European Parliament

The European Structural and Investment Funds

In a nutshell

Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, known as the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), aims to ensure smooth and consistent implementation of the five European Structural and Investment Funds: the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. The principles and rules included in this Regulation cover more than 41% of planned EU spending in 2014-20.

EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) heading and policy area

Heading 1b (Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion)

Heading 2 (Sustainable Growth: Natural Resources) – Rural development; fisheries

2014-20 financial envelope for the funds falling under the CPR (in current prices and as % of total MFF)

Allocations: €453 180.6 million (41.86%)[1]

2014-20 individual funds (in current prices)[2]

European Regional Development Fund: €187 430.1 million
European Social Fund (including part for the Youth Employment Initiative): €86 412.3 million
Cohesion Fund: €63 399.7 million
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF): €5 749.3 million
European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD): €95 577 million
Additional allocation for the Youth Employment Initiative: €3 211.2 million

Methods of implementation

Shared management (the European Commission and the Member States)

In this briefing:

- EU role in the policy area: legal basis
- Rules and instruments for implementation
- State of play of implementation
- Assessment system
- Other EU programmes and action in the same field
- Role of the EP

EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service
Author: Magdalena Sapała
Members' Research Service
PE 565.873

EN

EU role in the policy area: legal basis

The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) are the Union's means of reducing disparities between the levels of development of its various regions, and of helping less developed regions to catch up. Based on Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), they contribute to the goal of strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion. EU action in this field dates back to the 1960s. The rules governing how the Funds are spent, and the procedure for agreeing the rules, have evolved over time.

Since the Lisbon Treaty entered into force, the general and specific rules applicable to the ESI Funds have been defined by the European Parliament and the Council, acting by means of regulations in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure (Articles 177-178 TFEU). The latest revision of the rules was part of an interinstitutional legislative effort related to the negotiation of the 2014-20 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). As a result, at the end of 2013, a legislative package laying down the management and implementation rules for the ESI Funds was adopted, including the overarching Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, known as the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR).[3]

Structure of the CPR

Part One of the CPR, 'Subject Matter and Definitions', explains the structure and defines the most important concepts. Part Two, 'Common Provisions Applicable to the ESI Funds', is the longest and lays down rules essential to the smooth implementation of all five funds. The rules are further detailed in Part Three, 'General Provisions Applicable to the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund', which is, as indicated by the title, applicable to the three funds (referred to as 'the Funds'). Part Four, 'General provisions applicable to the Funds and the EMFF', focuses on financial management and auditing and covers the Funds and the Fisheries Fund, but does not apply to the Rural Development Fund. Part Five, 'Delegations of power, implementing transitional and final provisions', mainly deals with the adoption of delegated and implementing acts. The CPR is complemented by an annex that includes, for example, the Common Strategic Framework and a list of ex-ante conditionalities.

According to Article 1 of the CPR, during the 2014-20 financial programming period the EU should undertake actions through five funds, collectively referred to as the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds), to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion (figure 1).

Figure 1 – The European Structural and Investment Funds

In contrast with previous years, in the 2014-20 period the EMFF and EAFRD are included in the category of measures contributing to the overall goal of economic, social and territorial cohesion. Therefore, the scope of the ESI Funds is broader than just cohesion and social policy; they also cover rural development as well as the maritime and fisheries sectors. All these areas are shared competences of the EU and the Member States (Article 4 TFEU), and the ESI Funds are implemented within the framework of shared management (Article 59 of the Financial Regulation). Both parties are thus involved at all stages of implementation and have a responsibility to ensure sound organisational and financial management of the ESI Funds.

The CPR is complemented by detailed, fund-specific regulations and acts. It covers all stages of the policy implementation process and aims to ensure consistent implementation of the five ESI Funds across different EU policies and management levels (EU, national, regional and local). It defines priorities, tasks, implementation procedures, and monitoring and evaluation methods. The CPR also sets out guidelines on coordinating and achieving synergies between the ESI Funds and other EU instruments.

