Structural policies focusing on employment: regional programmes 1977-1999, objective 2

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OBJECTIVE: to provide an overview of the new regional programmes under Objective 2 of the Community's structural policies. SUBSTANCE: the communication provides an overview of the main elements of Community aid planned for the Objective 2 regions for the second programming period, 1997-1999. It lists the effects which the aid is expected to have on the economic development of the beneficiary regions and in particular on employment which is considered to be a paramount priority: the new programmes provide for the creation or maintenance of 800 000 jobs. The Commission document shows the breakdown of resources between the funds (ERDF, ESF) by region and by category of expenditure. It also summarises the key elements in the programming documents for each Member State, in particular the regional development strategies, the priorities and the anticipated effects. The general objective of safeguarding and developing jobs should be concentrated around four specific priorities: - competitiveness and development of SMEs; - research and development, innovation and a labour force qualified in future technology; - environment and sustainable development (increasing the attractiveness of the regions and exploiting eco-products and environmental services and technologies); - equal opportunities for women and men.