Employment: combating discrimination, guidelines for Community initiative EQUAL

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PURPOSE : to establish guidelines for the Community Initiative Programme (CIP) for which Member States are invited to submit proposals in the EQUAL Initiative framework. CONTENT : the European Commission has approved draft guidelines for the EQUAL Community Initiative, the objective of which is transnational cooperation for the promotion of new practices to combat all forms of discrimination and inequalities in relation with the labour market. EQUAL will also take due account of the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers. The new initiative will capitalise on the experience gained under the current Community Initiatives EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT. The successful innovations and the good practices developed in the EQUAL framework shall be the subject of wide dissemination and, if the case arises, integrated into the mainstream programmes of the Structural Funds. The first group of thematic fields, which will serve as the basis to the first call of projects, is as follows : - facilitating the access and the return to the labour market so as to promote a labour market which is open to all; - combating racism at work; - opening up business creation process to all; - improving the quality of jobs in the social economy (third sector); - developing integration practices in the work place and continuing professional training; - introducing information technologies, anticipating change and upgrading skills; - developing new forms of work organisation in order to reconcile professional and family life; - reducing the gaps between men and women and supporting job desegregation. The total contribution of the European Social Fund to the EQUAL Initiative for the period 2000-2006 is estimated at EUR 2.847 million.