

regi news

newsletter of the committee on regional development



NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday 29 May 2012
9.00 - 12.30 and 15.00 - 18.30

Wednesday 30 May 2012
9.00 - 12.30

Room JAN 4 Q 1

in focus

- **Exchanges of views with**
 - **Johannes Hahn, Commissioner on Regional Policy**
 - **Nicolai Wammen, Danish Minister for European Affairs**
- **Debates on the EU Cohesion Legislative Package**
- **Votes on**
 - **the EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation (Mr Poręba's draft opinion)**
 - **the Trans-European energy infrastructure (Mr Olejniczak's draft opinion)**
 - **the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (Ms Łukacijewska's draft opinion)**
 - **Establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument (Mr Zeller's draft opinion)**
 - **2013 Budget - Mandate for Trilogue (Mr Stavrakakis' draft opinion)**
- **Joint public hearing REGI-ITRE on Synergies between EU Cohesion Policy and Horizon 2020**
- **External Study on "Barriers for applicants to structural funding"**

[comments and subscriptions at regi-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:regi-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu)

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Next Publication

Committee meeting on
Wednesday 20 June 2012
15.00 - 18.30
and Thursday 21 June 2012
9.00 - 12.30 & 15.00 - 18.30
Brussels

Useful Internet links

EP Library - Info on items related to regional development
OEIL - The Legislative Observatory
Regional Policy Inforegio
EUR-Lex
Committee of the Regions
EP studies Website
REGI Website



part 1 meeting of 29-30 May 2012

Here you will find the topics which will be discussed at the next REGI committee meeting on 29 and 30 May 2012. The following items will be discussed as foreseen in [the draft agenda](#). Please note that most committee documents (working documents, draft reports, etc.) are available at our website [REGI](#).

1. Specific provisions concerning the European Regional Development Fund and the Investment for growth and jobs' goal and repeal of Regulation (EC) N° 1080/2006 (Point 3 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Jan Olbrycht (PPE)
Responsible administrator: Dagmara Stoerring
Procedure: 2011/0275(COD)

This Regulation sets out the provisions governing the European Regional Development Fund, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006. The common rules governing the ERDF are included in an overarching regulation proposed in COM(2011)0614 (referred to as Common Provisions Regulation). The ERDF Regulation sets out the scope of support and investment priorities for the regional development programmes. After several discussions during recent Committee meeting, the rapporteur will present his draft report than contains 56 amendments to the Commission's proposal.

The rapporteur is of a firm opinion that a major part of the ERDF regulation depends on the provisions of the CPR. The provisions and solutions contained in both regulations are interconnected to a significant degree. In particular, the ERDF Regulation translates the thematic objectives provided for in the CPR into specific investment priorities, while elaborating as well on the territorial dimension of the cohesion policy as far as the urban areas are concerned. It also introduces the thematic concentration and foresees specific provisions for areas with natural and demographic handicaps as well as the outermost regions.

In his draft report the rapporteur puts forward the amendments aimed at enlarging the scope of support through i.a. highlighting the mutual interdependence between Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and their bigger counterparts and thus proposing not to exclude the latter from funding; adding "accessible" to the descriptions of infrastructures to be supported and extending it to the spheres of culture, sport and tourism. The rapporteur puts a particular stress on the role of revolving instruments and proposes adding development of financial instruments to the scope of support from the ERDF. On the other hand, the rapporteur puts forward some adjustments of exclusions from the scope of support i.a. concerning the investments into infrastructure providing basic services in the areas of environment, transport and ICT in the more developed and a wholesale exclusion from the scope of support of the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

As far as thematic concentration is concerned, the rapporteur proposes to introduce more flexibility in this respect, through modification of the obligatory minimum levels of funds to be concentrated on the limited number of legally-binding objectives as well as an addition of one thematic objective into the concentration. He also pursues the idea of an equal treatment in thematic concentration for the phasing-out and the less-developed regions.

In the proposed amendments the rapporteur is completing the list of thematic priorities, ensuring more flexibility for the thematic concentration through i.a. underlining synergies with the Horizon 2020, broader inclusion of culture as well as enterprises (irrespective of their size), expansion of the energy efficiency and urban renewal themes, and appropriate consideration of Europe's waterways.