Main rules and instruments for implementing the ESI Funds

Rules applicable to the ESI Funds

Adoption of the CPR opened the way for implementation of a reformed cohesion policy, one which is result-oriented, based on a strategic and integrated approach, and focused on selected priorities with a clear link to the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy: smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Moreover, EU cohesion policy is to be implemented in accordance with the general principles of partnership and multi-level governance; equality and non-discrimination; and sustainable development (Articles 4-8).

One of the most important expressions of the new approach to cohesion policy is the focus on a list of 11 thematic objectives to which the ESI Funds should contribute.

Thematic objectives (Article 9)

1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation.
2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies (ICT).
3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, of the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and of the fishery and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF).
4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors.
5. Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management.
6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency.
7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructure.
8. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility.
9. Promoting social inclusion, and combating poverty and all forms of discrimination.
10. Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.
11. Enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration.

The fund-specific regulations set investment priorities in line with these thematic objectives, as well as specifying the minimum share of resources to be invested in each objective at national level. This allows investments in the Member States to be closely aligned with the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy, thereby promoting social, economic and territorial cohesion.

Figure 2 – Hierarchy of strategic and programming documents

Implementation of the ESI Funds must comply strictly with the strategic documents prepared during the programming phase by authorities at EU, national and regional level. These include a Common Strategic Framework (Articles 10-12 and Annex I), a Partnership Agreement (Article 14-17) and operational programmes (Articles 26-30). As illustrated in figure 2, the programming documents are interrelated and should refer to the overriding goals of the Europe 2020 strategy.

The **Partnership Agreement (Article 14-17)** is a new planning and strategic document introduced by the CPR. It is required at the beginning of the programming phase and provides the basis on which ESI Funds are used in a given Member State. The Partnership Agreement translates the thematic objectives and guidelines set out by the European Commission in the Common Strategic Framework into the national and regional context. It provides details on institutional and governance arrangements and at the same time refers to the National Reform Programme and the Council's country-specific recommendations. It expresses the Member State's commitment to using EU financial assistance in an efficient and effective way in pursuit of Union and national goals. Furthermore, it facilitates multi-fund coordination of different actions under an overarching agreement between the Commission and each Member State. The document is meant to be prepared in cooperation with partners in accordance with a multi-level approach to governance, and in dialogue with the Commission.

The preparation of the Partnership Agreements for the 2014-20 period began in 2012. Within a few months of the CPR coming into force, all the Member States had submitted their proposals to the European Commission. Following necessary adjustments, each agreement was approved and signed by the Commission and the respective Member State.[4]

On the basis of the Partnership Agreements, the Member States and the regions draw up operational programmes, which set out detailed strategy and arrangements for implementation of the ESI Funds, including types of projects to be supported.

In an effort to improve the effectiveness of the ESI Funds, the CPR recommends that Member States adopt innovative approaches to implementation, such as these two, which are designed to enhance territorial development:

- community-led local development, a way of using the ESI Funds (except the Cohesion Fund) to deliver local development strategies (Articles 32-35); and
- integrated territorial investments, which are designed to combine all the ESI Funds to deliver a cross-sectoral strategy for a specific area, such as an urban area (Article 36).

In other words, the two methods help to better target projects at territorial, i.e. local and regional, needs. They also help to align spending with the thematic objectives, and in turn with the Europe 2020 goals. Both methods are optional and, as initial data on the programming documents show, will not be applied by all Member States.[5]

In line with a general drive to maximise the impact of the ESI Funds and to squeeze the most value out of every euro, the CPR significantly extended the scope for using the ESI Funds to support innovative financial instruments. On the basis of the new rules the Member States have more opportunities and greater flexibility to finance the projects, by way of loans, guarantees, equity and other risk-bearing instruments, with contributions from the ESI Funds (Articles 37-46, Annex IV, V). This does not replace non-refundable grants, but provides an important means of leveraging the EU budget.

The CPR introduced a controversial tool for disciplining the Member States: macroeconomic conditionality. It makes payments from the ESI Funds conditional on Member States' compliance with the rules of sound economic governance (Recitals 24-26, Article 23 and Annex III). In the 2007-13 period a similar mechanism was provided for in the Cohesion Fund and linked with the excessive deficit procedure

(Article 4 of Regulation (EC) 1084/2006). It was applied only once, when the Council decided to suspend some of the commitments from the Cohesion Fund allocated to Hungary.

