

Agenda 2000

The document adopted by the European Commission on July 15 1997 which defines the European Union's development plans, its policies for the new millennium, the problems related to enlargement, the changes in the Structural Funds and in the Cohesion Fund, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reforms and the EU's financial prospects.

Objective 1

Objective-1 is aimed at promoting development and structural modernisation in regions lagging behind the EU average. It is directed at those regions with per capita gross domestic product below 75% of the EU average. The Italian Objective 1 regions are: Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Puglia, Sardinia and Sicily. In addition, Molise is receiving Objective 1 transition funding for former Objective-1 regions. This allows gradual detachment from Objective 1 support, facilitating consolidation of the results of previous structural interventions.

Objective 2

Objective-2 aims to support the economic and social development of regions with structural difficulties (social and economic changes in industries and services, declining rural zones, urban areas with problems, areas dependent on fishing). This too is a regionalized objective: areas eligible for support are determined by population percentages (18% of the Union population) and on specific socio-economic criteria. In Italy specific areas of the centre-north currently receive Objective 2 support.

Objective 3

Objective-3 aims to support adjustment and modernisation in education and training. This objective is the reference framework for measures adopted with the new chapter on employment introduced by the Amsterdam treaty and the subsequent European Strategy for occupation. Objective-3 is not regionalised: all non-Objective-1 regions are eligible for support.

Structural Funds

Structural Funds are financial instruments managed by the European Commission to realise the economic and social cohesion of all the regions of the European Union and to reduce the differences between the more advanced regions and those that are lagging behind. The Structural Funds for the programme period 2000-2006 are ERDF (European Regional Development Fund), ESF (European Social Fund), EAGGF (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund) and FIFG (Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance). The Cohesion Fund (for Portugal, Spain, Greece and Ireland) is placed along side these funds and shares the same goals. The EU financial contribution to structural development for the period 2000-2006, amounts to 213 million Euros, of which 195 will be distributed by the Structural Funds and 18 million Euros by the Cohesion Fund. This amount represents 33% of commitments on the EU budget.

ERDF (European Regional Development Fund)

Created in 1975, ERDF is the Structural Fund which promotes economic and social cohesion by correcting the main regional imbalances. ERDF funding supports local development, research and technological innovation, the development of physical & virtual networks while respecting the environment and equal opportunities.

ESF (European Social Fund)

The first Structural Fund, created with the Rome Treaty (1957), ESF is a financial instrument which offers support to initiatives aimed at preventing and countering unemployment, developing human resources and social integration in the labour market to promote high levels of employment, equality between men and women, enduring social development and economic and social cohesion.

EAGGF (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund)

Created in 1962, EAGGF finances the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). It is divided into two parts: the "Guidance" section contributes to funding projects aimed at improving structures for production, treatment and sale of agricultural products; the "Guarantee" section deals with integrally financing price support and market stabilisation measures.

FIFG (Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance)

Established in 1993, FIFG finances the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and for interventions in the areas of fisheries, aquaculture and the development and commercialisation of the products involved. Its goal is to help attain a long-term balance between fish resources and fishing capacity of the fishing fleets.

CSF (Community Support Framework) Objective 1

The CSF is the document approved by the European Commission, in agreement with the member State, which contains a snapshot of the starting social-economic situation, the strategy for development, priorities for action, objectives, the division of Structural Funds resources and the conditions for activity. It is divided in priority intervention axes and carried out through Operational Programmes. The 2000-2006 CSF for Italian Objective-1 regions includes 7 ROPs (Regional Operational Programmes) and 7 NOPs (National Operational Programmes).

Operational Programme

The Operational Programme is the active document of the Community Support Framework. It describes in detail the priorities of the CSF and it is made up of interventions divided into long-term initiatives each lasting several years. In Italy the 2000-2006 CSF or Objective-1 regions plans includes 14 Operational Programmes: 7 Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs) (Basilicata, Calabria, Campania, Puglia, Sardinia, Sicily, Molise) and 7 National Operational Programmes (NOPs) (Research, School, Safety, Development, Transports, Fisheries, Atas). These are developed by the managing authorities (the regions for ROPs, central government for NOPs) and approved by the European Commission. The 1994-1999 programme (which was

Community Initiative

Community Initiatives are interventions proposed by the European Commission to the Member States to solve transnational problems within the European Union. The Community Initiatives for the 2000-2006 period are: Interreg III (financed by ERDF, Interreg encourages cross-border, transnational and inter-regional cooperation), Leader+ (financed by EAGGF, Leader -- encourages rural development), Urban II (financed by ERDF, Urban encourages the improvement of deprived urban areas) and Equal (financed by ESF, Equal aims to counter discrimination in labour market access).