

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT THINK TANK – TOPICAL DIGEST

October 2018

Organised by the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions on 8-11 October 2018, this year's [European Week of Regions and Cities](#) (EWRC) will focus on ensuring a strong EU Cohesion Policy beyond 2020. Bringing together local and regional representatives, beneficiaries of EU policies and EU institutions for four days of workshops and debate, the EWRC has evolved to become the world's largest regional development event. With negotiations well under way on the future of cohesion policy post 2020, this year's event comes at a crucial stage of the policy cycle, providing Europe's regions and cities with a key platform for sharing their ideas on the shape of EU cohesion policy beyond 2020, including the legislative proposals under the new multiannual financial framework. Along with the future of cohesion policy, the event's thematic priorities also cover territorial development, education, culture and youth. This Topical Digest contains a selection of briefings by the European Parliament on regional and cohesion policy.

[2021-2027 multiannual financial framework and new own resources: Analysis of the Commission's proposal](#)

In-depth analysis by Matthew Parry and Magdalena Sapata, European Parliamentary Research Service, July 2018

The process of negotiating a new seven-year financial plan for the EU has now begun formally with the Commission's publication of proposals for a 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), and for a new system of own resources providing the revenue to pay for it. This analysis presents the proposed new MFF and own resources, and compares them to the status quo, as well as to the European Parliament's priorities as expressed in plenary resolutions adopted in spring 2018.

[Common Provisions Regulation](#)

'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Vasilis Margaras, European Parliamentary Research Service, August 2018

For the next EU budget, covering the 2021-2027 period, the European Commission has proposed to update EU cohesion policy with a new set of rules. The May 2018 proposal for a Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) sets out common provisions for seven shared-management funds: the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund+, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, the Asylum and Migration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Border Management and Visa Instrument. Additional specific regulations add certain provisions needed to cater for the particularities of individual funds, in order to take into account their different rationales, target groups and implementation methods.

[European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund](#)

'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Agnieszka Widuto, European Parliamentary Research Service, July 2018

The new single regulation on the ERDF and CF (previously covered by two separate regulations) identifies the specific objectives and scope of support for both funds, including non-eligible activities. In line with evidence regarding impact, investments will focus on activities with the highest added value, such as support for SMEs, smart specialisation, the low carbon economy, sustainable urban development and regional cooperation. The ERDF will focus mainly on smart growth and the green economy, and the CF on environmental and transport infrastructure. A special approach is adopted for territories such as urban areas and outermost regions. The indicator framework for monitoring progress will include new common results indicators.

[European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 2021-2027](#)

'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Frederik Scholaert, European Parliamentary Research Service, September 2018

As part of the next EU budget framework for the 2021-2027 period, the European Commission published its proposal for a regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) on 12 June 2018. The new fund will continue to support the EU common fisheries policy and the Union's maritime policy. The proposal aims to simplify the delivery of the fund compared to the complex legal framework in use for the current EMFF. It therefore sets out a more flexible architecture: this would allow Member States to use the funds where they see the greatest need, instead of being bound to a list of pre-defined measures and eligibility rules. Small-scale coastal fisheries and outermost regions would receive more preferential treatment.

[European territorial cooperation goal \(Interreg\) 2021-2027](#)

'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Vivienne Halleux, European Parliamentary Research Service, September 2018

Financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), European territorial cooperation is the European Union's key instrument for supporting cooperation between partners across borders. On 29 May 2018, the European Commission published legislative proposals aimed at defining the architecture of cohesion policy post-2020, one of which concerns the next generation of European territorial cooperation (ETC) programmes, better known as 'Interreg'. The main novelties include a restructuring of cooperation strands; a tool to help actors involved in smart specialisation strategies to cluster together; a single set of rules for territorial cooperation within and beyond EU borders; additional policy objectives; and lower resources and co-financing rates for European Territorial Cooperation.

[Mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context](#)

'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Christiaan van Lierop, European Parliamentary Research Service, July 2018

Often isolated, and with generally poorer access to public services, the EU's border regions face a unique set of challenges. This has been recognised under Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which provides that particular attention should be paid to cross-border regions when developing action to strengthen the EU's economic, social and territorial cohesion. Yet while the EU has provided significant support over the years, particularly within the framework of European territorial cooperation, helping to strengthen connectivity and create new growth and jobs, numerous obstacles continue to hamper cross-border cooperation.

[Creative Europe programme](#)

'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Magdalena Pasikowska-Schnass, European Parliamentary Research Service, October 2018

While the creative and cultural sector is the EU's third largest employer after the construction, and food and beverages sectors, cultural and audiovisual activities and operators face many challenges and barriers, such as the digital shift, language barriers and market fragmentation. To help operators address these issues, the Creative Europe programme was launched as a support programme for the cultural sector and its operators for the 2014-2020 period. The European Commission has decided to continue the Creative Europe Programme as a self-standing programme post 2020, increasing its budget by 17 %, and placing funds to support cultural and creative activities and enterprises exclusively under the Cohesion and Values heading in the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027.

[Connecting Europe Facility](#)

'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing by Marketa Pape, European Parliamentary Research Service, October 2018

The European Union needs strong, modern, and reliable infrastructure to secure jobs, growth and competitiveness. With this aim, it supports the development of high-performing, sustainable and interconnected trans-European networks in the area of transport, energy and digital infrastructure. In 2013, the trans-European networks policy was consolidated and the Connecting Europe Facility set up as a dedicated financing instrument to channel EU funding into infrastructure networks, help eliminate market failures and attract further investments from the public and private sectors. Following a mid-term evaluation, which confirmed the programme's capacity to bring significant EU added value, the European Commission proposes to renew the programme under the next EU budget.

[Regional governance in the EU](#)

Briefing by Agnieszka Widuto, European Parliamentary Research Service, September 2018

Regional governance refers to rules, procedures and practices used by institutions at the regional level. The quality of institutions has an important impact on social and economic development at regional level. A variety of parameters may be used to assess the quality of institutions, including indicators on government effectiveness, rule of law or control of corruption. The 2017 European Quality of Government Index (EQI), which measures institutional quality at the regional level in the EU, reveals that while institutional quality still varies across EU regions, the traditional North-South and East-West divisions seem to be slowly blurring.

[Harnessing the potential of the Urban Agenda for the EU](#)

Briefing by Christiaan van Lierop, European Parliamentary Research Service, June 2018

Our towns and cities are home to nearly three quarters of the EU's population, and most EU policies concern them, be it directly or indirectly. While the revised 2014-2020 cohesion policy framework introduced a number of new instruments intended to enhance the urban dimension of cohesion funding, a shared vision of urban development has gradually taken shape at intergovernmental level, accompanied by increasing calls to give city authorities and stakeholders a greater say in policy-making.

The regions in the Digital Single Market

Briefing by Vasilis Margaras, European Parliamentary Research Service, April 2018

The digital economy is growing at seven times the rate of the rest of the economy. The European Commission estimates that completing a digital single market could contribute €415 billion per year to Europe's economy, create 3.8 million jobs and transform public services. The Digital Agenda for Europe, announced in 2010 in the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy, aimed at promoting economic recovery and improving social inclusion through a more digitally proficient Europe, complemented by the Digital Single Market strategy, introduced in 2015. Achieving a digital single market will ensure that Europe maintains its position as a world leader in the digital economy, helping European companies to grow globally.

Cities: Front line of climate action

Briefing by Vivienne Halleux, European Parliamentary Research Service, February 2018

Cities have a crucial role to play in addressing the climate change challenge, and delivering on the ambitions of the Paris Agreement. In the European Union, where nearly three quarters of the population live in urban areas, many cities are leading the way in this regard, taking action in three areas central to increasing energy efficiency and reducing emissions – namely, buildings, energy supply, and transport – and acting as living laboratories of climate-change-related innovation. The EU supports cities in their efforts through providing guidance, promoting experience- and knowledge-sharing, fostering cooperation, and funding climate action.