On the other hand, the CPR also allows Member States going through temporary budgetary difficulties to apply for an increase in interim payments (Article 24), subject to certain conditions. This measure provides a degree of flexibility to the ESI Funds and can be crucial for a Member State that does not have the budgetary capacity to co-finance projects. The application of this principle will be revised after June 2016.

Measures linked to sound economic governance based on Article 23 (macroeconomic conditionality)[6]

As part of a general effort to improve the effectiveness of cohesion policy, Article 23 of the CPR provides that:

a) the Commission may ask a Member State to review its Partnership Agreement and re-programme part of its funding where it is necessary to support the implementation of Council Recommendations, or to improve the impact of the ESI Funds on growth and competitiveness (Article 23(1-8)); and

b) the Commission is obliged to propose a partial or full suspension of the ESI Funds (commitments or payments) when a Member State fails to take effective action to correct its excessive deficit in the context of economic governance procedures (Article 23(9-11)).

Macroeconomic conditionality was the most controversial and most hotly debated element of the legislative proposal. On the one hand the Commission argued that the mechanism was essential to ensure that the effective use of the ESI Funds was not undermined by unsound macroeconomic policies.[7] On the other hand, the Parliament flatly opposed the idea, arguing that it 'would penalise regions and social groups already weakened by the crisis' and that 'local and regional authorities should not be punished for difficulties encountered at Member State level'. Moreover, the EP stressed that 'a punitive approach of this kind might not be understood by the public and could add to public distrust'.[8] The intention of the majority in the EP was to delete the provision from the Regulation, or at least to significantly amend it to ensure that it was applied in a fair and balanced manner.

The EP eventually accepted the measures, after introducing amendments guaranteeing that it would be informed in detail about any planned measures and would be able to scrutinise all decision-making procedures leading to the suspension of funds. Furthermore, the EP managed to introduce an amendment ensuring that the suspension of funds would be adjusted in line with the social and economic circumstances of the Member State concerned.[9]

The debate on the issue is not over. The REGI Committee is currently drafting an own-initiative report on the European Commission's guidelines for implementation of Article 23.

Rules applicable to the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund (the Funds)

Part III of the CPR lays down rules specific to the implementation of the Funds, such as the criteria for delimiting regions eligible for support, and co-financing rates. First, it states that the Funds should support two main goals (Article 89):

- investment for growth and jobs in Member States and regions (financed by the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund); and
- European territorial cooperation (financed by the ERDF).

Second, the CPR determines that on the basis of data from the years 2007-09, NUTS level 2 regions[10] may fall under one of the following categories eligible for support from the ERDF and ESF (Article 90):

- **Less-developed regions**, with GDP per capita of less than 75% of the EU27 average;
- **Transition regions**, with GDP per capita of between 75 and 90% of the EU27 average;
- **More developed regions**, with GDP per capita of more than 90% of the EU27 average.

The Cohesion Fund, in turn, is meant to support Member States with a GNI per capita of less than 90% of the EU average (reference period 2008-10).

Third, the CPR determines the amount of resources allocated in the 2014-20 period to the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund, and the amounts allocated to achieving each of the two goals as well as in each category of regions. According to the CPR provisions, the resources are non-transferable between categories of regions, and according to the additionality principle they must not be used to replace public or equivalent structural expenditure by a Member State (Articles 91-95, Annex VI-X). In this context it is worth mentioning that the rules for the current programming period, unlike the provisions for the 2007-13 period, provide for the possibility to finance the operational programmes jointly from different funds. In other words, in the 2014-20 financial programming period, the CPR allows what is known as a multi-funding approach (Article 98).

Furthermore, the Regulation sets out the maximum co-financing rates for different types of regions. Several indicators have to be taken into account when calculating the allocation for particular regions. For instance, the co-financing rate for the priority axis in less developed regions of Member States whose GDP per capita for 2007-09 was below 85% of the EU27 average must not exceed 85% (Article 120); the co-financing rate for the priority axis in less developed regions of Member States whose GDP for 2007-13 was between 75% of the EU25 average and 75% of the EU27 average must not exceed 80%.

