

Brussels, 18 October 2001

## **Urban II programme: European Union approves EURO 14.9 million support for urban regeneration in Leipzig, Germany**

***The European Commission has approved a programme for urban regeneration in Leipzig, Germany. This URBAN<sup>1</sup> Community Initiative Programme will provide about € 14.9<sup>2</sup> million from the European Union over the period 2001-2006. The European funding has attracted about € 5 million in further investment from the public sector, creating total resources of € 19.8 million. Priorities will include the support of enterprise and job creation, human resources development and projects to promote equal opportunities, promotion of citizens' identification with their district and solidarity, improvement of the urban fabric and socio-cultural and leisure activities.***

Announcing the decision, Michel BARNIER, Member of the European Commission responsible for regional policy, said: "The URBAN Community Initiative is a creative and innovative approach to urban regeneration. These programmes have a strong "grassroots" emphasis, involving local people at all stages in the decision making process. The programme for the city of Leipzig is no exception. It mobilises a strong local partnership and I fully endorse the programme priorities. I am confident that this programme will make a substantial contribution to urban regeneration in the city of Leipzig."

The programme area covers the western part of the city of Leipzig (Plagwitz, Lindenau/Altlichtenau, and parts of Kleinzschocher and Leutzsch) with a population of 31,000. The area forms part of a mixed industrial area dating from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Since German reunification, the city has been facing radical changes and strong social and economic problems: decline of population, structural weaknesses in the local economy, derelict industrial areas, high unemployment, decline in employment, insufficient implementation of equal opportunities, environmental damage, vacant properties, decline of residential areas.

The programme aims to tackle these problems with three main priorities:

- Development of enterprises and jobs, human resources and promotion of equal opportunities (Community contribution: € 5.9 million).
- Promotion of citizens' identification with their district and solidarity, improvement of the urban fabric (Community contribution: € 5.6 million).
- Socio-cultural and leisure infrastructure (Community contribution: € 2.6 million)

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<sup>1</sup> See below for a description of URBAN II.

<sup>2</sup> Programming prices

An additional amount of € 0.7 million (Community contribution) will finance technical assistance.

The programme has some very innovative features, for example: support of handicraft services in the neighbourhood, support for the creation of enterprises for young people, networking of those involved in employment initiatives, local area management, greening of backyards, integration of socially disadvantaged people in the area.

As with all URBAN programmes, this programme will be funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) under the responsibility of Mr Barnier.

## **URBAN**

The goal of the URBAN Community Initiative is "economic and social regeneration of cities and of neighbourhoods in crisis in order to promote sustainable urban development". The second round of URBAN ("URBAN II") will cover the period 2001-2006, supporting 70 deprived urban areas across the EU. Total funding from the EU alone will be € 743.6 million<sup>3</sup> and this will attract at least as much again in matched funding from both public and private sectors.

The total URBAN allocation for Germany amounts to € 148.7 million<sup>4</sup>. Programmes have been submitted for Berlin, Bremerhaven, Dessau, Dortmund, Gera, Kassel, Kiel, Leipzig, Luckenwalde, Mannheim/Ludwigshafen, Neubrandenburg and Saarbrücken.

A particular feature of URBAN II is the development of innovative models for urban regeneration. Another feature is a strong emphasis on partnership and on involving local actors. There will also be an exchange of information and experience on sustainable urban development across the European Union.

URBAN II is financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Funding is available for initiatives such as the renovation of buildings and public spaces, local employment initiatives, the improvement of education and training systems for disadvantaged groups, the development of environmentally friendly public transport systems, the introduction of more efficient energy management systems and the use of renewable energy, developing the potential created by information society technologies.

The Commission adopts programmes which are proposed by a partnership including local and community groups. These programmes run for the whole of the period 2001-2006 and local actors are involved at all stages in this process.

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<sup>3</sup> New profile 2003 prices

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**Further information**

More detailed information on URBAN be found in MEMO/01/301 of 25 September 2001 or at the following website:

European Commission : <http://www.inforegio.cec.eu.int/urban/>