Outermost regions of the EU: A stronger and renewed partnership

Briefing by Christiaan van Lierop, European Parliamentary Research Service, January 2018

The EU's outermost regions qualify for special treatment owing to structural difficulties, such as remoteness, difficult topography or economic dependence on a few products, which can severely hamper their development. Specific support mechanisms exist under cohesion, agricultural and fisheries policies, with the Commission outlining measures aimed at assisting outermost regions in its communications published in 2004, 2008, and 2012. With the outermost regions continuing to face numerous challenges in areas such as mobility, unemployment and climate change, discussions were launched on the formulation of a new strategy, published in October 2017. The shape of the EU's legislative and financial proposals post 2020 will be of crucial importance for the successful delivery of the strategy.

Measuring social progress in EU regions

Briefing by Agnieszka Widuto, European Parliamentary Research Service, September 2018

The social dimension has long been present on the European Union agenda. Recently, it has gained greater significance, particularly in contexts such as the EU governance framework (European Semester), and economic and monetary union, as well as the reflection process on the EU's future. Initiatives to measure the social situation and the social impact of EU policies have produced a number of indicators complementing the assessment of economic performance, helping to present a more comprehensive picture of the state of European societies. The EU regional Social Progress Index provides an overview of aspects including health, access to education, environmental quality, housing, personal rights and inclusion. The 2016 findings give a mixed picture of social progress across EU regions.

New technologies and regional policy: Towards the next cohesion policy framework

Study by the Scientific Foresight Unit (STOA), European Parliamentary Research Service, July 2018

This study aims at highlighting the importance of the territorial dimension and structures for economic growth at European level. It focuses on the role and potential of the existing cohesion policy funding in planning and implementing ICT infrastructure in the regions, and in accompanying efforts to digitalise the European economy and society. In the same context, the study also highlights the role and potential of cohesion policy funding in planning and implementing integrated science and technology parks. The policy options listed in this document focus on the direction of cohesion policy after 2020, on priorities, and on ways for policy implementation to enhance regional economic strengths and, eventually, to build confidence in the EU's added value.

Research for REGI Committee – Conditionalities in Cohesion Policy

Study by European Parliament's Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, September 2018

This study discusses the Commission's proposals for 2021-2027, in the light of the prior experience of conditionalities in cohesion policy. Noting that the 2021-2027 proposals consolidate and further expand the use of conditionalities in cohesion policy, the study considers that the four horizontal and 16 thematic enabling conditions streamline and significantly improve the legal framework of 2014-2020 ex-ante conditionalities. On the topic of the proposed new rule of law conditionality, the study finds that this conditionality may help the EU to safeguard EU financial resources

from unwarranted waste and ensure compliance with EU rule of law principles on a number of occasions, yet concludes that the proposal needs to be significantly revisited to translate into an effective rule of law conditionality.

Further reading:

[Guide to EU Funding](#)

Guide to EU Funding 2014-2020 by Vasilis Margaras, European Parliamentary Research Service, February 2017

[European Parliament: Facts and Figures](#)

Briefing by Giulio Sabbati, European Parliamentary Research Service, April 2018

[European Regional Development Fund, Cohesion Fund, a cross-border mechanism and Interreg](#)

Initial appraisal of impact assessment by Esther Kramer, European Parliamentary Research Service, September 2018

[Research for REGI Committee – Digital agenda and cohesion policy](#)

Study by European Parliament's Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, June 2018

