

**Communication from the Commission amending the guidelines for a Community initiative concerning trans-European cooperation intended to encourage the harmonious and balanced development of the European territory - Interreg III**

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1. The Commission of the European Communities decided on 23 August 2001 to amend the guidelines for the Interreg III Community initiative(1) (hereafter referred to as "the guidelines") to take account of certain recent developments.
2. These amendments received the positive opinion of the Committee on the Development and Conversion of Regions in its meeting on 17 July 2001.
3. The amendments refer to (a) cross-border cooperation across the Adriatic; (b) the involvement of Vienna in external cross-border cooperation programmes; and (c) minor modifications in the list of eligible areas for Interreg IIIB.

Cross-border cooperation across the Adriatic

Background

4. A Commission statement, attached to the guidelines, states that "[w]hen the political conditions to encourage cooperation under Interreg III between the Italian regions and those of the third countries of the Adriatic are met, the Commission will examine the most suitable methods of encouraging this cooperation with the other cooperation instruments".
5. In addition, point 46 of the guidelines states that "following the creation of any new Community instrument for peace and reconstruction in the Balkans, the Commission will, when appropriate, examine the possibilities of promoting coordination of Interreg III with such an instrument under arrangements to be defined at the time, in particular for the Italian Adriatic regions".
6. With the adoption of Council Regulation (EC) No 2666/2000 of 5 December 2000 on assistance for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, a new Community instrument for the Balkans is in place, and the Commission has therefore considered the possibilities for promoting coordination between it and Interreg III.
7. In the light of the creation of this new financial instrument and the positive political developments in the region, the Commission considers that Interreg III should be able to assist cross-border cooperation across the Adriatic.

Amendment to the guidelines

8. Annex I of the guidelines is amended to include, under the heading "ITALIA", the following NUTS III areas: "Ancona; Ascoli Piceno; Campobasso; Chieti; Ferrara; Foggia; Forli-Cesena; Macerata; Pesaro e Urbino; Pescara; Ravenna; Rimini; Rovigo; Teramo".

9. In addition, the word "CARDS" is added after the word "MEDA" in the following points: 7, 25, 36, 43, 45, 46, 49 and in the title of section VII.

### Involvement of Vienna in external cross-border cooperation programmes

#### Background

10. Annex I of the guidelines identifies Vienna, Wiener Umland/Nordteil and Wiener Umland/Südteil as eligible areas in the framework of cross-border cooperation, but does not specify with whom. Given the economic, geographical and political importance of these areas in the context of cross-border relations with neighbouring countries, it is important to clarify with which countries they can cooperate.

As Vienna, Wiener Umland/Nordteil and Wiener Umland/Südteil will participate in their own right in several cross-border cooperation programmes, the Commission should be able to fix the details of that participation.

#### Amendment to the guidelines

11. Annex I of the guidelines is amended as follows: under "ÖSTERREICH", the following text: "Wien, Wiener Umland/Nordteil, Wiener Umland/Südteil" should be replaced by: "Wien (cooperation with the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary), Wiener Umland/Nordteil (cooperation with the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Wiener Umland/Südteil (cooperation with Slovakia and Hungary)".

12. In point 35 of the guidelines a new paragraph is added after the first paragraph as follows: "With regard to a NUTS III zone listed in Annex I participating in several cross-border cooperation programmes involving countries benefiting from PHARE-CBC, or the participation of NUTS III zones covered by point 10, paragraph 2 in such programmes, the details of this participation will be agreed between the Commission and the designated authorities in the Member States, in agreement with the bordering countries concerned."

### Modifications to the list of eligible areas for Interreg IIIB

#### Background

13. Paragraph 2 of point 13 of the guidelines permits Member States to request duly justified modifications to the list of eligible areas for Interreg IIIB as set out in Annex III of the guidelines. The Commission has received and accepted a number of these requests. Consequently, Annex III requires updating.

#### Amendment to the guidelines

14. Annex III of the guidelines is modified as follows:

Under North Sea Area, Sweden: add "Kronobergs län, Skåne län";

Under Northern Periphery, Sweden: add "Gävleborgs län";

Under Northern Periphery, Finland: add "Keski-Suomi" after "Pohjois-Pohjanmaa";

Under Atlantic Area, Spain: add "Canarias, Sevilla, Cádiz";

Under Western Mediterranean, Portugal: add "Alentejo".

(1) OJ C 143, 23.5.2000, p. 6.