



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
REGIONAL POLICY

The Director-General

Brussels, 23.06.2006* 05278
REGIO.C.1/PG/aa D(2006) 310436

Subject: Recommendations to the Commission on the financing of major projects

Dear Ms Stoczkiewicz,
Dear Mr Konečný,

Thank you for your letter of 24 May and the recommendations on the financing of major projects. The Commission is also of the opinion that investments co-financed from the EU budget should meet all relevant standards.

The Cohesion Policy Regulations contain a number of important provisions on compliance with and mainstreaming of environmental policies. Because project selection is decentralised to Member States and regions, national and regional partnerships have an essential role to play.

With respect to environmental assessments, the relevant legislation remains applicable. This means that strategic environmental assessments must be carried out at programme level and individual environmental assessments at the level of individual projects. It is important that all stakeholders, including environmental organisations, make use of the relevant instruments of this legislation to ensure that environmental assessments are properly performed and that final decisions are in compliance. This can include judicial procedures.

Although, as part of its approval process, the Commission does check whether to its best knowledge the procedures have been followed, the Commission is not a body for judicial appeal.

The Commission acknowledges that waste and transport are particularly difficult sectors in terms of taking a balanced decision. We would indeed generally favour investments in the prevention, recycling and composting of waste, but in certain cases, e.g. for health or other reasons, it is also important to invest in incineration facilities. The potential conflicts between investments in transport infrastructure and the preservation of the

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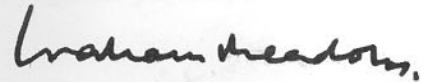
environment need to be dealt with carefully. The SEA and EIA instruments offer public authorities the means for such watchful decision-making.

Allow me finally to say a word on transparency. In order to ensure that Member States have indeed taken a balanced decision with respect to major projects, the Regulations laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds provide for an explicit Commission decision. This procedure is not intended to be an appeals procedure, but simply an opportunity to check whether procedures have been followed and whether eligible cost have been properly defined. Consequently, the Commission only has three months to establish this decision. The online information system you propose would make more it more difficult to keep to such deadlines and would also be misleading for the European citizen. The Commission can forward the information on a specific major project when it is requested to do so by a local stakeholder.

For administrative purposes, JASPERS will be a structure within the European Investment Bank (EIB). Therefore, the EIB should be contacted for any information related to the action plans approved.

I hope this clarifies the points you raise.

Yours sincerely,



Graham Meadows