The rapporteur proposes modification of the concept of sustainable urban development starting with proposing to replace "cities" by "functional urban areas". Definition of these areas should be decided by the Member States in the respective Partnership Contract. Another amendment concerning sustainable urban development is the rapporteur's proposal to allow the undertaking of sustainable urban development also through a specific operational programme or a specific priority axis. In spite of his support to networking, capacity-building and exchange of experience in the sustainable urban development context, the rapporteur proposes the deletion of the provision on the Urban Development Platform as he believes these can be conducted through already-existing programmes and bodies.

Moreover, the rapporteur stresses that the specific business environment of enterprises in the outermost regions requires providing possibilities for additional funding and finally, due to the technical nature of common indicators he proposes moving the list of common indicators from an annex to the ERDF regulation to an implementing act.

TIMETABLE

Exchange of views: 22/11/2011, 25/01/2012, 20/03/2012, 8/05/2012

Consideration of draft report: 29/05/2012

Deadline for amendments: 31/05/2012

Adoption REGI: 11/07/2012 (tbc)

Adoption in plenary: tbc

2. Amendment of Regulation (EC) N° 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) as regards the clarification, simplification and improvement of the establishment and implementation of such groupings (Point 4 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Joachim Zeller (PPE)

Responsible administrator: Stefan Manev

Procedure: 2011/0272(COD)

This amending Regulation makes changes, on the one hand, to respect the terminology introduced by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and on the other hand in response to the weaknesses and areas of potential improvement identified in the Report referred to above.

These changes concern the Membership, the content of the Convention and Statutes of an EGTC, its purpose, the process of approval by national authorities, applicable law for employment and for procurement, approach for EGTCs whose members have different liability for their actions and more transparent procedures for communication.

The rapporteur, Mr Zeller, is supporting the Commission's amending regulation and its overall approach and objectives. However, he considers that a number of elements can be further amended in order to improve the functioning of this territorial cooperation instrument.

Mr Zeller makes the following main proposals in his report:

1) Widen the scope of EGTCs membership - extension of the list of potential members to undertakings entrusted with the operation of services of general economic interest as defined in the decision¹ on the application of Article 106(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. This is aimed at enabling more cooperation in public transport, healthcare, energy or water supply.

2) Facilitate the partnerships with entities from third countries - The rapporteur aim is to further facilitate the establishment of EGTCs with partners from third countries, irrespective of whether partners from one or more Member States are involved.

3) Introduce a "one-stop-shop" approach to authorisation - A single authority should be appointed by the Member State, deciding about the authorisation of a new EGTC, instead of a multiplicity of governmental departments. In the case of federal states, each state will decide on its authority. Furthermore, a new approach of "reasoned" authorisation or rejection of the establishment of an EGTC is suggested by the rapporteur.

4) Extension of the tasks that an EGTC can carry on - EGTCs must be allowed to apply for funding under any EU programme and to participate in any call and initiative. The rapporteur suggests changing the wording to ensure that the EGTC can also implement operations with financial support of the EU outside Cohesion Policy. The EGTC should be understood as a cooperation instrument in a wider sense and therefore be granted full eligibility to all EU programmes.

5) Give a greater role to the Committee of the Regions - The EGTC Platform set up by the Committee of the Regions brings together all the stakeholders at political and technical level and provides a vital forum for support and advice for both existing and potential future EGTCs. This platform should be used as a tool for mapping and dissemination of best practices in setting and running EGTCs.

TIMETABLE

Exchanges of views: 22/11/2011, 25/01/2012,

Consideration of working doc.: 28/02/2012, 20/03/2012

Consideration of draft report: 29/05/2012

Deadline for amendments: 31/05/2012 at 6 pm

Adoption REGI: 11/07/2012

Adoption in plenary: (tbc)

3. EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation (Point 5 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Tomasz Piotr Poręba (ECR)

Responsible administrator: Dagmara Stoerring

Procedure: 2011/0270(COD)

Main committee: EMPL - Jutta Steinruck

The Commission is proposing to combine three existing instruments – the Progress programme, the EURES programme and the Progress Microfinance Facility for employment and social inclusion – into a single EU Programme for Social Change and Innovation. The financial appropriations for implementing the Programme during the period from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020 should be set at EUR 958.19 million.

