



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
REGIONAL POLICY

The Director-General

28.04.2006* 03703

Brussels,
REGIO.C.1-PG/mkr D(2006) 310292

Subject: Making better use of EU funds in central and eastern Europe

Dear Ms Stoczkiewicz,
dear Mr Konečný,

Thank you for your letter of 28 March on the use of EU funds in central and eastern Europe and for the attached map of projects which you consider problematic. I appreciate your support for European Regional Policy.

We share your concern that projects supported by EU funds should bring clear economic, social and environmental benefits and be fully consistent with EU legislation and policies.

The regulations on structural and cohesion funds are designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion in a sustainable way. Projects can only be funded in the framework of operational programmes containing priorities in line with the strategic guidelines for cohesion, and in support of growth and jobs. Major projects are decided by the Commission based on a procedure requiring in particular a cost benefit analysis.

Concerning the environmental impact, I sent a letter to Member States earlier this year, reminding them of their obligations for the period 2007-2013 with regard to the implementation of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. Many operational programmes may require assessment under the SEA Directive, particularly if they include projects covered by the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Directive, and it is the case for major projects. Moreover, a handbook on SEA for cohesion policy has been prepared through the INTERREG IIIC project "Greening Regional Development Programme".

The implementation in the Member States of the requirements of both SEA and EIA Directives should prevent potentially damaging projects from being funded by the structural and cohesion funds.

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Your map of projects which you consider to be problematic is being circulated within the Directorate-General to ensure an appropriate follow-up by the geographical desks. Moreover, transparency in the Commission's appraisal process for major projects will be ensured according to the existing rules.

I hope you will continue to help us to make good use of structural and cohesion funds.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Graham Meadows". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Graham Meadows