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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION  
TO THE MEMBER STATES**

**establishing the guidelines for the Community Initiative EQUAL concerning  
transnational co-operation to promote new means of combating all forms of  
discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market**

## **COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE MEMBER STATES**

### **establishing the guidelines for the Community Initiative EQUAL concerning transnational co-operation to promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market**

1. On 14 April 2000, the Commission of the European Communities approved these guidelines for the Community Initiative entitled EQUAL,
2. Under EQUAL Community funding, in the form of European Social Fund (ESF) grants, will be made available for activities which respect the guidelines laid down in this notice, and which are included in proposals presented by each Member State and approved by the Commission of the European Communities in the form of Community Initiative programmes (CIPs). EQUAL applies to the whole territory of the European Union.

#### **I. AIM**

3. The aim of EQUAL is to promote new means of combating all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market, through transnational co-operation. EQUAL will also take due account of the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers.

#### **II. POLICY CONTEXT**

4. The growing interdependence of Member State economies has led to the inclusion of a new Title on employment in the Amsterdam Treaty. This provides for a co-ordinated strategy for employment and the adoption of guidelines which the Member States take into account in their employment policies. The employment guidelines (based on the four pillars of Employability, Entrepreneurship, Adaptability, and Equal Opportunities) and their transformation by the Member States into National Action Plans for employment (NAPs) provide the framework for financial support at EU level, in particular through the Structural Funds.
5. The European Employment Strategy has the goal of achieving a high level of employment for all groups in the labour market. To achieve this, the development of the skills and employability of those currently outside the labour market is essential. The skills of those already in work, especially in exposed or vulnerable sectors, must also be renewed and updated. Furthermore, the capacity for entrepreneurship must be broadened. The equal participation of women and men in the labour market must also be ensured. This requires action to counter inequality and discrimination suffered by both the jobless and the employed.
6. To be fully effective, the European Employment Strategy must be translated into action at the local and regional level, in urban and rural districts - that is to say at the level of

territories able to generate local co-operation. It requires new approaches to shared priorities and the effective dissemination of successful ideas.

7. The European Social Fund (ESF) is one of the Structural Funds, along with those dealing with agriculture and regional development. The ESF is concerned with measures to prevent and combat unemployment and to develop human resources and promote equal opportunities for all in accessing the labour market. In particular, it is intended to contribute to action which supports the European Employment Strategy.
8. At Community level there is an integrated strategy to combat discrimination (in particular that based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation) and social exclusion. Focusing on the labour market, EQUAL will form part of that strategy. It will be complementary to other policies, instruments and actions developed in this respect and which go beyond the labour market area and, in particular, the specific legislation and action programmes under Articles 13 and 137 of the Treaty. The Commission and the Member States will ensure coherence between EQUAL and such activities. EQUAL will, therefore, play a key role in linking together the EU supported actions under Articles 13 and 137, the ESF supported programmes and the political objectives pursued in the framework of the European Employment Strategy.

### **III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

#### **Introduction**

9. Building on lessons learned under the EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT programmes, EQUAL will act as a testing ground to develop and disseminate new ways of delivering employment policies in order to combat all sorts of discrimination and inequality experienced by those seeking access to the labour market and those already within it. The particular needs of asylum seekers will be addressed taking into account their specific situation.
10. EQUAL will operate in a number of thematic fields, defined in the context of the four pillars of the employment strategy and following discussion with the Member States. These are the priority fields where groups of Member States consider that transnational co-operation will assist them in improving ways of delivering their national policies. In accordance with Article 1 of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999<sup>1</sup>, and the European employment guidelines, Member States will adopt a gender mainstreaming approach in each thematic field.
11. EQUAL will be implemented by partnerships established at geographical or sectoral level and called Development Partnerships (DPs). The partners within the DPs will define and agree a strategy to be followed, along with the means of bringing it to fruition using innovative approaches. DPs will undertake transnational co-operation and participate in the dissemination and mainstreaming of good practice.
12. The successful innovation developed under EQUAL should be disseminated widely in order to achieve the maximum impact on policy and, where appropriate, it should be incorporated into the Objective 1, 2 and 3 Structural Fund programmes and the NAPs.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 of 21 June 1999 laying down general provisions on the Structural Funds.