In his draft opinion the rapporteur stresses that the Commission provides no indication of the added value of combining the three programmes that are already in place and that it fails to show the demarcation between the activities provided for under the new Programme and the support available under cohesion policy funds (ESF,

¹ C(2011) 9380 final.

ERDF). Therefore the rapporteur indicates the need to clearly establish how the new instrument will be integrated with the complementary instruments in place in the cohesion policy field. The rapporteur believes that the fixed percentage set by the Commission for social experimentation under the Progress access should be made more flexible, and stresses that the social innovation objectives should be pursued only in support of national social systems, and must not take their place. In the current economic climate, of the three instruments, microfinance is the most likely to produce tangible results and accordingly, microfinance's percentage share of the budget for the new Programme should be increased and the essential role it plays in the fight against exclusion should be emphasised. In view of the current economic crisis and the severe budget restrictions introduced in the Member States, the rapporteur is opposed to an increase in administrative costs (Article 5.3) and to the 5% budget reserve, whose use is not clearly specified by the Commission. The rapporteur draws attention to the need for involvement of regional and local authorities in all the operational stages of the programme implementation and he tables amendments that should give priority to the young people for the EURES activities.

Altogether 134 amendments have been tabled to the Commission's proposal and compromise amendments are being negotiated.

TIMETABLE

Exchange of views: 20/03/2012

Consideration of draft opinion: 26/04/2012

Deadline for amendments: 03/05/2012 (tbc)

Adoption REGI: 29/05/2012

Adoption EMPL: 21/06/2012

Adoption in plenary: July 2012

4. Trans-European energy infrastructure and repeal of Decision N° 1364/2006/EC (Point 6 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Wojciech Michał Olejniczak (S&D)

Responsible administrator: Franck Ricaud

Procedure: 2011/0300(COD)

Main committee: ITRE - António Fernando Correia De Campos

In his draft opinion presented the 26th of April, the Rapporteur generally welcomes Commission's proposal and appreciates its comprehensive character in providing regulation for Trans-European energy infrastructure projects, especially with reference to projects of common interest. Most notably, Rapporteur welcomes the measures aimed at streamlining and speeding up the process of permit granting and encourages its adoption whenever applicable also for the purpose of development of non cross-border energy infrastructure projects.

His report places emphasis on the regional dimension of energy infrastructure, bearing in mind especially their direct impact on citizens which is often not properly offset by project's anticipated positive outcomes in terms of energy security, sustainability, or efficiency of the infrastructure. Therefore, the role of regional authorities should be acknowledged at specific stages of permit granting procedure, so that those most concerned would have a chance to influence decision making process. Moreover, the process of relevant public consultations should be unified at the EU level.

Also, the proposal should strike a proper balance between the criteria of cost-efficiency, crucial from the point of view of private entrepreneurs who will ultimately finance, develop and manage the energy infrastructure, and prerequisites for provision of financial support from Connecting Europe Facility.

173 amendments have been tabled especially focused on the circumstances where public interest and customers' benefit justify additional funding without detriment to the principle of competitiveness.

TIMETABLE**Consideration of draft opinion: 26/04/2012****Deadline for amendments: 02/05/2012****Adoption REGI: 29/05/2012****Adoption ITRE: 31/05/2012 (tbc)****Plenary: July 2012 (tbc)**

5. Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA II) (Point 7 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska (PPE)**Responsible administrator: Gabriel Alvarez****Procedure: 2011/0404(COD)****Main committee: AFET - Kristian Vigenin**

The Committee has discussed on the establishment of a new instrument for pre-accession (IPA II) 2014-2020 in the framework of the reform of the EU external action financial instruments and following on from the unified Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) for the potential candidate countries to accession, financial perspective from 2007 to 2013.

This instrument has proved its usefulness during the current budgetary period to help candidate countries to improve their administration, market system, and infrastructures. These reforms can be considered as a must for pre-accession countries to approach and align their overall economic, political and social frameworks to those of the European Union.

TIMETABLE**Consideration of draft opinion: 26/04/2012****Deadline for amendments: 08/05/2012 (tbc)****Adoption REGI: 29/05/2012****Adoption AFET: 10/07/2012 (tbc)**

6. Establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument (Point 8 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Joachim Zeller (PPE)**Responsible administrator: Gabriel Alvarez****Procedure: 2011/0405(COD)****Main committee: AFET - Eduard Kukan**

During the last meetings the Committee discussed on the establishment of a new European Neighbourhood Instrument 2014-2020 in the framework of the reform of the EU external action financial instruments and following on from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument 2007-2013.