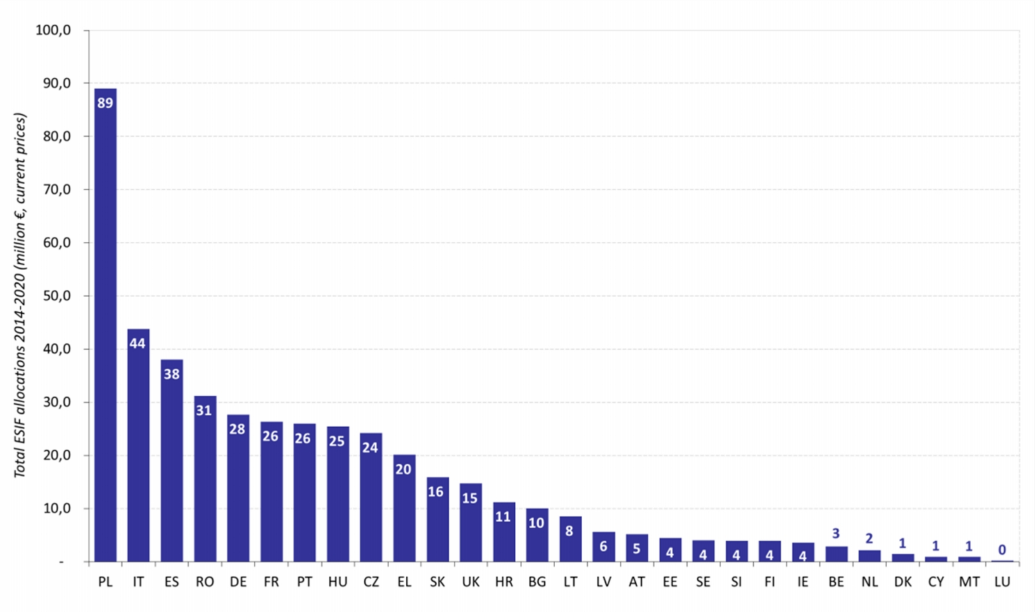
New criteria for determining the borders of regions eligible for support from the Funds triggered significant shifts in the distribution of support in comparison with the 2007-13 programming period. For instance:[11]

- Less-developed regions cover a smaller population than the previous category of convergence regions.
- Some regions, including the capital cities of Poland, Romania and Slovenia, lost their less-developed status.
- Nevertheless, less-developed regions continue to receive the greatest share of the structural funds (€182.2 billion in 2014-20), and remain concentrated in eastern and central Europe.[12]
- The population contained by transition regions increased, with most of them located in Germany, France, Spain and the United Kingdom.
- Croatia as a whole falls under the category of less-developed regions and qualifies for the Cohesion Fund.
- All the remaining regions fall under the category of more developed regions.
- Cyprus is no longer eligible for the Cohesion Fund, but it will continue to be supported on a transitional basis.

In addition, it should be noted that the CPR earmarked €3 billion of the ESF for measures under the Youth Employment Initiative (Article 91), while €10 billion of the Cohesion Fund is to be set aside for use as part of the Connecting Europe Facility (Article 92(6)).

On the basis of these complex eligibility criteria and co-financing rates, a total ESI Funds allocation per Member State is calculated and a list of eligible regions for funding is set out. Chart 1 presents the preliminary allocation of the ESI Funds per Member State.

Chart 1 – The 2014-20 ESI Funds allocation, by Member State[13]



Source: European Commission.

State of play of implementation

The late agreement on the 2014-20 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) resulted in late adoption of the rules governing the ESI Funds.[14] This in turn delayed the drawing up of national programmes and implementation of the projects. As a result, the budget allocation for the year 2014 could not be spent. Part of the allocation could be carried over to 2015, but a very significant part had to be transferred to subsequent years by means of a revision of the MFF in accordance with Article 19 of the MFF Regulation. Up to the end of May 2015, Member States received pre-financing totalling €7.4 billion.

