Structural Funds. 7th annual 1995 Report

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OBJECTIVE: presentation of the 7th annual report on the Structural Funds (1995). SUBSTANCE: the Commission's 7th annual report on the Structural Funds covers the measures financed during 1995, the year during which three new Member States were integrated into the structural policies, and the second year of implementation of the 1994-1999 planning period. The report describes the types of intervention, the strategies adopted and the financial contributions allocated by region and by country. In 1995 ECU 21.9 billion was committed (against 19.2 billion in 1994) out of ECU 24 billion available for all assistance. Of this amount 56% concerns the ERDF, 26% the ESF, 16% the EAGGF Guidance section and 2% the FIFG. With regard to the different objectives, the commitments are allocated as follows: objective 1 (less-favoured regions): ECU 14.5 billion or 64% of appropriations; objective 2: ECU 1.7 billion; objectives 3 and 4: ECU 1.6 billion and ECU 94.5 million respectively; objective 5a: ECU 655.9 million for agriculture and ECU 179 million for fisheries; objective 5b: ECU 517.9 million; objective 6: ECU 125.9 million. At the end of the first two years of the programming period one third of the allocations available had been committed. 1995 also saw the adoption of Community Initiative Programmes. The very large number of programmes presented by the Member States (400 in total) has given rise to intensive preparation. Two-thirds of the programmes planned could be adopted in 1995, which represents more than 80% of the total allocation of funds for the twelve Member States and almost 45% of that provided for the three new Member States. It should be noted that environmental considerations form a strong theme in the report as regards regional development and direct or indirect investment and also encouragement to environmental impact assessment of projects and public awareness. Employment is also a major challenge for the Union. The Commission hopes to increase the impact of the funds by incorporating them into the European strategy for employment. In practice, without undermining the programming of the Funds this means using the flexibility offered under the CSFs/SPDs by stressing proactive and preventive measures and also directing the monitoring and assessment systems to the implementation of the priorities selected for employment.