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*Plenary sitting*

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**B8-0861/2016**

29.6.2016

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on synergies for innovation between the European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other European innovation funds  
(2016/2695(RSP))

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on behalf of the GUE/NGL Group

**European Parliament resolution on synergies for innovation between the European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other European innovation funds (2016/2695(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 4, 162 and 174 to 178 thereof,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on 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 and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (hereinafter ‘the Common Provisions Regulation’)<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 amending Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) as regards the clarification, simplification and improvement of the establishment and functioning of such groupings<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the Cohesion Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1084/2006<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 289.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 470.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 259.

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 303.

<sup>6</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 281.

Council of 17 December 2013 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005<sup>1</sup>,

- having regard to its resolution of 26 February 2014 on optimising the potential of outermost regions by creating synergies between the Structural Funds and other European Union programmes<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 9 September 2015 on ‘Investment for jobs and growth: promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Union’<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 26 November 2015 on ‘Towards simplification and performance orientation in cohesion policy 2014-2020’<sup>4</sup>,
  - having regard to the Commission’s sixth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion entitled ‘Investment for jobs and growth’ of 23 July 2014,
  - having regard to the guide published by the Commission in 2014 entitled 'Enabling synergies between European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other research, innovation and competitiveness-related Union programmes',
  - having regard to the COP21 Agreement signed in 2015 in Paris,
  - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas cohesion policy in the 2014-2020 financial programming period continues to represent the main EU instrument covering all regions and whereas it is the only fund redistributing wealth among EU regions, and is aimed at extending prosperity and reducing economic, social and territorial disparities, which were exacerbated by the economic and financial crisis and austerity policies;
- B. whereas cohesion policy is built around the articulation of its three funds, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF), together with a broader coordination under a Common Strategic Framework (CSF) with the funds for rural development, namely the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and for the maritime and fisheries sector, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF);
- C. whereas common provisions were established for all five of these funds – the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) – under the Common Provisions Regulation, while specific rules applicable to each ESI Fund and to the European territorial cooperation goal were subject to separate regulations;
- D. whereas the recent cohesion policy reform introduced a limited number of objectives and priorities creating a thematic concentration;

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 487.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2014)0133.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA (2015)0308.

<sup>4</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA (2015)0419.

1. Recalls that synergies cannot be used as a way to deviate the ESI Funds from their objective of territorial, economic and social cohesion;
2. Recalls that cohesion policy is aimed at extending prosperity and reducing economic, social and territorial disparities, which were exacerbated by the economic and financial crisis, and the austerity policies; strongly condemns, in this regard, the link between economic governance and cohesion policy;
3. Restates that links between cohesion policy and other EU policies and initiatives have been strengthened within the Common Strategic Framework introduced by the Common Provisions Regulation, and thus through all its instruments and objectives, including the urban agenda, the territorial agenda, investment in SMEs, especially micro enterprises, smart growth and smart specialisation strategies, and must contribute to the achievement of the cohesion objectives;
4. Underlines the fact that the Common Provisions Regulation relating to the ESI Funds includes for the first time a legal mandate to maximise synergies not only among these two instruments, but also with other programmes such as COSME, Erasmus+ and the Connecting Europe Facility; recalls that the new framework of cohesion policy is focused on a limited number of policy objectives and four priority areas;
5. Underlines the fact that the synergies are built in right from the strategic planning level, and therefore require, from the start, strategic choices and planning by the regions and Member States in order to identify and generate opportunities; points out that, in the case of Horizon 2020, this consists in implementing the programmes in a synergies-friendly manner in terms of raising awareness, providing information, engaging in communication campaigns and connecting National Contact Points (NCP) as much as possible to national and regional ESIF policy-makers and managing authorities;
6. Stresses, that the development of smart specialisation strategies through the involvement of national or regional managing authorities and stakeholders, such as universities and other higher education institutions, and social partners, are useful for the regions and those Member States that wish to invest ERDF resources into research and innovation;
7. Acknowledges the increased use of financial instruments in the Union budget as a complementary form of funding as compared to subsidies and grants; notes that financial instruments can provide an alternative and complementary way of funding but should only apply in the case of projects for which this type of financing represents an added value and improves the sound management of public funds;
8. Calls on the Commission to conduct an in-depth analysis of the use of the financial instruments starting from the beginning of the current programming period; stresses that when assessing a financial instrument, the leverage dimension cannot be the only evaluation criteria; recalls, in this context, the importance of the ‘additionality’ criteria and the assessment of the contribution to the fulfilment of the EU’s cohesion objectives as the EFSI is legally based on Article 175(3) TFEU;
9. Regrets, in this regard, the lack of geographic and development criteria in the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI); emphasises that EFSI and ESI Funds policies

(including cohesion, rural development and fisheries) target different policy areas and institutional levels; stresses that full coherence and synergies between all EU instruments should be ensured in order to avoid overlaps or contradictions among them or between the different levels of policy implementation; regrets, in this regard, that the creation of the EFSI has entailed a reduction in the Connecting Europe Facility and Horizon 2020 budgets, thereby limiting its ability to accomplish their objectives and demonstrating the incompatibility of this fund with the objectives of social, economic, and territorial cohesion enshrined in the Treaties;

10. Recalls that there is not enough funding under Horizon 2020, in particular for less developed regions and outermost regions, and that projects evaluated as excellent do not get funding; stresses that alternative funding has to be unlocked (e.g. ESIF grants could take over excellent Horizon 2020 projects); proposes that their status as to their level of excellence as evaluated by Horizon 2020 is accepted ex-ante as the evaluation criteria correspond with those provided for by the Common Provisions Regulation for the relevant thematic objective (e.g. ‘strengthening research, technological development and innovation’);
11. Regrets the territorial concentration of EU research funds in a few countries and universities; calls for a research and innovation policy that guarantees a fair territorial distribution that actually converges with the cohesion policy objectives;
12. Calls on the Commission to quickly deliver a framework enhancing efficient synergies between ERDF and EFD;
13. Calls on the Commission to initiate a framework for synergies between ESI Funds, Horizon 2020 and the Blue Growth strategy;
14. Recalls that CPR is based on the horizontal objective of sustainable development, and believes in this regard that synergies between ESI Funds and other EU policies have to be strengthened, in particular in line with the EU objectives developing renewable energies, including the COP21 objectives, and with all the EU funds supporting nature and biodiversity protection;
15. Believes that the synergies between cohesion policy and Horizon 2020 should not target military research;
16. Highlights the problems that austerity policies and fiscal constraints represent for national, regional and local authorities in achieving the co-financing ratio of EU funds; calls on the Commission to review the actual ratios of co-financing, and allow temporary exemptions to Member States and regions of the EU that are facing serious economic problems;
17. Calls for a monitoring system to track the success of synergies with a view to spreading best practices and learning lessons ahead of the review of the Europe 2020 strategy;
18. Calls on the Commission to assess the possibility of applying the ‘golden rule’ on public investment, thereby exempting public investment from public deficit figures and allowing Member States to develop public investments, including those supported by EU funds;

19. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the parliaments and governments of the Member States.