Despite the delay, all the Partnership Agreements between the Commission and the Member States were signed before the deadlines set in the provisions. Further, according to Commission data, by the end of March 2015, 66% of the operational programmes under Heading 1b (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund) and 22% of those under Heading 2 (EAFRD and EMFF) were adopted. All the remaining programmes are expected to be adopted by the end of 2015.[15]

As we are only at the beginning of the implementation of the ESI Funds based on the CPR, it is still too early to tell whether the new rules will have the expected results and whether the system works smoothly. However, some preliminary conclusions related to the preparation of the new generation of strategic documents, the challenge of strategic coherence, and administrative capacity have been drawn up and presented in studies requested by the European Parliament. By and large, the new regulatory framework included in the CPR has improved strategic coherence and the quality of programming of cohesion policy. Clearly, the policy is aligned better with the Europe 2020 objectives, the thematic concentration on the programming stage has been achieved, and the management of the funds is more consistent. Furthermore, there has been greater coordination and a stronger partnership with the relevant stakeholders.[16]

Assessment system envisaged in the CPR

As part of a broader effort to improve the effectiveness of the ESI Funds, the CPR addresses extensively the issues of ex-ante conditionality, interim and ex-post performance assessment. A number of conditions have to be fulfilled before the funds are disbursed to a Member State (Article 19, Annex XI). Ex-ante conditions include, for example, underpinning legal acts, the administrative capacity to manage the funds, and a smart specialisation strategy. Moreover, the Regulation established a special performance framework that will be used to carry out the interim and ex-post performance reviews in 2019 and 2023, and with which the Member States must comply. Furthermore, the Member States must put aside six per cent of their national allocation from the ESI Funds under the Investment for Growth and Jobs goal as a special performance reserve. On the basis of the results measured under the performance framework and following a decision by the Commission, this is to be allocated to the programmes that have proven successful (Articles 20-21, Annex II).[17] In contrast, where there is evidence of serious implementation weaknesses, the Commission is able to suspend interim payments (Article 22). Finally, the ex-post evaluations should be carried out by the end of 2024, either by the Commission or by Member States in close cooperation with the Commission, and these should assess whether the ESI Funds have been used effectively and efficiently (Article 57).

The new assessment rules were designed to address the problems uncovered during the annual budgetary discharge procedures, including in reports of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) and in EP resolutions. The Court's annual reports show that the parts of the EU budget spent on cohesion, rural development and fisheries are among the most error-prone areas of EU spending. For many years the primary sources of problems have been breaches of EU or national public procurement rules and the risk that specific expenditure and projects may not be eligible for EU subsidies. Furthermore, the ECA points out that the management system of the funds has incentivised a high level of expenditure ('use it or lose it') rather than achieving results, and that assessment has focused too much on whether procedures have been correctly followed.[18] The European Parliament has expressed similar concerns in subsequent EU budget discharge procedures.

The CPR requires the results of audits and evaluations to be submitted in the form of reports. These are an important tool for tracking achievements and identifying problems. For instance, the Member States have to present annual implementation reports (Article 50) and progress reports on the implementation of the Partnership Agreement in 2017 and 2019 (Article 52). Moreover, special annual review meetings must be held between the Commission and each Member State to examine the performance of each programme (Article 51). Additionally, starting from 2016 the Commission should present to the EP, the Council, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee a summary of the national annual implementation reports (Article 53). The Commission must also include a section on the ESI Funds in its Annual Progress Report, and under Article 175 TFEU, every three years the Commission presents the Cohesion Report on progress made towards achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion.

One of the first official reviews of the current programming period is scheduled for the end of 2015, when the Commission will submit a report on the outcome of negotiations on the Partnership Agreements and operational programmes (Article 16(3)).

Additional programmes: coordination

The CPR was designed to improve coordination and synergies between the different ESI Funds, and between the ESI Funds and other EU financial programmes. This is supposed to be achieved, first, by means of common provisions covering both the structural funds and Cohesion Fund and the rural development and fisheries funds, and, second, by means of special guidelines included in the Common Strategic Framework (CSF). The latter is included in Annex I to the Regulation and lays down the principles for consistent use of different forms of EU financial assistance in order to maximise their contribution to economic, social and territorial cohesion and to the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy. The CSF facilitates the programming process and the drawing up of the Partnership Agreements and operational programmes. For instance, it gives indications on how to coordinate the deployment of the ESI Funds with different EU policies and programmes, such as the Common Agricultural Policy, the Common Fisheries Policy, Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, New Entrance Reserve 300 demonstration funding,[19] the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation, the Connecting Europe Facility, the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance, the European Development Fund and the European Neighbourhood Instrument.

