



**2015/2210(INI)**

18.9.2015

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the European Semester for economic policy coordination: implementation  
of 2015 priorities  
(2015/2210(INI))

Rapporteur: Iskra Mihaylova

PA\_NonLeg

## SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Acknowledges the new approach for a more streamlined European Semester 2015 to focus on the four key priorities for economic growth: boosting investment, implementation of structural reforms, fiscal responsibility and improving employment policy; notes the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) for 2015, which address the growth drivers that can allow sustainable recovery and through which progress can be achieved within a shorter timeframe (12-18 months);
2. Recalls that a sound macroeconomic framework is important in order to achieve the objective of reducing disparities in levels of development as defined in Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and that cohesion policy can be a driving force for achieving this objective if accompanied by a sound macroeconomic framework; is deeply concerned that in Member States with high government debt levels and macroeconomic imbalances the absorption and effectiveness of the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds can be greatly diminished; calls on the Commission, therefore, to propose tailor-made measures which will support the timely implementation and achievement of cohesion policy and economic goals in these countries;
3. Notes the closer links between the objectives of the European Semester process and the programming of the ESI Funds for 2014-2020, and especially the systematic references to CSRs and National Reform Programmes (NRPs) in the programming exercise; takes note of the study entitled 'Strategic Coherence of Cohesion Policy: Comparison of the 2007-2013 and the 2014-2020 Programming Periods', which shows that CSRs are taken into consideration to a very limited extent in Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes; considers that cohesion policy investments could play a very important role in supporting structural reforms and the fulfilment of the EU's strategic goals by following up the relevant CSRs and NRPs; calls for steps to be taken to ensure complementarity and synergies between the ESI Funds, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) and the other EU-subsidised programmes and initiatives, together with national public investments and private financial instruments, in order to obtain maximum added value and synergy by exploiting the full potential of such investments;
4. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure the quality of the interventions co-financed under cohesion policy, and compliance with the most relevant CSRs and NRPs; notes that in the 2013 and 2014 financial years there were more CSRs with relevance for ESI Funds programming, and that medium-term structural reforms related to investments under the ESI Funds are still necessary and should be included in CSRs even though they are very often contained in the ex-ante conditionalities set out in the ESI Funds common framework;
5. Notes with great concern the persistently high unemployment rates in some Member States, especially as regards youth and long-term unemployment; stresses the need to implement structural reforms related to the labour market, education systems and financial

services for SMEs, which should be strongly supported by cohesion policy financial instruments at regional, national and EU level in order to create employment opportunities and boost quality job creation;

6. Urges the Member States to ensure swift and effective implementation of the respective CSRs for 2015 in order to achieve sustainable growth and jobs; deplores, in this connection, the non-binding nature of the recommendations; recalls that the quality of ESI Funds intervention as a policy response to the challenges identified in the CSRs will depend on how Member States connect their structural reforms and smart fiscal consolidation with the use of the ESI Funds through the NRPs, and on how Member States ensure programme implementation;
7. Acknowledges the entry into force of the regulation on the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI); underlines the strong combined potential of the Investment Plan for Europe and the ESI Funds in terms of boosting competitiveness, sustainable economic growth and job creation; urges the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to step up the structural reforms and to improve the regulatory and administrative environment in order to substantially improve the business and investment climate and achieve the maximum output / leverage effect from limited public finances;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider innovative ways to encourage investment in the EU, and highlights the fact that the increased use of financial instruments under the 2014-2020 cohesion policy can help to produce leverage and a multiplier effect for the EU budget, and to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of investment under the ESI Funds; emphasises, however, the need to ensure the transparency, accountability and scrutiny of financial instruments, including the EFSI.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	17.9.2015
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 30 -: 8 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Pascal Arimont, José Blanco López, Franc Bogovič, Mercedes Bresso, Steeve Briois, Edward Czesak, Rosa D'Amato, Bill Etheridge, Michela Giuffrida, Krzysztof Hetman, Ivan Jakovčić, Constanze Krehl, Andrew Lewer, Louis-Joseph Manscour, Martina Michels, Andrey Novakov, Younous Omarjee, Demetris Papadakis, Mirosław Piotrowski, Stanislav Polčák, Julia Reid, Liliana Rodrigues, Fernando Ruas, Maria Spyrali, Ruža Tomašić, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Ángela Vallina, Monika Vana, Matthijs van Miltenburg, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Derek Vaughan, Joachim Zeller
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Petras Auštrevičius, Jan Olbrycht, Maurice Ponga
<b>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</b>	Brando Benifei, Andrejs Mamikins, Soraya Post