As a matter of fact, what happens outside the borders of the EU can influence the economy and the future of Europe. In this regard, the Lisbon Treaty marks a new departure in the EU's relations with the rest of the world, stating that it is in the interest of the EU to be actively engaged in influencing the world outside the borders.

The overall objective for external action for the period 2014-2020 may be summarized as follows:

- long-term commitment to establishing an area of stability, prosperity and democracy in its own neighborhood;
- facilitating the EU's engagement with third countries on issues that are of global concern, such as climate change, environmental protection, irregular migration and regional instabilities, and
- allowing the EU to respond rapidly and effectively to natural and manmade disasters around the world.

TIMETABLE**Consideration of draft opinion: 26/04/2012****Deadline for amendments: 08/05/2012****Adoption REGI: 29/05/2012 (tbc)****Adoption AFET: 10/07/2012 (tbc)**

7. 2013 Budget - Mandate for Trilogue (Point 9 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)**Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho****Procedure: 2012/2016 (BUD)****Main committee: BUDG - Giovanni La Via**

Mr. Stavrakakis' draft opinion, to which 4 amendments were tabled, will be put to the vote. Essentially, the amendments tabled put an emphasis on the need for a growth agenda in the EU, and further stress that any failure to provide for realistic payment appropriations could result in jeopardising the attainment of the objectives of the current programmes in Cohesion policy.

TIMETABLE**Consideration of draft opinion: 26/04/2012****Deadline for amendments: 03/05/2012****Adoption REGI: 29/05/2012****Adoption BUDG: 19/06/2012 (tbc)**

8. Exchange of views with Johannes Hahn, Commissioner on Regional Policy, on latest developments in Cohesion Policy Legislative Package (Point 10 of the draft agenda)

Commissioner Hahn will come to the committee in a very important moment, when the work of the co-legislators on the legislative package is getting cruise speed. The committee expects from the Commissioner a detailed account on how the Commission sees the advancement of the works at the Council, the main obstacles the MS are encountered and a clear positioning of the EC on the more advanced chapters of the reform. The position of the EC on the Common Strategic Framework will certainly be debated.

9. REGI-ITRE Joint Public Hearing on Synergies between EU Cohesion Policy and Horizon 2020 (Point 11 of the draft agenda)

This public hearing is closely linked to both legislative proposals for structural funds and for Horizon 2020 and the main aim is to draw on expertise in exploring synergies between Horizon 2020 and funds under the EU's Cohesion policy. Four speakers have been invited, two experts by REGI and two by ITRE. The speakers will have 15 minutes each and after the interventions the floor will be open for debate between Members and the experts.

This hearing will be co-chaired by the REGI and ITRE Chairs.

The guests and their respective topics are the following:

- **Prof. Jacek Guliński** (Undersecretary of state in Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Poland): Synergies between the EU cohesion policy and EU research and innovation policy with examples from the 2007-2013 financing period from Poland
- **Prof. Birgitta Wolff** (State Minister of Saxony - Anhalt in charge of economy and research, Germany): The role of coordination between the two Union funding programmes based on examples from the German Landers
- **Prof. Tim C. Claypole** (Faculty member of the College of Engineering, Swansea University, Wales): The role of cohesion policy for facilitating technology transfer of research to local industry: example of the ERDF funded DIPLE project, the 2009 Regiostars award winner
- **Mrs Adriana Agrimi** (Head of the Department for research and innovation of Region Puglia, Italy): Smart specialisation strategy as the main synergy link between EU cohesion policy and Horizon 2020

10. Common provisions on European Funds and repealing Regulation (EC) N° 1083/2006 (Point 12 of the draft agenda)

**Co-rapporteurs: Lambert van Nistelrooij (PPE);
Constanze Angela Krehl (S&D)
Responsible administrators: Diana Haase, Ana
Maria Dobre
Procedure: 2011/0276 (COD)**

The Rapporteurs, Constanze Angela Krehl and Lambert van Nistelrooij, will present their final draft legislative report putting forward amendments to the draft CPR. Members of REGI have the possibility to table their amendments until the 31 May 2012, with a view to consider these in June and vote in REGI in July.

