



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2014 - 2019

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*Committee on Employment and Social Affairs*

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**2015/2052(INI)**

24.6.2015

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Regional Development

on the European Structural and Investment Funds and sound economic  
governance: guidelines for the implementation of Article 23 of the Common  
Provisions Regulation  
(2015/2052(INI))

Rapporteur: Javi López

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the Commission's criteria, highlighting the fact that the challenges Member States face are of a long-term nature and that the multiannual programmes financed by European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds), meant to address these challenges, require certainty and permanence, and that frequent reprogramming should therefore be avoided and instead stability favoured in order to reinforce the predictability and credibility of programmes under ESI Funds; believes that the shorter term focus of the Country Specific Recommendations (CSRs) should not jeopardise the long-term goals of ESI Funds given the long-term and result-oriented nature of the ESI Funds and the annual cycle of the European Semester; trusts that the Commission and the Council will be very cautious when requesting the reprogramming of the funds or the suspension of payments for the programmes, according to the principle of EU solidarity, which is partly expressed through the mechanism of the share out of EU funding and which should remain a central tenet of EU policy;
2. Highlights the fact that, in order to maximise their impact on growth, development, cohesion and job creation and to address new social and economic challenges when they emerge, investment supported by ESI Funds should take place in a sound macroeconomic framework; recalls, however, that the allocations under the ESI Funds are based on specific eligibility criteria linked to the level of development of EU regions, and therefore decisions to either reprogramme or suspend based on other criteria may be inconsistent with the rationale behind these funds;
3. Points out that in certain cases reprogramming or suspension as regulated in Article 23 of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) could jeopardise achieving the objectives of the ESI Funds in all Member States, and especially in those that face deep macroeconomic and social imbalances; calls on the Commission to use the mechanism only when Member States have persistently failed to take effective action to address its requests to reprogramme, and where there is strong evidence that reprogramming could have a considerable direct impact on the programme's potential for job creation; stresses that the Commission should demonstrate that the modifications do not negatively impact employment and social affairs targets as foreseen by Member States; calls on the Commission therefore to carry out an assessment of the impact on the unemployment rate and economic development in the countries concerned; stresses that every programme with long-term positive effects linked to social investment should remain untouched;
4. Considers it counterproductive that ESI Funds supporting education, training and employment creation might be suspended if such funds are achieving their objectives; calls therefore on the Commission to be cautious in applying the first strand of Article 23 of the CPR to all programmes coming under any of the thematic objectives of the ESI Funds, in particular thematic objectives (8), (9) or (10), or the employment and social targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy and to accompany any modifications to programmes under ESI Funds with the appropriate guarantees that social cohesion objectives are

respected; asks the Commission to strictly commit to applying the ESF minimum share provided for in Article 92(4) of the CPR;

5. Calls on the Commission to take proportionate measures and to consider the economic and social circumstances of the Member States in order to avoid the suspension of commitments or payments provided for in the second strand of Article 23 of the CPR where Member States are involved in any of the situations described in sub-paragraphs (a) to (e) of paragraph 1 of Annex III to the CPR; calls on the Commission each time to assess the impact of suspension on unemployment and to try to alleviate possible undesirable effects for the affected population;
6. Calls on the Commission, in applying Article 23 of the CPR, to devise a transparent, effective and democratic decision-making process to be applied in a consistent manner, in line with Article 23(15) of the CPR, which would include introducing an early warning system to inform the country concerned about the possibility of launching the reprogramming procedure immediately after the publication of the CSRs, and to allow Parliament, on the basis of a formalised process, to be informed at all stages of the adoption of reprogramming requests or of any proposals and decisions on suspension of commitments or payments;
7. Calls on the Commission to establish a timescale for the lifting of the suspension under Article 23(8) of the CPR.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	23.6.2015
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 43 -: 8 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Guillaume Balas, Tiziana Beghin, Brando Benifei, Mara Bizzotto, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, David Casa, Ole Christensen, Martina Dlabajová, Lampros Fountoulis, Marian Harkin, Rina Ronja Kari, Jan Keller, Ádám Kósa, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Kostadinka Kuneva, Jean Lambert, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Patrick Le Hyaric, Jeroen Lenaers, Javi López, Thomas Mann, Dominique Martin, Anthea McIntyre, Joëlle Mélin, Emilian Pavel, Georgi Pirinski, Marek Plura, Sofia Ribeiro, Anne Sander, Sven Schulze, Siôn Simon, Jutta Steinruck, Yana Toom, Ulla Tørnæs, Marita Ulvskog, Renate Weber, Tatjana Ždanoka, Inês Cristina Zuber
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Maria Arena, Georges Bach, Heinz K. Becker, Paloma López Bermejo, António Marinho e Pinto, Edouard Martin, Tamás Meszerics, Csaba Sógor, Helga Stevens, Monika Vana, Tom Vandenkendelaere
<b>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</b>	Flavio Zanonato, Branislav Škripek