

ANGUS COUNCIL

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

17 APRIL 1997

**SUBJECT: EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COHESION OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION: BRUSSELS 28 - 30 APRIL 1997**

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Abstract: This report seeks homologation for officer representation at a European Conference in Brussels which focuses on issues impacting on Angus Council's benefit from the European Structural Funds post 1999.

1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee agree to homologate the decision taken by the Director of Planning, Transport & Economic Development in consultation with the Vice Convener of Economic Development for approving the attendance of the European Services Manager to represent the Council at the European Commission's "Cohesion Forum" to be held in Brussels on 28 to 30 April 1997.

2 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The European Commission is holding a Cohesion Forum, the purpose of which is to discuss the economic and social policy of the European Union. This conference will be held in Brussels on 28, 29 and 30 April 1997 (programme attached).
- 2.2 Attendance is strictly limited to 1,200 participants restricted to key players from across the Union by invitation only from Dr Monika Wulf Mathies, Commissioner of DG XVI (Directorate General of the European Commission for Regional Policy and Planning).
- 2.3 ESEC (Eastern Scotland European Consortium) has secured a place at this conference for Angus Council as the European Services Manager is the lead officer of the ESEC Working Group on the "Reform of the Structural Funds".
- 2.4 At the UK5b Partnership meeting held in Edinburgh on 20/21 March 1997 it was agreed to call a pre-meeting of officers and members from the UK Objective 5b areas who are invited to the Cohesion Forum at the Scotland Europa offices in Brussels on Monday 28 April 1997 at 11.00am. The aim of this meeting is to discuss the post-Cork paper and co-ordinate subsequent input to the workshops from a rural perspective.
- 2.5 Participation at the Cohesion Forum and the UK5b Partnership pre-meeting will provide an opportunity for Angus Council to have direct access and input to the discussions of how national and EU policies affect the economic and social cohesion of the Union and on how cohesion policy can be adopted to meet the challenges of the future.

- 2.6 This will potentially enhance Angus Council's impact and accrued benefit from the EU Cohesion policy after the end of the current Structural Funds on 31 December 1999, ie post-1999. The exchange of ideas and experience will also contribute to highlight Angus Council's standing and profile within ESEC, the UK5b Network and Europe.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There is no fee cost for the attendance of the Cohesion Forum. The cost of travel, accommodation and subsistence is estimated to cost a total of £710.
- 3.2 The total cost for attendance of the Cohesion Forum can be contained within the Departmental Revenue Budget for the present year under European Liaison.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Law and Administration have been consulted and are in agreement with the terms of this report.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The successful development of a European Strategy for Angus Council post 1999 depends upon proactive participation in the discussions shaping the future of the European Union's Cohesion Policy and networking in Brussels and Europe. It is therefore paramount for key officers and members to be up to date with the emerging shape of the future EU Cohesion Policy as well as current best practice throughout the Union.
- 5.2 Therefore, attendance at the European Commission's Cohesion Forum is important for the Council in terms of positioning and maximising uptake of European funding as well as implementing the development of a complementary, effective, long-term European strategy for Angus Council.

NOTE

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

AA/LB/MR

9 April 1997

Alex Anderson
Director of Planning, Transport & Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

The promotion of economic and social cohesion is one of the Union's three major priorities alongside the achievement of economic and monetary union and the completion of the Single Market. One result has been a considerable increase in the effort and resources devoted, at EU level, to cohesion policies.

It is important to assess both the impact of these policies on target groups and regions and the synergies created with other policies at the national and Union level. This is one of the aims of the Cohesion Report, provided for in the Treaty on European Union, the first of which was published by the European Commission in November 1996. Another aim of the Report is to examine how these policies could be adapted to address the challenges which lie ahead.

The Commission considers the First Cohesion Report to be a contribution to the transparency of cohesion policies and to the ongoing dialogue with all those concerned with their future. As a unique opportunity to develop this debate, the Commission is organising a Cohesion Forum.

