Regional development Fund ERDF: guidelines for actions for 2000-2006

2000/2270(COS) - 12/07/2000 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : to propose the guidelines for innovative measures under the ERDF in the period 2000-2006.
CONTENT : having regard to the code of practice for the implementation of structural policies by the Commission agreed between the European Parliament and the Commission on 6 May 1999, the Commission is sending to the European Parliament as information the draft guidelines for innovative measures under the ERDF for the period 2000-2006. This Communication is part of the Union's framework for a strategy aiming to strengthen the competitiveness of the European economy and to implement the global objective of preparing the transition to a knowledge-based economy through the development of the information society. In order to enable all regions in the Union to catch up in terms of the development of the new economy, the Commission is proposing a new generation of innovative measures aiming to reduce the gap between regions with high technological development and regions undergoing structural conversion. The first objective of these innovative measures is to improve the quality of interventions of operational programmes co-financed by the ERDF for Objectives 1 and 2. The Commission identifies in this framework three priority action themes for the least developed regions in the Union: 1) a regional economy based on knowledge and technological innovation (e.g. the creation of cooperation networks between businesses or groups of businesses; research centres and universities; exchanges of personnel between research centres and businesses and SMEs; establishing innovative technological regional strategies; support the start-up of new businesses stemming from the world of information; contribution to the financial development of start-ups,...); 2) e-Europe: the information society at the service of regional development (e.g. creation of partnerships in the information society; improvement of numeric and mobile services for young people, the elderly and disabled; encouraging SMEs to include electronic commerce in their development strategy, provide public access points to the Internet including by radio/satellite in rural and remote regions,...); 3) the development of regional identity and sustainable development (e.g. support to micro-businesses from crafts sectors or traditional prodcution; development of cultural tourism and ecology,; support to new SMEs in the field of media and culture; development of new forms of proximity services; development of environmental management systems with recycling of waste and rational use of energy,...). The Commission calls for the active participation of regional authorities in the innovative measures by establishing a reinforced partnership at regional and local level, including the authorities responsible for Objectives 1 and 2 programmes in which the ERDF and the private sector participate. Furthermore, the Commission intends to improve the synergies with other Community policies contributing to strengthening the spirit of business and innovation at the regional level, as well as to faciltate exchanges between the regions through joint training and the disemmination of best practices. On the technical level, this new generation of measuresconsists of three strands: - the co-financing of regional innovative measures and pilot and demonstration projects which result from these; - accompanying measures: support for the exchange of experience and the creation of networks between regions; - the organisation of competitions for the identification and the development of best practices. In this context, the Commission proposes a programme approach rather than an individual project approach. The beneficiaries will be the regional authorities of regions which have an area or part of their region eligible for Objective 1 or 2. The regional innovative measures programme and the pilot projects shall cover the whole of the region. Lastly, the Communication outlines details on the selection criteria of projects, the financing provided (0.4% of the annual ERDF budget), as well as the list of eligible regions.