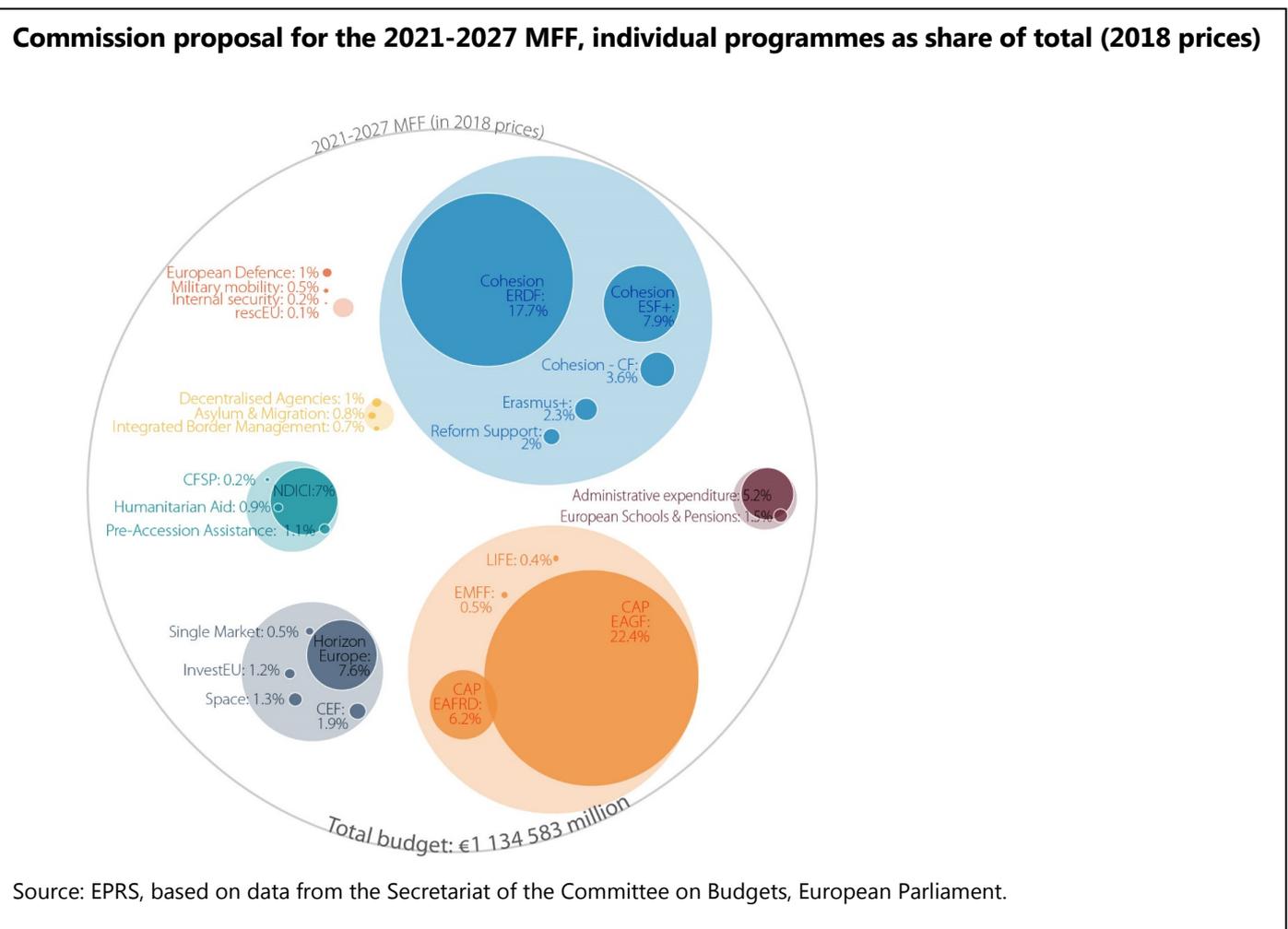
[Research for REGI Committee – Control and Simplification of Procedures within European Structural and Investment Funds \(ESIF\)](#)

Study by European Parliament's Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies, April 2018

[Digital tourism in the European Union](#)

Briefing by Maria Niestadt, European Parliamentary Research Service, September 2018

More in the [Graphics Warehouse](#)



You can access this Topical Digest at http://www.europarl.europa.eu/EPRS/TD_EWRC_2018.pdf & <https://wp.me/p2qdgs-8KO>.
or by scanning the QR code:

