

European Proposals of Particular Relevance to the European and External Affairs Committee

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Where a document is a proposal for legislation this will be indicated at the beginning of the summary. The summary will also indicate whether the document has been, or may be, considered by other Committees.

Of particular significance

Date of deposit	Title	Summary
2/3/04	<p>COM(2004) 107 final - Third report on economic and social cohesion</p> <p>(Our ref. 408)</p>	<p>The Cohesion Report was produced by the European Commission on 18 February 2004. It sets out the EU's vision for Cohesion Policy in an enlarged Union for the period 2007-2013, and contains 'concrete recommendations' on how the resources, as outlined in the Financial Perspectives paper (published on 10 February 2004) should be used, in order to narrow the economic gaps between Member States.</p> <p>The Report states that the priority for Cohesion Policy will be those regions whose per capita GDP is less than 75% of the average GDP of the enlarged Union of 25 states. However, it adds that for those regions (possibly including Wales) whose per capita GDP would have been below 75% of the Community average as calculated for the Union of 15, there will be temporary support. The figures in the Cohesion report show that for the three-year period 1999-2001, per capita GDP was below West Wales and the Valleys was</p>

69.4% of the EU15 average and so would currently qualify for this temporary support on the basis of the latest available figures.

This document is being considered by the Members' Research and Committee Services teams for all Committees.

The European and External Affairs, and Economic Development and Transport Committees discussed this report at a joint meeting on 26 February 2004. The Committee will be revisiting regional policy issues in future meetings.

3/03/04

COM(2004) 133 final - Annual Policy Strategy for 2005

(Our ref. 405)

The Annual Policy Strategy constitutes the first stage of the Commission's annual policy cycle. For 2005, the following objectives will be pursued:

- establish the policy priorities for 2005;
- identify the initiatives which will help to realise these priorities;
- adopt the budgetary framework and guidelines, so that the priority initiatives receive the necessary resources, and for the purpose of financial programming.

The Annual Policy Strategy defines the framework and guidelines for the budgetary and legislative cycle. Following adoption of the strategy, the cycle moves on to the preparation of the preliminary draft budget and the inter-institutional dialogue.

This document is being considered by the Members' Research and Committee Services teams for all subject Committees, and has been noted for information by the Economic Development and Transport Committee.

The final result of the Annual Policy Cycle is the production of the Commission's Annual Work Programme. This Committee always considers that document and draws it to the attention of subject Committees - it may wish to adopt the same practice for this document.

To note

Date of deposit	Title	Summary
25/02/2004	<p>COM(2004) 60 final - Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – "Towards a thematic strategy on the urban environment".</p> <p>(Our ref. 377)</p>	<p>This strategy presents early proposals for action that may lead to legislation in the future. The Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment is part of the European Community's Sixth Environment Action Programme "Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice". It is one of seven thematic strategies in the Programme, introduced to provide a holistic approach to key environmental issues.</p> <p>It aims to promote an integrated horizontal approach across Community policies to improve the quality of the urban environment, by developing a strong framework to encourage local initiatives based on best practice. The four cross-cutting themes are sustainable urban management, transport, construction and urban design.</p> <p>Key elements in the framework are that capital cities and urban agglomerations of more than 100,000 inhabitants (i.e. the EU 25's largest 500 towns and cities) should implement an urban environment management plan and a sustainable urban transport plan. "The Commission believes that there could be requirements at the EU level to this effect."</p>

		<p>The actions proposed will be subject to a second round of consultations in 2004, including an open internet consultation. Technical working groups will examine feasibility and the final Thematic Strategy will be proposed in mid-2005.</p> <p>The Committee may wish to note the contents of this report, which will also be considered by EPC and EDT Committees.</p>
26/2/2004	<p>COM(2004) 113 final - Proposal for a council Decision concerning the provisional application of the Agreement on the participation of the Czech Republic, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Cyprus, The Republic of Hungary, The Republic of Latvia, The Republic of Lithuania, The Republic of Malta, The Republic of Poland, The Republic of Slovenia and the Slovak Republic in the European Economic Area and the provisional application of four related agreements.</p> <p>(Our ref. 380)</p>	<p>Countries becoming members of the EU must also separately become contracting parties to the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement. Delays in negotiating the EEA Enlargement Agreement, covering the enlarged EU, and four related agreements with EFTA areas, mean that these agreements are unlikely to be ratified in time for enlargement on 1 May 2004. To allow effective functioning of the internal market for an EU 25, this decision by the Council would therefore allow the provisional application of the EEA Enlargement Agreement from 1 May 2004.</p> <p>The Economic Development and Transport Committee have not considered this document relevant for further consideration. Members may wish to note it for information.</p>
10/03/04	<p>SEC(2004)246 - Commission Staff Working Paper</p> <p>ANNEX: EU follow – up to the Barcelona Commitments and operationalisation of the Monterrey consensus</p> <p>(Our ref. 421)</p>	<p>This is a follow up to Commission communication "Translating the Monterrey Consensus into practice: the contribution by the European Union" (COM(2004) 150 final). It deals with Member States' current and projected commitments to EU Official Development Assistance (ODA). The Annex contains Member States' replies to a survey on commitments to ODA, including: increasing ODA towards the UN goal of 0.7 per cent GNI; harmonisation of donor practice; untying aid; developing new forms of financing; and a Task</p>

Force on financing the provision of 'Global Public Goods'. As well as the views of individual Member States it also contains figures for current and projected ODA.

Members may wish to note this for information.