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A budget for recovery and Europe's citizens

Ahead of the June summit where heads of state will discuss the future EU budget, Frank Jensen, lord mayor of Copenhagen and president of EURO CITIES, warned:

"The number one priority of the EU budget must be economic growth and job creation. Member states need to move beyond national, political and historical positions and make the right decisions for Europe as a whole.

The economic crisis has also created a crisis of public confidence in Europe itself. EU spending needs urgently to be directed where it makes the greatest, and most visible, impact for the majority of our citizens."

Currently Europe spends as much on the CAP¹ as on regional policy². Yet agricultural and rural expenditure is less visible and reaches far fewer people than regional investment.

EURO CITIES, the platform for Europe's biggest cities, has found that estimates of cities' share of EU regional funds vary from 10% to 35%. But even assuming that as much as half goes to urban areas, the per capita EU spend in the countryside through CAP is nevertheless five times that for towns and cities, where 75% of people live.

Frank Jensen said:

"The common agricultural policy has, for good reasons, traditionally been a main plank of the EU budget. Clearly, food security is important to all of us. But EU spending needs to connect visibly with our citizens if they are to appreciate the value that Europe adds."

EURO CITIES argues that the EU budget for 2014 to 2020 must refocus priorities to equip the EU for the challenges of the future. Regeneration, skills, social inclusion, research, innovation, energy efficiency and sustainable transport should top the list.

Frank Jensen added:

"If we are to deliver on the Europe 2020 objectives for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, we urgently need to rethink the main priorities of the EU budget.

Cities are the engines of the European economy and are catalysts for creativity and innovation. Their economic performance is critical for the EU's global competitiveness.

When money is tight we must invest where we can have the biggest impact for Europe as a whole. With a fairer share of support, metropolitan Europe is capable of delivering jobs and prosperity that will benefit everyone."

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¹ Common agricultural policy: direct payments and rural development funding

² Structural funds supporting EU cohesion policy

Notes to editors

The EUROCITIES analysis was based on the following data:

In EUR million (budget period 2007 - 2013):

Cohesion policy = 348.415

CAP = 330.085

Eurostat population figures 2011:

Urban population = 377m (75%)

Rural population = 126m (25%)

Estimates of structural funds investments in cities and urban areas:

- 10%: a frequently quoted estimate (EP and Commission) of structural funds 2007 - 2013 earmarked for urban development
- 35%: from the European Spatial Development Perspective (1999)
- 50%: an informal estimate from the European Commission comprising structural funds invested directly in cities as well as in their surrounding areas, of which cities are likely to benefit indirectly

EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities, www.eurocities.eu

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