADEM (Lux), FOREM (BE-Wallonie), ORBEM/BGDA (BE-Région Bruxelles), VDAB (BE-Flanders), ANPE (F), IEFP (P), AMS — Arbejdsmarkedsstyrelsen (DK), AMS — Arbetsmarknadstyrelsen (SW), Ministry of Labour (FIN), AMS — Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, BA — Bundesanstalt für Arbeit (D), Employment Service (UK), FAS (IRL), CWI (NL), INEM (ES), Ministero del Lavoro (IT), OAED (GR);

- (b) 'Development of evaluation practice in the European Employment Strategy'

Central, regional and local public authorities or agencies dealing with employment issues; social partners and other non-profit organisations or networks with an established interest in employment; research bodies working in association with one of the aforementioned groups. Joint proposals with a transnational character are allowed; proposals exclusively implemented in accession countries are excluded, nevertheless proposals may include partly activities in these countries;

- (c) 'Awareness raising for the European Employment Strategy'

Proposals can be submitted from central, regional or local public authorities or agencies or other organisations repre-

senting e.g. social partners or civil society. Cooperation between such institutions or transnationality are not required, but would be welcomed. Proposals exclusively implemented in accession countries are excluded, nevertheless proposals may include partly activities in these countries.

12. Eligibility: information to be specified in the calls for proposal.

13. Procedure to be followed:

- (a) 'Modernisation of PES'

The project should be submitted directly to the European Commission, Directorate-General Employment and Social Affairs, Unit Employment Services (A3), rue Joseph II, 27, B-1000 Brussels. Further detailed information will be provided in the call for proposals, which will be published on the site http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/employment_social/tender_en.htm

- (b) 'Development of evaluation practice in the European Employment Strategy'

The project should be submitted directly to the European Commission, Directorate-General Employment and Social Affairs, Unit Employment Strategy (A2), rue Joseph II, 27, B-1000 Brussels. Further detailed information will be provided in the call for proposals, which will be published on the site http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/employment_social/tender_en.htm

- (c) 'Awareness raising for the European Employment Strategy': see point b.

14. Community sources of information: details on the programme will be posted on the DG Employment and Social Affairs web site pages on calls for tender/proposals:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/employment_social/tender_en.htm.

15. Community contact points:

Directorate-General Employment and Social Affairs
Arben KANBER
European Commission
DG Employment and Social Affairs
Direction A — Employment and ESF Policy Coordination
Office J27 — 5/13
B-1049 Brussels
Tel. (32-2) 299 04 85
Fax (32-2) 299 01 94.

16. National sources of information and contact points

17. Examples of projects.

CORRIGENDA**Corrigendum to the summary of Community decisions on marketing authorisations in respect of medicinal products from 15 January to 15 February 2003***(Official Journal of the European Union C 48 of 28 February 2003)**(2003/C 64/23)*

On page 13, against the entry for 'Arava', in the column headed 'Date of notification':

for: '18.2.2003',

read: '19.2.2003'.