13. EQUAL will be distinguished from the Objective 1, 2 and 3 Structural Fund programmes by its focus on testing new ways of delivery for policy priorities in the framework of the European Employment Strategy and by the emphasis on partnership in a context of transnational co-operation.

### **Thematic approach**

14. Member States shall formulate their strategy for EQUAL on the basis of thematic fields in the four pillars of the European Employment strategy. Within these fields Member States shall ensure that their proposals principally benefit those subject to the main forms of discrimination (based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation) and inequality. Each thematic field shall be fully accessible to all such groups. Within this horizontal approach, the promotion of equality between women and men will be integral to the thematic fields in all four pillars as well as being targeted through specific actions in the fourth pillar.
15. The thematic fields, which will serve as the basis for the first call for proposals, are set out below. The list of thematic fields may be reviewed, before subsequent calls for proposals, to take account of developments in the labour market and in the employment guidelines. Proposals for revised thematic fields will be put forward by the Commission following the necessary consultations. They will be submitted for agreement to the Committee pursuant to Article 147 of the Treaty, after discussion in the Employment Committee, and presented to the European Parliament.

### **Thematic fields for the first call for proposals**

16. In setting out their strategy, based on these themes, Member States should have in mind the ideal of improving the supply of and demand for quality jobs with a future. They should also encourage the effective use of existing mechanisms (for example those that exist for social dialogue) to sensitise those in the labour market to the factors leading to discrimination, inequality and exclusion for certain groups in connection with the labour market.

#### *Employability*

- a) Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or re-integrated into a labour market which must be open to all
- b) Combating racism and xenophobia in relation to the labour market

#### *Entrepreneurship*

- c) Opening up the business creation process to all by providing the tools required for setting up in business and for the identification and exploitation of new possibilities for creating employment in urban and rural areas
- d) Strengthening the social economy (the third sector), in particular the services of interest to the community, with a focus on improving the quality of jobs

#### *Adaptability*

- e) Promoting lifelong learning and inclusive work practices which encourage the recruitment and retention of those suffering discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market
- f) Supporting the adaptability of firms and employees to structural economic change and the use of information technology and other new technologies

*Equal Opportunities for women and men*

- g) Reconciling family and professional life, as well as the re-integration of men and women who have left the labour market, by developing more flexible and effective forms of work organisation and support services
- h) Reducing gender gaps and supporting job desegregation.

17. Member States will select only the thematic fields in which they want to co-operate. In addition, each Member State must plan at least a minimum level of action aimed at asylum seekers, in line with the dimensions of the problem in the Member State.

18. Normally Member States will be expected to choose at least one thematic field in each pillar for each call for proposals. Exceptionally, the Commission may agree to a reduction in this requirement in a Member State.

### **Asylum Seekers**

19. The position of asylum seekers within the Union is complex. They may be divided essentially into three categories<sup>2</sup>:

- those whose application for asylum is under consideration by the Member State concerned;
- those who have been admitted under a humanitarian resettlement or evacuation programme or who benefit from a temporary protection arrangement;
- those who have not been granted refugee status, but who benefit from another form of protection (complementary or subsidiary protection) because their individual situation prevents their return to their country of origin.

20. In the majority of Member States, access to the labour market by asylum seekers as such (the first category above) is either forbidden or hedged around with very restrictive conditions. As regards the latter two categories, however, Member States have shown themselves more willing to consider access to the labour market. It could also be noted that in the Joint Action of 26 April 1999, the Council recognised the desirability of helping asylum seekers who face repatriation with education and training, which would give them skills useful in their home country<sup>3</sup>. It is important that this state of affairs be respected in implementing the “asylum seeker” element in EQUAL.

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<sup>2</sup> Refugees are not included under this heading because, as long-term residents, they are eligible under normal EQUAL Development Partnerships.

