

WORKSHOP - ESPOSENDE

November 14 2003

OBJECTIVES

- A – Presentation of the study results concerning the town of Esposende;
- B – Assessment of participants' awareness of the implemented or prospective policies meant to promote development.

PARTICIPANTS

Esposende Town Hall (**CME**)

Commercial and Industrial Association of the *Concelho* of Esposende (**ACICE**)

Entre o Douro e Minho Regional Agriculture Board (**DRAEDM**)

PRESENTATIONS

- A – Conceptual introduction to the debate on Rural Development Policies (15 minutes);
- B – Esposende study case- Results (:30 minutes).

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANTS' CONTRIBUTIONS

ACICE (Commercial and Industrial Association of the *Concelho* of Esposende)

After the results of Esposende economic integration were presented the technicians from ACICE reported a similar study carried out by the ACICE itself on the *concelho's* economic activity. This study also included an appraisal of the economic business transactions spatial distribution, although regarding different geographic zone analysis. It left out farm businesses and public sector analysis. At the *concelho* level, however, the results of both studies are very similar.

In order to promote development in Esposende, this association has organized several events such as street animation, food and shop window contests, as well as an annual fair, the ExpoSende. These projects are strongly directed at the small commerce in an attempt to take advantage of the public financial resources made available by the Economic Operations Program within the Third EU Support Framework (III QCA). The

strategic intention underlying these projects is obviously the integration of urbanism in commerce through the creation of a commercial area within the urban centre (by, for instances, covering pedestrian streets as it has already been done in another Portuguese city (Coimbra). The idea is clearly to attract and concentrate people in the *concelho* by creating the conditions in the town of Esposende for a high quality commerce (through franchising) and tourism and leaving for the remaining *freguesias* the commerce of low order goods or basic necessity ones. Esposende possesses outstanding conditions for tourism. Therefore, it is important that entrepreneurial associations show their dynamism.

DRAEDM

The responsible for Esposende Agrarian Zone corroborated the study's results concerning farm businesses, namely the weight countries such as Spain and England have on these businesses' economic transactions as in the case of horticultures. The *concelho's* aptitude and productive orientation to this type of products are already relevant but they may become more profitable and competitive if UE regulations regarding control and quality criteria are strictly observed. Along with the many young farmers which are starting big horticulture greenhouses in the *concelho*, with good prospects of increasing the farm business profitability, there is also the obligation to register the fertilization and watering intervals which points to farmers' growing concern about the quality of their products.

CME – Councillor Victor Leite

The town hall representative spoke to stress the importance of the horticulture market in the *concelho* of Esposende made even more significant due to the existence of a natural reserve, with all its possible implications at the products' quality level.

He also addressed the question of the *concelho's* seasonal variations, and the economic constraints it entails for the business fabric, namely the retail commerce. Nevertheless, this is a problem which has been being dealt with through a whole range of investments. Starting with the opening of the IC1 leading directly to Porto and the building of an important residential complex, which allowed people to live in Esposende and commute to Porto everyday. In order to attract new business firms, the infra-structures for an industrial perimeter were built which proved to be a sensible measure since the number of firms in the *concelho* has drastically increased in recent years. Finally, the city hall

favoured the consolidation of sewage disposal infra-structures and the water supply system all over the *concelho* while re-urbanizing the intervened zones (all these works have been possible thanks to EU funds). The urban landscape has also been improved, especially as far as shops are concerned, with the help of URBCOM and PROCOM Programmes.

The debate ended with all the representatives of the above mentioned institutions agreeing that the real development motor of this *concelho* is the tourism, not only summer tourism but a permanent one, throughout the year, using fully and rationally the many resources Esposend has to offer (the river, nature, the hotels and food and catering).