

Cohesion policy and cities

The Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013 in the field of cohesion aim to encourage growth and jobs. They define the areas of intervention where priority should be given in the Operational Programmes for Cohesion Policy for 2007-2013 by focusing on the specific needs of certain territories, such as urban areas, and on social and environmental objectives.

Sustainable urban economic development should be accompanied by measures designed to reduce poverty, social **exclusion** and environmental problems. This is the reason why the objective of this communication is to present certain specific aspects of the urban dimension which are relevant in the context of the strategic guidelines.

The Communication presents and proposes actions in a large number of fields and reflects the possibilities for intervention by the Structural Funds. The actions examined are divided into six headings, i.e.:

- making cities more attractive;
- supporting innovation, entrepreneurship and the knowledge economy;
- the creation of more and better jobs;
- managing disparities within cities;
- governance;
- financing urban renewal.

Attractive cities

In order to rise to the different challenges and make themselves more attractive, cities should attract more investment and create jobs. Four main points should be taken into consideration when doing so:

- the mobility and accessibility of transport. For example, cities and regions should make the best possible use of the whole transport infrastructure;
- access to modern, efficient and affordable services, as well as to equipment;
- the natural and physical environment;
- a cultural sector based on the availability of facilities.

Supporting innovation, entrepreneurship and the knowledge economy

Cities can take measures to support innovation, entrepreneurship and the knowledge economy. These involve actions for SMEs as well as actions to put innovation and the knowledge economy at the service of growth. This means for example:

- improving the economic infrastructure and adopting environmental management systems;
- providing business support services;
- cooperation between local partners and access to sources of finance;
- the drafting of an innovation strategy for the whole region;
- involvement of cities in research and development (R&D) projects (Seventh Framework Programme), and in the information society field (the i2010 initiative).

More and better jobs

Given that highly qualified people and those with very low levels of qualifications are over-represented in cities, cities offer both needs and opportunities. Under the "Convergence" objective, the Structural Funds can support:

- actions to strengthen institutional capacity and the efficiency of public services at local and regional level;
- initiatives to create jobs, fight unemployment and create partnerships for employment and innovation;
- improving employability by raising levels of educational achievement and training.

Disparities within cities

Within **deprived** neighbourhoods of cities where high unemployment is compounded by other deprivations, this communication proposes actions to:

- promote social inclusion and equal opportunities;
- increase security for citizens, for example, by developing approaches to local crime reduction policies and creating safety-related jobs.

Governance

In order to improve governance and manage urban development, this communication proposes actions aimed at:

- establishing good co-operation between the different territorial levels, e.g. by developing partnerships between cities, regions and the state or improving coordination between urban, rural and regional authorities;
- developing an integrated approach to sustainable development. This, for example, calls for the development of a long-term plan for all the different factors promoting sustainable growth and jobs;
- raising the participation and involvement of citizens;
- establishing networks for the exchange of experience.

Financing urban renewal

The urban development projects could be supported within the framework of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Funds. The communication also suggests assistance from the new financial instruments JASPERS, JEREMIE and JESSICA , and from public-private partnerships.

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