



PRESS RELEASE - 20 November 2013 - BRUSSELS

New structural funds rules strengthen the role of cities

The new rules on regional investments for 2014 - 2020 recognise the need to invest in urban Europe and involve cities in programming.

The binding rules on partnership agreements support the involvement of cities both in programming and delivering the funds. This recognises the need to have cities, the main drivers of economic growth and job creation, at the table when vital decisions about investing European funds are made. If partnership provisions look positive on paper, their impact on the ground now depends on implementation in member states.

Paul Bevan, secretary general of EURO CITIES said:

“The new rules to involve large cities when programming for 2014 - 2020 make sense. City leaders know very well the investment needs of their regions. Member states that fail to tap that knowledge are shooting themselves in the foot.”

The next round of structural funds will also see a minimum of 5% of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) allocated to integrated sustainable urban development. This requirement doesn't match the challenges faced by Europe's cities, but it is a minimum that will demonstrate the value of integrated, place-based action. If structural funds are to help meet the objectives of Europe 2020, cities need their fair share of the resources invested in the EU's territories.

New tools also promote the combined use of the ERDF and the European Social Fund (ESF). This will help to join up urban regeneration with labour market measures. The test will be practical implementation on the ground.

The new rules emphasise collaboration between urban and rural areas and many cities have partnership arrangements with their surrounding areas. Strengthening metropolitan area cooperation helps achieve economies of scale and a more balanced development.

Paul Bevan added:

“We're pleased to see the new programme of support for innovative actions in urban areas. Although there will be only €330 million to deploy over seven years, it is nevertheless symbolic of the Commission's ambition to help cities find new solutions to complex urban challenges.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

- EURO CITIES statement on EU structural funds 2014-2020: <http://bit.ly/IfPOyl>
- Contact: Dorthe Nielsen, EURO CITIES senior policy advisor, dorthe.nielsen@eurocities.eu
- EURO CITIES: www.eurocities.eu
- EURO CITIES on Twitter: www.twitter.com/eurocitiestweet

EURO CITIES is the political platform for major European cities towards the European institutions. We network the local governments of over 130 of Europe's largest cities and 40 partner cities that between them govern some 130 million citizens across 35 countries.