Role of the European Parliament

The Lisbon Treaty strengthened the EP's powers in the procedure leading to the adoption of the general provisions. Previously, only the fund-specific rules were adopted by co-decision, while the assent procedure was applied for the regulation laying down the general rules. Under the Lisbon Treaty, the entire legislative package covering the ESI Funds (both common and fund-specific regulations) was agreed using the ordinary legislative procedure (co-decision).[20]

The ambition of the EP was to build a more strategic, modern, efficient and result-oriented cohesion policy with a commensurate budget. While the budgetary resources for the ESI Funds were decided in the decision-making procedure for the MFF, the EP managed to negotiate an appropriate regulatory framework ensuring the maximum impact for every euro spent.[21]

Although the EP supported closely aligning cohesion policy with the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy, in its resolution of 5 July 2011 (2011/2035 INI) it emphasised that 'cohesion policy is not merely an implementing tool for Europe 2020 and that a continued focus on the core principles of cohesion policy will have the added value of sustaining the achievements of Europe 2020 even after the strategy has come to an end'.

Moreover, the Parliament was in favour of concentrating the funds on the thematic objectives, but it insisted on flexibility in implementation that would allow the Member States and regions to adjust them to their specific needs. The EP also supported the concept of Partnership Agreements, but insisted on full respect for the principle of partnership, with greater rights for local and regional authorities as well as representatives of civil society.

While the ESI Funds are implemented by the Member States, relevant legislative decisions and policy actions are prepared at the level of the EU institutions. The Parliament has a number of roles to play under the Common Provisions Regulation and the fund-specific regulations.[22] Additionally, it scrutinises EU expenditure through the ESI Funds during the annual budgetary discharge procedure.

Endnotes

1 Source: DG REGIO. Total figure including additional allocation for the Youth Employment Initiative excluding transfers to the Connecting Europe Facility and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived.

2 Source: DG REGIO. The figures do not include appropriations for European Territorial Cooperation therefore, the sum of individual funds does not correspond to the financial envelop 2014-20.

3 The legislative package included: Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 laying down common provisions on the ERDF, the ESF, the Cohesion Fund, the EAFRD and the EMFF; Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 on the ERDF; Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 on the ESF; Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013 on the Cohesion Fund; Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 on specific provisions for the support from the ERDF to the European territorial cooperation goal; Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC); Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 on support for rural development by the EAFRD.

4 For more on the application of new rules in the programming process and preliminary conclusions from preparation of the Partnership Agreements, see: Implementation of cohesion policy 2014-2020 preparations and administrative capacity of Member States: Study / Tödtling-Schönhofer, Herta and Bachtler, John et al.; European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. Policy Department B, PE 529.085, Brussels 2014; Strategic coherence of Cohesion Policy: comparison of the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods: Study / Kah, Stefan; Mendez, Carlos et.al.; European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. Policy Department B, PE 540.354, Brussels 2015; Partnership Agreements within Cohesion Policy 2014-2020: Blog EPRS / Silvia Ionescu.

5 See: Strategic Coherence Of Cohesion Policy: Comparison Of The 2007-2013 And 2014-2020 Programming Periods: Study / pp. 76-77.

