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### **Results of the ESF Seminar on "Transnational and interregional Co-operation in ESF Programmes for 2007-2013", on January 23, 2007**

#### **Purpose of the Seminar**

Following an invitation at the last ESF Committee meeting on December 6, 2006, Member State representatives gathered at a seminar on 23 January to discuss in detail the relevant issues of transnational cooperation on the basis of an orientation note by the Commission.

The seminar provided ESF programme designers with an opportunity to have an interactive exchange on options and plans for feasible and effective arrangements of transnational cooperation in the Operational Programmes. A dialogue also began on the role the Commission will play to make transnationality work. The need for common frameworks and Commission support, organised in a pragmatic way, were called for.

#### **Participants**

Participation reflected the high interest of Member States to share plans, implementation provisions, good practice and to work together towards common solutions:

- more than 45 nominated representatives from 24 Member State in charge of planning and implementing the transnational cooperation dimension of ESF programmes 2007-2013 participated,
- 10 Member States were represented by a member of the ESF Committee.
- Strong participation from ESF units ensured the link to the mainstreaming of ESF.

#### **Main results:**

- ↳ On the basis of the orientation note, the messages given by the Commission were:
  - The main purpose of transnational cooperation is to contribute to reforms in employment policy and delivery, essentially through learning from other countries, bringing together ideas and experiences, administrations and social partners.
  - In the new programming period, responsibility for transnational cooperation will shift from the Commission to the Member States. In the previous programming period, the Commission provided the lead for stimulating and supporting

transnational cooperation under the ESF through the EQUAL Community Initiative. The ESF Regulation stipulates that it is now an integrated feature of the ESF 2007-13 and therefore Member States and regions must assume the main responsibility for learning from one another through exchange of good practice and knowledge.

- Member States will have to make some strategic choices for the integration of transnational cooperation. This includes considering the areas/themes of their national programme's for which transnational cooperation could add most value, and deciding whether transnational cooperation should be integrated as a dedicated priority, a cross cutting theme, or a combination of these options.
- To make transnational cooperation work, future ESF Programmes have to provide for eligibility of the relevant costs (travel etc.). Adequate resources and support have to be ensured.

↪ Eight representatives from national or regional ESF Programmes volunteered to present the provisions of their OP for a rapid “peer review”, presenting objectives and indicators, themes and issues, provisions defining eligible activities and forms of cooperation, use of Technical Assistance, mechanisms for validation and dissemination of results, and indicative budget allocations (for details, see annexes 3-10).

↪ In terms of programming options, the promotion of transnational cooperation through a dedicated priority is being planned by 10 Member States, whereas the others are making plans through specific provisions across some or all thematic priorities (for details, see Annex 1).

↪ First clusters of programmes that will promote transnational coordination in the same fields became apparent (for details, see Annex 2). Themes that more than 5 Member States will promote include:

- life-long learning and entrepreneurship under the adaptability priority
- equal opportunities/increased participation of women in employment and migrants/immigrants and asylum seekers under the integration priority
- persons with disabilities, social economy and ethnic minorities/racism/Roma under the anti-discrimination priority, and
- validation of skills under the human capital priority
- innovation and gender mainstreaming in the fields of good governance.

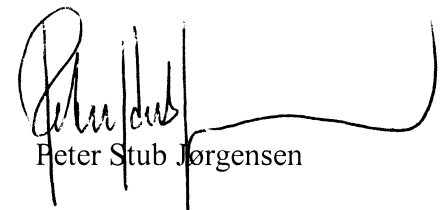
↪ Member States unanimously highlighted that the implementation provisions to be specified nationally have to be clear and simple and that cooperation with partners from other Member States will be essential. This refers in particular to the specifications of eligible categories of expenditure covering 1.) the organisation or management of meetings, events, placements, visits networks, projects etc., 2.) participation in the above (travel, accommodation, subsistence); 3.) communication, translation and interpretation, and 4.) pertinent services (expertise, facilitation, training etc.).

↪ The participants worked in small groups, giving all seminar participants an opportunity to exchange their plans for transnational cooperation, and to raise questions on issues for which they have not yet taken a decision. 93 % of the participants stated that the seminar met their expectations and the overall aims and objectives of the event.

## Follow-up

- ↳ The Commission will revise the orientation note in light of the seminar results and will complement it with an action plan, responding to Member States' requests for complementary support by the Commission.
- ↳ Member States' and regions' requests covered:
  - a platform/network for ESF managers on implementation issues for transnational cooperation to be established under the umbrella of the ESF Committee;
  - support in establishing effective frameworks for partner search
  - thematic networking at EU level;
  - support in validating good practices and results through e.g. peer reviews;
  - assistance in the presentation and dissemination of good practices e.g. by providing space on the ESF web portal;

The collaboration between the Commission and the Member States in implementing the action plan will be discussed at the next seminar of national and regional contact persons for transnational cooperation which will be organised on March 22.



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## Annexes

1. Programming options chosen by Member States
2. Thematic choices across member States (first indications)
3. Transnational cooperation in the ESF OP of Brandenburg
4. Transnational cooperation in the ESF OP of the Czech Republic
5. Transnational cooperation in the ESF OP of Finland
6. Transnational cooperation in the ESF OP of Spain
7. Transnational cooperation in the ESF OP of Wales
8. Transnational cooperation in the ESF OP of Flanders
9. Transnational cooperation in the ESF OP of Germany
10. Transnational cooperation in the ESF OP of Poland