OECD LEED CONFERENCE ON AREA-BASED RESPONSES TO INDUSTRIAL RESTRUCTURING IN AUSTRIA

Vienna, 30th November 1994

Area-Based Responses to Industrial Restructuring in Austria, the first in a new series of OECD-LEED Country Studies of local and regional development policies, will be presented at an international ministerial conference in Vienna on 30th November. The conference will be addressed by Mr. Viktor Klima, Austrian Minister of Public Economy and Transport and Mr. Josef Hesoun, Austrian Minister of Labour and Social Affairs.

Other speakers include Mr. Chris Brooks, Head of the OECD’s Territorial Development Service and Mr. John Morley, Head of the European Union (EU) Task Force on Employment. The report will be introduced by Mr. Alvaro Espina, former Spanish Secretary of State for Industry and Mr. Michael J. Piore, Professor of Industrial Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who jointly led the OECD expert study group that produced the report.

Journalists are invited to a press conference at the Palais Ferstel, Strauchgasse 4, Vienna, at 12.30 p.m.

The Vienna conference will focus on key issues raised by the report, such as:

-- the policy adjustments necessary to adapt traditional Austrian structures to deal with a more intrusive and competitive global economy, accession to the EU and the opening of Austria’s Eastern borders;

-- new ways of delivering policy more practically and responsively to the local and regional level;

-- the need for greater vertical and horizontal coordination among government ministries and between the central and regional/local levels -- and how the role and responsibility of each of these actors for local and regional development as well as job creation should be reassessed;

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-- the critical role of the EU in promoting regional development and empowering local actors, as well as in using the structural funds.

The LEED study concentrates on the role of regional and local policy in areas undergoing drastic industrial restructuring, and many of the issues raised are relevant for the Central and Eastern European countries in transition. The conference, therefore, includes a full session on the implications of the Austrian experience for policymaking in former centrally planned economies, with presentations by high-ranking government officials from the Czech and Slovak Republics, Poland and Hungary.

The conference will be held at the Palais Fersterl, Strauchgasse 4, Vienna on 30th November 1994 (9.30 a.m./5.30 p.m.). Journalists wishing to have a copy of the report or an executive summary in German should contact: Martin Forst, LEED Programme, OECD, 2 rue André Pascal, 75775 Paris cedex 16 (tel. 33 1 45 24 91 70 - Fax. 33 1 45 24 85 63) or Melinda Roberts, ÖBS-Unternehmensberatung, Neubaugasse 31/1/10, A-1070 Vienna (tel. 43 1 523 15 38).

* LEED Programme: Co-operative Action Programme on Local Economic and Employment Development.