6 For arguments for and against macroeconomic conditionality, as well as the consequences for cohesion policy, see for example: European Economic Governance and Cohesion Policy: Study / Begg, Ian and Bachtler, John; European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. Policy Department B, PE 513.999, Brussels: European Parliament 2014; Comparative study on the visions and options for cohesion policy after 2013: Study / Mendez, Carlos; Bachtler, John and Wishlade, Fiona; European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. Policy Department B, PE 460.062, Brussels: European Parliament 2011; Conditionalities and the Performance of European Structural Funds: A Principal-Agent Analysis of Control Mechanisms in European Union Cohesion Policy / Bachtler, John and Ferry, Martin; Regional Studies 2013; Not quite fit for purpose. Conditionality under the EU's financial framework for 2014-2020. Research Briefing / Heinen, Nicolas; Deutsche Bank AG, DB Research 2013; Macroeconomic conditionality in Cohesion Policy: added value or unnecessary burden? European Policy Brief No 13 / Tokarski, Paweł and Verheslt, Stijn; Egmont Royal Institute for International Relations and the Polish Institute of International Affairs; 2012.

7 Investment for jobs and growth: promoting development and good governance in EU regions and cities, sixth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion, European Commission 2014, pp. 235, 248-253.

8 Report on the effects of budgetary constraints for regional and local authorities regarding the EU's Structural Funds expenditure in the Member States, Rapporteur Erminia Mazzoni, Committee on Regional Development, (2013/2042(INI)).

9 For detailed analysis of the EP's position on the matter see: The European Structural and Investment Funds and sound economic governance: guidelines for the implementation of Article 23 of the Common Provisions Regulation: briefing / Haas, Diana; European Parliament DG IPOL Policy Department B, PE 529.088, Brussels: European Parliament 2014. European Union Cohesion Policy 2014-2020: a Comprehensive Presentation of the Legislative Package and the Role of the European Parliament, Secretariat of the Committee on Regional Development, PE532.425v01-00, Brussels: European Parliament 2014, pp. 99-103.

10 NUTS (*nomenclature des unités territoriales statistiques*) are a common classification of territorial units for the purpose of statistics. The classification is based on the population thresholds and subdivides the Member States into NUTS level 1, 2 and 3 territorial units. The NUTS level 2 units are regions eligible for support from the ESI Funds.

11 Based on: Prospects for Cohesion Policy in 2014-20 and Beyond: Progress with Programming and Reactions of the Future, EoRPA Paper 14/04, C. Mendez and J. Bachtler, EPRC, January 2015, pp. 14-18; Commission Implementing Decision of 18 February 2014 setting out the list of regions eligible for funding from the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund and of Member States eligible for funding from the Cohesion Fund for the period 2014-20 (C(2014) 974).

12 These data are based on preliminary allocations that are subject to transfers and adjustments as part of the ongoing revision of the Partnership Agreements. See: The European Commission, DG REGIO.

13 Note that the Partnership Agreements are currently being revised and the amounts allocated are not entirely finalised.

14 Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 was signed on 17 December 2013 and entered into force on 22 December 2013.

15 Analysis of the budgetary implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds in 2014 / European Commission, May 2015.

[16] Strategic Coherence of Cohesion Policy: Comparison of the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 Programming Periods: Study; Kah, Stefan and Mendez, Carlos, et al.; European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies. Policy Department B, PE 540.354, Brussels 2015.

[17] In the previous programming period the performance reserve was put aside by the Member States on a voluntary basis. During the negotiations leading up to the adoption of Regulation 1303/2013, the Parliament sought ways to limit the application of the performance framework and the reserve.

[18] See: Agriculture and cohesion: Overview of EU spending / European Court of Auditors, Luxembourg 2014.

[19] The NER 300 programme uses part of the revenues from the European Emissions Trading Scheme.

[20] See: The impact of the Treaty of Lisbon on regional policy: note / Kramer, Esther; European Parliament Policy Department B, PE 431.586, Brussels: European Parliament, 2010.

[21] For an overview of the legislative process and the relationship between negotiations on the MFF and the interinstitutional negotiations on the cohesion policy legislative package, see: European Union Cohesion Policy 2014-2020. A comprehensive presentation of the legislative package and the role of the European Parliament / Secretariat of the Committee on Regional Development, PE532.425v01-00, Brussels: European Parliament 2014, p. 7-21.

[22] Up to date information can be found in an Overview of the legislative framework and on the website of the Committee for Regional Development.

Disclaimer and Copyright

eprs@ep.europa.eu
http://www.eprs.ep.parl.union.eu (intranet)
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank (internet)
http://epthinktank.eu (blog)