<sup>3</sup> JOINT ACTION of 26 April 1999 adopted by the Council on the basis of Article K.3 of the Treaty on European Union, establishing projects and measures to provide practical support in relation to the reception and voluntary repatriation of refugees, displaced persons and asylum seekers, including emergency assistance to persons who have fled as a result of recent events in Kosovo: OJ L114/2 of 1 May 1999; cf Article 5 (c).

21. Action in respect of asylum seekers may be programmed either as a sectoral DP (i.e., a national partnership, involving all the appropriate partners to support social and vocational integration for asylum seekers), or as a geographical DP in an territory where there is a high concentration of asylum seekers. The same types of partnership, strategy and activity should be envisaged as for other EQUAL development partnerships.

### **Partnership approach**

22. EQUAL will fund activities implemented by strategic partnerships. The EQUAL partnerships will operate within the thematic fields and will be called Development Partnerships (DPs). They will bring together interested actors, with relevant competence, who will co-operate to develop an integrated approach to multi-dimensional problems. The partners shall work together to identify the factors leading to inequality and discrimination in connection with the labour market, within their chosen thematic field/s. They shall pool their efforts and resources in pursuit of innovative solutions to jointly defined problems and common goals.
23. DPs should have a core of partners from the outset. They should also ensure that relevant actors, such as: public authorities; the public employment service; non-governmental organisations (NGOs); the business sector (in particular SMEs); and the social partners, can become involved during the life of the partnership. Small organisations with innovative ideas must be able to make their contribution by participating fully in DPs. The experience of EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT has shown the importance of involving local and regional authorities to ensure coherence between the planned activities and the development needs of the territory. Their participation will also strengthen the probability of mainstreaming the results.
24. DPs may be geographically based, bringing together relevant actors in a given geographical area. These will be known as *geographical partnerships*. Geographical partnerships may not always be the most effective way to tackle an identified problem and other forms of partnership are possible within the above guidelines. These could cover particular economic sectors or industries. If justified, they might equally relate mainly to one or more specific group amongst those subject to discrimination or inequality in connection with the labour market. These other partnerships will be known as *sectoral partnerships*.
25. Under EQUAL, the final beneficiaries are the DPs as already described in § 22-24 above. At the point of application for EQUAL funding, each DP must have arrangements for ensuring that the administrative and financial responsibilities are handled by an organisation which has the capacity to manage and account for public funding.

### **Empowerment**

26. The principle of empowerment will be central to each DP. In practice this will mean that those involved in the implementation of activities should also take part in the decision-making. On the other hand, the active participation of those targeted for assistance should be positively assessed in the selection for Action 1 funding and the confirmation of selection for Action 2.

## **Transnational co-operation**

27. EQUAL will be based on the principle of transnational co-operation. The experience gained under the Community Initiatives EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT shows that transnationality is a dimension which can bring significant added-value to project operators working with others in similar situations. In addition, it shows that considerable policy innovation can be achieved through transnational co-operation. Transnationality will, therefore, be an essential element of EQUAL.

## **Innovation**

28. EQUAL will test innovative approaches to policy delivery. These may be completely new approaches, or the transfer of elements from elsewhere, which increase the effectiveness of policy delivery.

29. The definition of innovation in EQUAL is based on the typology which emerged from the evaluation of EMPLOYMENT and ADAPT and which differentiated between three types of innovation:

- process-oriented innovations will cover the development of new methods, tools or approaches as well as the improvement of existing methods;
- goal-oriented innovations will centre around the formulation of new objectives and innovation could include approaches to identify new and promising qualifications and the opening up of new areas of employment for the labour market;
- context-oriented innovations relate to political and institutional structures. Context-oriented innovations will be concerned with system development in connection with the labour market.

## **Mainstreaming**

30. EQUAL will fund the development of innovative solutions to the delivery of the policy priorities of Member States as set out in their NAPs. In order to obtain the maximum impact from EQUAL, the results must be analysed, benchmarked and disseminated both within Member States and across the Union. It is important that policy makers, in particular those in charge of the NAPs, and those involved in the Objective 1, 2 and 3 Structural Fund Programmes, receive input from EQUAL.

