

DIRECTORS GENERAL MEETING ON TERRITORIAL COHESION
Congress Centre Brdo, Slovenia 14th May 2008

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST ACTION PROGRAMME

INTERVENTION OF MR. G. GEORGHIOU,
DIRECTOR, PLANNING BUREAU

Madam Chair,

Please allow me to add our appreciation for the invitation and the warm welcome to the Meeting. We have, this morning heard with great interest the considerable progress made in the first few months of the implementation on the 1st Action Programme.

We would like to join the previous speakers in their expression of appreciation for the excellent work done by the Slovenian presidency on the implementation of the Plan. However, we have, at the same time, to recognise that a lot of work still lies ahead for concluding this ambitious work to this and I would like to reiterate the intention of the Cyprus Government to actively participate in the process of implementation of the Action Plan.

A small comment on the first attempt to establish possible indicators. We want to join the UK's concern on the need to centre more on a more qualitative assessment and a value added approved valuation rather than a quantitative one relying on the number of action and the number of participants.

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TERRITORIAL COHESION PROCESS

INTERVENTION OF MR. G. GEORGHIOU,
DIRECTOR, PLANNING BUREAU

Madam Chair,

We do not want to take much of the remaining time in repeating a lot of what has already been said on the importance of Territorial Cohesion and its contribution to Cohesion Policy objectives.

We want, however, to reiterate what we have always argued that despite the institutionalisation of the territorial dimension in Cohesion Policy, it needs to be assigned equal weight with the economic and social dimensions and hence must be integrated fully in the objectives and the scope of Cohesion Policy.

This is the only way to ensure that disparities and territorial handicaps are addressed in a balanced way. The first step in this process is to define all aspects of territorial cohesion and design the proper instruments to achieve it. More specifically, in the reformed policy, territorial criteria (geographical position, insularity and small size) should be used more explicitly with respect to eligibility and allocation of funds.

The contribution of the future Cohesion Policy to the realization of key political objectives of the Union, should take further into account geographical and territorial criteria. In this respect European Territorial Cooperation Objective is an important instrument but can not remain the only instrument promoting territorial cohesion.

Cohesion Policy must aim at bringing out the competitive advantage of each region/Member State and as such must be tailored even more to the local needs and resources. As already mentioned “**one size fits all, is not the right recipe**”. The formulation of integrated development policy for various area types needs to be safeguarded.

Reference to Territorial Cohesion in relation to sectoral policies and the role of spatial planning, it should be noted that sectoral policies which fail to take into account the spatial dimension tend to have limited results. Although territorial cohesion should firstly be achieved through Cohesion Policy, mainstreaming into all major sectoral policy is equally fundamental.