European Cohesion Forum

28-29-30 APRIL 1997
PALAIS DES CONGRES
Brussels

Provisional programme

OBJECTIVES OF THE FORUM

As part of the constructive dialogue with those concerned with European cohesion (EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities, economic agents and social partners, research institutes and civic groups), the Forum is intended, firstly, to examine the achievements of the cohesion policies of the EU, secondly, to consider how they might be improved in the years ahead in order to meet new challenges and thirdly, to assess the contribution of other policies of the EU and the Member States to this process.

MONDAY 28 APRIL, 1997

14.30 - 16.00 Opening session-
Cohesion policies for the 21st Century

Introductory addresses :

- Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission,
The President of the Council,
- The President of the European Parliament,
- The President of the Committee of the Regions,
- The President of the Economic and Social
Committee

**Monika Wulf-Mathies, Member of the European Commission
for Regional Policy and Cohesion**
"Cohesion on trial"

Eneko Landaburu, Director General for DG XVI
Presentation of Topics and Workshops.

16.00 - 16.15 Break

16.15 - 18.30 Topic I : Parallel workshops A to D

The priority objectives of EU cohesion policies: what has been achieved?
The EU has responded to the wide variety of problems facing the regions and different sections of society by identifying a number of priority objectives under the Structural Funds. To what extent have the policies under each objective been successful? What are the factors in the different Member States and regions which have contributed to success? How could the results be improved?

Workshop A Supporting the regions where development is lagging behind and reducing the gaps in competitiveness (Objective 1)

Workshop B Restructuring areas dependent on traditional industries in decline (Objective 2)

Workshop C Assisting Europe's human resources to achieve their full potential and to adjust to changes in the workplace (Objectives 3 and 4)

Workshop D Helping structural adjustment in Europe's rural areas or regions dependent on fisheries or suffering from the effects of low population density (Objectives 1, 5a, 5b and 6)

19.30 Reception

TUESDAY 29 APRIL, 1997

09.00 - 10.30 Plenary session: Topic I

Presentation of the conclusions of the parallel workshops A, B, C, D, followed by a debate

10.30 - 10.45 Break

10.45 - 13.00 Topic II : Parallel workshops E to H

Bridging the gaps: the contribution of EU cohesion and other policies to competitiveness and employment
EU cohesion policies seek to address the economic weaknesses of Member States and regions in situ, attempting to remove the obstacles to development created by poor or outmoded infrastructures, an uncompetitive productive base or a lack of qualified human resources. What is the specific contribution of the actions undertaken in each area? Have national and EU policies complemented one another? What changes should be made for the future?

Workshop E The role of infrastructure in regional development, including EU transport, telecommunications and energy policies.

Workshop F The role of productive investments, including EU Research and Technological Development and innovation policies

Workshop G The role of human resources

Workshop H The contribution of policies in the fields of agriculture and environment to cohesion.

13.00 - 14.30 Lunch

TUESDAY 29 APRIL 1997

- 14.30 - 16.00 **Plenary session: Topic II**
Presentation of the conclusions of the parallel workshops E, F, G, H, followed by a debate
- 16.00 - 16.15 **Break**
- 16.15 - 18.30 **Topic III : Parallel workshops I to L.**

The delivery system: the added value of EU cohesion policies

Decentralisation and partnership characterise the EU's approach to cohesion, combined with targeting of resources on the most serious problems and the weakest regions. By means of a multi-annual development strategy, human and financial resources are mobilised around the achievement of agreed development priorities. To what extent has this approach been successful? Has it contributed not just to economic development but also to the construction of a genuine "citizens' Europe" of opportunities?

- Workshop I The sharing of responsibilities (Partnership)
- Workshop J The advantages and limits of the programming approach (Programming)
- Workshop K Maximising the impact: the targeting of resources (Concentration)
- Workshop L Improving performance (Additionality, Conditionality, Monitoring, Control and Evaluation)

WEDNESDAY 30 APRIL 1997

- 09.00 - 10.30 **Plenary session: Topic III**
Presentation of the conclusions of the parallel workshops I, J, K, L followed by a debate
- 10.30 - 10.45 **Break**
- 10.45 - 12.00 **Closing session**

The lessons of the past, the way forward
Monika Wulf-Mathies, Member of the European Commission.