## **IV. ACTIONS TO BE FUNDED BY EQUAL**

31. EQUAL will fund activity under the following four actions

- Action 1: setting up Development Partnerships and transnational co-operation
- Action 2: implementing the work programmes of the Development Partnerships
- Action 3: thematic networking, dissemination of good practice and making an impact on national policy.
- Action 4: Technical Assistance to support actions 1, 2 and 3.

Actions 1 and 2 are sequential. Member States will be expected to be in a position to start Action 3 at the earliest point that results are available to disseminate. Action 4 will provide support from before the commencement of Action 1.

**Action 1 :**  
**Setting up Development Partnerships**  
**and transnational co-operation**

32. The objective of Action 1 is to facilitate the creation or the consolidation of durable, effective Development Partnerships (DPs) and to ensure that transnational co-operation will have a real added value. The time period available for this Action will be decided by the managing authority but would not normally exceed 6 months. Overall, the Commission would not expect Action 1 to represent a significant part of total funds available to the Member State.
33. Selection for Action 1 will be the main stage in selection for funding under EQUAL. It will be based upon an application submitted jointly by a number of organisations (DP initiators). In the context of the thematic field and territory/sector of operation, the application should identify:
- the partners to be involved in the DP at the outset; the arrangements for ensuring that all relevant partners can become involved during the life of the partnership including, in particular, appropriate small organisations; and the arrangements for handling the administrative and financial responsibilities;
  - the rationale for the partnership, a diagnosis of the problem to be addressed and an explanation of how the needs of all the potential beneficiary groups will be taken into account;
  - the objectives of the partnership;
  - a work programme for Action 1;
  - the nature of the activities they intend to implement in Action 2;
  - the expectations for the transnational co-operation.
34. Whilst the procedures for selecting Development Partnerships fall within the competence of the managing authority, in co-operation with the monitoring committee of the CIP, the Commission would expect selection criteria to reflect the general principles of EQUAL which are explained in section III. Unsuccessful applicants should be given reasons for their non-selection.
35. At the end of Action 1, the DP should be able to present a common strategy in the form of a Development Partnership Agreement. As a minimum this should contain:
- an assessment of current labour market exclusion, discrimination and inequality, within the thematic field and territory/sector concerned;
  - objectives and priorities for action, reflecting the learning from previous relevant action in the territory/sector;

- a detailed work programme accompanied by a realistic budget;
- a clear identification of the role of each partner, including the arrangements for steering and managing the partnership and administering the financial support;
- a mechanism for on-going assessment including the presentation of data and information on the DP and the analysis of results;
- the commitment of the DP to collaborate on Action 3;
- its strategy and mechanisms for implementing a gender mainstreaming approach

#### *Transnational co-operation*

36. DPs must identify at least one partner from another Member State. As a general rule, co-operation should be established between DPs selected by the Member States under EQUAL, and preferably those working in the same thematic field; such co-operation may also extend to similar projects supported in a non Member State eligible for funding under the *Phare*, *Tacis* or *Meda* programmes. The CIP proposal may define parameters for exceptions to the general rule, subject to the condition that the potential value added of co-operation with partners outside EQUAL is clearly identified, and that these partners are able to demonstrate their capacity to cover their own costs incurred by this co-operation.

37. At the end of Action 1, the DP should set out in the form of a Transnational Co-operation Agreement:

- a transnational work programme accompanied by a budget;
- the role of each transnational partner, the common methods of decision making and the organisational arrangements for implementing the common work programme;
- the methodologies for monitoring and assessment of joint activities.

#### **Action 2 :**

#### **Implementation of the work programmes of Development Partnerships**

38. In order to have selection confirmed and to receive funding to implement its work programme through Action 2 of EQUAL, each Development Partnership must submit two documents, a Development Partnership Agreement and a Transnational Co-operation Agreement, which meet the criteria set out under Action 1. These documents must also demonstrate that the DP fulfils the following conditions:

- Transparency : the DP must demonstrate the availability of the necessary co-financing. The DP must also accept that the results obtained (products, instruments, methods, etc. ) will be public property.
- Representative capacity : the DP must be able to demonstrate its capacity to mobilise different actors in order that they work together. Particular attention will be given to the arrangements for ensuring that all relevant actors, such as: public authorities; the public employment service; NGOs; the business sector (in

particular SMEs); and the social partners, can become involved during the life of the partnership. The DP must show that appropriate small organisations are able to participate fully.

- Co-operative spirit : the DP must be able to demonstrate its capacity and its willingness to work in a context of transnational co-operation and explain the expected value added of transnational co-operation in implementing the different components of the work-programme. In addition, the DP must plan to co-operate in networking, dissemination and mainstreaming activities at both national and European level.

39. If the conditions in §38 are fulfilled, the managing authority will confirm the initial selection of the Partnership, and notify it of the multi-annual budget available to implement its work programme.
40. This work programme would normally cover an initial period of 2 to 3 years. However, if the results obtained justify an extension, a further grant could be approved, along with an extension of the period of financing for the DP.

#### *Eligibility of activities*

41. The normal eligibility rules of the ESF apply (cf. article 3 of the ESF Regulation<sup>4</sup>). However, in order to achieve the maximum effectiveness of activities EQUAL may fund action normally eligible under the ERDF, EAGGF Guidance or FIFG rules, (Article 21(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999).
42. Member States shall check the activities of the DPs for compatibility with the provisions of the Treaty, in particular with the state aid provisions, and if necessary notify them under Article 88 (3).

#### **Action 3:** **Thematic networking, dissemination of good practice** **and making an impact on national policy**

43. There will be a separate action, for networking, dissemination and mainstreaming activities within EQUAL. Participation in this Action shall be mandatory for all DPs in order to ensure the mainstreaming impact that EQUAL seeks. It shall be organised under the responsibility of the Managing Authority in such a way as to facilitate maximum input into labour market and employment policy and should involve the social partners.
44. Member States shall establish mechanisms which will facilitate mainstreaming at both the horizontal level (the level of organisations active in the same or a similar field) and the vertical level (the level of regional and national policy, including the NAP and the Structural Funds). These mechanisms should aim at:
- identifying factors leading to inequality and discrimination and monitoring and analysing the impact or potential impact of the DPs on the policy priorities set out

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<sup>4</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 1999 on the European Social Fund (OJ L 213, 13.8.1999).

in the NAP and on the different groups subject to discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market;

- identifying and assessing the factors leading to good practice and benchmark their performance;
- disseminating good practice, from the end of Action 1

45. These activities will normally involve DPs acting either singly or in groups on the basis of their specific expertise and proven capacity. For this purpose, these DPs would receive additional funding.

#### **Action 4 : Technical Assistance**

46. Technical assistance will be available to support the implementation of the CIP and will be used particularly :

- to advise on and facilitate the consolidation of partnerships and the search for suitable transnational co-operation partners (Action 1);
- to collect, edit and disseminate the experience and results, including annual reports of the DPs (Action 2);
- to support the thematic networking, the horizontal dissemination activities and the setting up of mechanisms for policy impact (Action 3);
- for co-operation in European networking and to ensure the sharing of all relevant information with the other Member States and the Commission (cf. V. Actions at European level).

47. Technical assistance will also be available to support the monitoring, audit and evaluation of actions both within Member States and at the European level.

48. The budget for technical assistance may not exceed 5% of the total ESF contribution to the CIP. The ESF rate of contribution will be subject to the ceilings in Article 29 (3) of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999.

49. Member States will apply their own procedures to the selection and funding of those who will carry out Technical Assistance activities in a transparent way.

#### **V. DISSEMINATION AND EVALUATION AT EUROPEAN LEVEL**

50. If EQUAL is to fully play its role as a testing ground for developing and promoting new ways of delivering employment policies, there will need to be close co-operation between Member States and social partners, and the Commission, to successfully exploit the potential for impact on the European Employment Strategy of good practice identified all over the Union.

51. Evaluation of the impact of EQUAL is crucial. At Union level, the Commission will set up an evaluation mechanism, to assess the implications of EQUAL for the European Employment Strategy and other Community programmes.
52. The Commission proposes implementing three types of action to support the process of creating an impact at Union level:
- thematic review at Union level;
  - a periodic assessment of the value added by EQUAL in relation to the National Action Plans for Employment (NAP);
  - the use of discussion fora at Union level.

### **Thematic review**

53. In order to disseminate good practice and benchmark the achievements, the Commission will organise a series of "thematic reviews" with clusters of Development Partnerships for each of the EQUAL thematic fields.
54. The results will be summarised and made public, and will be used to enrich the policy peer reviews set up in the context of the European Employment Strategy, the evaluation activities at Union level, and the dissemination and exchange activities planned in the Community Programmes under Articles 13 (fight against discrimination) and 137 (in favour of social inclusion) of the Treaty. Candidate countries will be associated with the discussion and exploitation of the results.

### **Periodic assessment - EQUAL and the NAPs**

55. On the basis of the activities undertaken in the framework of Action 3 in each of the Member States, and data and information collected from DPs by Member States, the Commission will establish a database of good practice under EQUAL. The information can be used as a basis for periodic assessment of the actual and potential impact on the NAPs. These assessments should be presented for information to the Objective 1, 2 and 3 Structural Fund monitoring committees and be taken into account in the implementation of the European Social Fund.

### **Discussion fora**

56. EQUAL will be discussed in a number of existing fora:
- the Employment Committee will be kept informed of the results and on the review of the thematic fields;
  - the Committee pursuant to Article 147 of the Treaty will deliver its opinion on the result of the review of the thematic fields and respond to specific questions referred by the Commission;
  - a forum for the discussion of EQUAL will be organised on an annual basis with the existing NGO platform at Union level in order to facilitate discussions and feedback from the organisations concerned.

- If required, the Commission will organise meetings focussing on more specific issues under EQUAL, such as the transfer of good practice to policies in candidate countries.

#### *Technical assistance*

57. The successful implementation of EQUAL demands a significant amount of collaboration between Member states and the Commission: collecting and processing information about Development Partnerships, setting up data bases, animating the thematic review process, organising seminars, publicising results, etc. A certain number of specific tasks which cannot take place without support at European level will be assigned to outside service providers, at the initiative and under supervision of the Commission, on the basis of calls for tender to be published in the Official Journal of the European Communities. The execution of these tasks shall be financed at a rate of 100% of the total cost.

### **VI. PREPARATION, PRESENTATION AND APPROVAL OF PROGRAMMES**

58. Section III of this Notice sets out the general principles within which EQUAL will operate. This section sets out the elements which the Commission expects to see in the programme proposals to be presented by the designated authorities in Member States in consultation with the appropriate partners. The financial and administrative management of the CIP fall entirely within the competence of the designated managing authority, in co-operation with the Monitoring Committee of the CIP.

59. On the basis of the indicative financial allocations per Member State, adopted by the Commission, Member States should propose their draft Community Initiative Programmes (CIPs) for EQUAL. These proposals should meet the requirements set out in Article 16 of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999. The CIPs will take the form of a Single Programming Document, supplemented by a Programme Complement, as provided for in Article 19(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999. The priorities in the CIP proposals will be taken from the list of thematic fields set out in § 16 above. The Actions outlined in Section IV should be considered as the measures within those priorities.

60. Member States will be expected to introduce a gender perspective in the programming, implementing, monitoring and evaluating phases of EQUAL.

#### **CIP proposals**

61. *The proposal for a CIP put forward by the Member States shall contain the following:*

- A description of the current situation as regards discrimination and inequality in the labour market in relation to the chosen themes, and as regards asylum seekers;
- An evaluation of the expected impact, including on the social and economic situation at local or sectoral level and the situation in terms of equality between men and women, in accordance with Article 41(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999;
- A description of the strategy for the implementation of EQUAL, based on the selection of priorities, from the list in § 16 plus specific action focused on asylum seekers (*cf.* § 19-21 above). This should include specific objectives, quantified where they lend themselves to quantification;

- A description of the relationship between the strategy and the prevailing NAP as interpreted in the policy frame of reference referred to Article 1 of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999);
- A synthesis of the lessons learnt from ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT for the selected thematic priorities;
- A summary of arrangements to ensure complementarity between EQUAL and other Community instruments and programmes and the Territorial Employment Pacts;
- A summary description of the measures planned to implement the priorities and the information needed to check the compliance with Article 87 of the Treaty;
- An indication of whether and to what extent the actions proposed under each priority will contain activities normally eligible under the ERDF, EAGGF or FIFG (Article 21(2) of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999), to enable the Commission to make the appropriate provision in its Decision on the CIP proposal;
- A description of the arrangements for technical assistance expected to be required to implement the CIP; both the types of activities and the procedures for selecting those who will carry them out;
- An indicative financing plan specifying for each priority and each year, in accordance with Article 19(3)(c) of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999, the financial allocation envisaged for the contribution of the ESF, as well as the total amount of eligible public or equivalent and estimated private funding relating to the ESF contribution;
- A description of the actions and methods planned to implement the gender mainstreaming approach effectively;
- An account of the process of programming, including the arrangements made to consult partners, including those with a specific interest in the main areas of discrimination or inequality and the social partners, and the results of the consultations;
- Provisions for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the CIPs as described below.

*Provisions for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of CIPs*

62. The provisions for implementing, monitoring and evaluating the CIP shall be set out, in line with the requirements in Article 19(3)(d) of Regulation (EC) 1260/1999. In addition the CIP should cover the following:

- a description of the mechanism for at least two calls for proposals (procedures for publicity, guidelines and procedures for selection, including appeals);
- types of contracts with final beneficiaries;

- national mechanisms to facilitate mainstreaming at both the horizontal and vertical levels as described in Action 3;
- arrangements to ensure that Monitoring Committee membership provides for the involvement of the social partners and those people with direct experience of the main forms of discrimination and inequality in connection with the labour market, including relevant representative NGOs;
- the type and amount of data and information that DPs will be required to produce each year for on-going monitoring and the mechanisms for assessment within the DP;
- the mid term evaluation, at the level of the CIP, which will be launched, upon adoption, to ensure continuous feed-back for any readjustments necessary for successive calls for proposals. The CIP will indicate the specific parameters and quantitative and qualitative indicators to be taken into account for the mid-term evaluation and the final assessment, in line with common minimum requirements for all Member States.

### **Presentation and approval of CIPs**

63. These draft CIPs shall be submitted to the Commission by the Member States within four months of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal. A five month period for negotiation with the Commission will follow.
64. In accordance with Article 28 of Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999, the Commission will approve each CIP by means of a Decision confirming the allocation of ESF funding to each priority it contains.
65. Each CIP shall be supplemented by a programme complement as defined in Article 9(m) and described in Article 18(3) of Regulation (EC) 1260/1999.
66. The programme complement will be sent to the Commission no later than three months after the Commission Decision approving the CIP. However, in order to simplify the process, Member states are encouraged to send this at the same time as the draft CIP.

## **VII. FINANCING**

67. The EQUAL Initiative will be jointly financed by the Member States and the European Community. The total contribution of the European Social Fund to EQUAL for the 2000 - 2006 period is 2,847 million €. In accordance with Article 7(7) of Regulation (EC) 1260/1999, the ESF contribution to EQUAL shall take account of the rate of indexation of 2% a year up to 2003 and shall be decided at 2003 prices for the years 2004 to 2006. By 31 December 2003, the Commission shall determine the rate of indexation applicable for 2004 to 2006.
68. The rates of Community contribution defined in Article 29 of the Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 will apply. In view of the innovative nature of the methods used, a systematic application of the ceilings indicated in the Regulations is recommended.

69. An indicative amount of a maximum of 2% of the total ESF contribution will be reserved to finance activities carried out at the initiative of the Commission as set out in section V. These activities shall be financed at a rate of 100% of the total cost.

### **VIII. TIMING**

70. The Commission invites Member States to present their draft Community Initiative Programme for EQUAL within 4 months of the date of publication of this notice in the Official Journal.

Address for all correspondence concerning this communication :

Mr. A. LARSSON  
Director General  
Directorate General Employment and Social Affairs  
Rue de la Loi, 200  
B-1049 Brussels

Done at Brussels, 14.04.2000