

Interview with António Vitorino: the use of Community funds in Portugal (Lisbon, 24 October 2007)

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[Miriam Mateus] And, although it's been positive, do you think that Portugal has made the best use of all the aid that it has received?

[António Vitorino] I think that the balance of the application of Community funds is positive, with particular regard to investment in the physical infrastructure that drives economic development and in the qualifications of the Portuguese people. More could have been done in some areas, particularly the latter, in connection with qualifications, both in terms of the education system and in vocational training. Has there been any waste? Some situations always involve waste, although I consider them to be marginal. Some types of multipurpose sports or urban infrastructure financed by the Structural Funds have had no direct impact on the economic development of the country and constituted, without doubt, less productive financial appropriations for Portuguese development. But I think that we also have to learn from our own mistakes, and I hope that the next financial support framework, 2007–2013, will allow those errors to be corrected and the funds to be applied to qualifications, research, development, competitiveness and improvements in the productivity of Portuguese enterprises, so that Portugal is better prepared for the future.