

Structural reform support programme 2017-2020

The European Parliament is due to vote on the Commission proposal for a structural reform support programme offering Member States technical help in designing and implementing growth-enhancing structural reforms. The proposed budget of €142.8 million is to be redirected from the technical assistance resources available under the European Structural and Investment Funds.

Background

Structural reforms were identified as a priority area in the European Commission's 2016 [Annual Growth Survey](#). Currently, comprehensive and tailor-made support for reforms is available mainly for Member States with temporary budgetary difficulties or under economic adjustment and financial assistance programmes. The proposed initiative builds on the expertise gathered in connection with technical assistance for reforms in Greece and Cyprus, with the aim of extending support to all Member States and a broad range of policy areas. According to the Commission's ex-ante [evaluation](#), reforms undertaken simultaneously across countries and policy areas can bring positive spill-over effects due to the strong interconnection between Member States' economies.

Details of the programme

The [proposal](#) for a regulation was presented as part of the November 2015 [European Semester](#) package. The Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) aims to improve administrative and institutional capacity, in order to facilitate better implementation of EU law, in particular the country-specific recommendations, ensure a more efficient use of EU funds, and promote [structural reform](#). The SRSP would provide technical support to authorities in areas such as public financial management, business environment, labour markets, cohesion, education and training, social security systems, migration and agriculture. Eligible actions could include workshops, expert advice, working visits, training, data collection, research and communication activities. Support would be provided on a voluntary basis and on a Member State's request. It would be organised by the Commission's Structural Reform Support Service and run until 2020. The proposed financing of the programme from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) requires amendments to the current Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 establishing the common provisions for all ESI Funds and to Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 on the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

European Parliament

The Regional Development Committee (REGI) discussed the proposal on the basis of the draft report of co-rapporteurs, Lambert van Nistelrooij (EPP, the Netherlands) and Constanze Krehl (S&D, Germany). On 29 November 2016, it adopted its [report](#) by 29 votes to 11. A provisional [agreement](#) with the Council was subsequently reached in the course of interinstitutional negotiations, and approved in committee on 28 February 2017. The agreement takes into account many of the points raised in the REGI report and in the opinions of other committees, including the associated Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) Committee. It adds cohesion to the objectives of the programme and areas eligible for support, and extends the definition of eligible national authorities to include regional and local levels. It also ensures scrutiny and transparency, whereby the Parliament and the Council would be provided with 'cooperation and support plans' detailing each request and support measure, as well as with annual work plans and monitoring reports. The proposed version of the regulation also states that the funding source should not constitute a precedent for the future.

First reading ([2015/0263\(COD\)](#)). Co-rapporteurs: Lambert van Nistelrooij (EPP, the Netherlands) and Constanze Krehl (S&D, Germany). See also the EPRS 'EU Legislation in Progress' briefing, [Structural reform support programme 2017-2020](#).