The final draft report addresses the following key issues:

- The legislative nature of the CSF and its scope;
- Enhancing the principle of partnership and multi-level governance;
- Mainstreaming of gender issues and accessibility;
- Ensuring a more place-based approach while maintaining concentration of resources;
- Fine-tuning the timeline foreseen for adoption of PC and OPs;
- Content of the PC;
- Strengthening the reporting back by the Commission to the legislators, also to create platform for political debate to enhance the visibility of the policy;
- Feasibility of the performance reserve as presented in the proposal;
- Concerns about macroeconomic conditionality and its implication on policy implementation;
- Clarifications regarding local development strategies and community led local development;
- Clarifications regarding the provisions on financial instruments (ex-ante assessment and re-use of legacy resources, clearer provisions regarding funding agreements and strategy documents);
- Enhancing the role of evaluation in policy design;
- With regard to the proposed budget for the policy, expressing the position adopted earlier by the EP SURE committee;
- Clarifications of ex-ante conditionality provisions;
- Providing for a true multifund approach and reinforcing provisions on cross-financing between ERDF and ESF;
- Simplifying the provisions on the audit authority;
- Review of the delegation of powers (legal review of and clarity of content of the provisions).

Further to the amendments included in the draft report, the Rapporteurs proposed earlier to the Committee, that REGI should not accept the EC proposal with regard to the legal nature of the Common Strategic Framework (CSF). This document should not be adopted as a delegated act, as it is an essential element of the policy. The CSF should be part of the basic act, annexed to the CPR. In this context, the Rapporteurs have prepared a draft structure of the future CSF that was circulated to all REGI members and briefly discussed in the May I REGI meeting. The first draft text of the CSF, as proposed by the Rapporteurs, is to be debated in the May II REGI meeting, to be then tabled as an amendment to the CPR. The draft structure includes the following.

- Horizontal principles and cross-cutting challenges,
- Synergies and coordination of Funds covered by the CPR with instruments of other EU policies,
- Coordination mechanism among Funds covered by the CPR and harmonisation of priorities,
- Priorities for coordination (cross-border, transnational and interregional).

Members also have the possibility to table ideas on the CSF, but they were asked to follow the proposed structure as far as possible, to facilitate integration of the proposed texts.

TIMETABLE

Exchange of views: 22/11/2011; 19/12/2011, 19/12/2011

Consideration of working doc.: 25/01/12, 27/02/12, 19/03/12

Consideration of draft report: 26/04/2012, 08/05/2012, 29/05/2012

Deadline for amendments: 31/05/2012 (tbc)

Adoption REGI: 11 July 2012 (tbc)

Adoption in plenary: September 2012 (tbc)

11. Exchange of views with Nicolai Wammen, Minister for European Affairs, on the state of play of the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (Point 13 of the draft agenda)

The Danish presidency represented by Nicolai Wammen, Minister for European Affairs, will present the state of play on which respects the future EU Cohesion Policy. The committee expects a detailed account on the ongoing negotiations in the Council of the legislative package on EU post 2013 cohesion policy.

After the statement, the Chair will give the floor to the Members of the committee, starting by the political group coordinators and following by the other MEPs.

12. External study on "Barriers for applicants to structural funding" (Point 14 of the draft agenda)

On 30 May 2012, Ms Christine Hamza, co-author of the study "Barriers for applicants to Structural funding" which was produced by Policy Department B at the request of the REGI committee, will make a presentation at the Committee. She will outline the main features and findings of the study which analyses the factors susceptible to facilitate or to discourage stakeholders and businesses to apply for support from Structural Funds. In the current economic crisis it is even more important to attract as many applicants as possible in order to provide Structural support wherever suitable.

Based on a wide-ranging literature review, case studies, questionnaires and interviews, this study illustrates what can be done to attract more applications, and how the participation of successful applicants can be made more effective. It puts forward a number of specific recommendations for policy makers at local, regional, national and EU level. One core question - the balance between rules and procedures to follow on the one hand and the necessary flexibility for policy makers and beneficiaries on the other hand - is a much discussed issue in the current debate on the reform of Cohesion policy and the legislative package for 2014-2020.

13. Cohesion Fund and repeal of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1084/2006 (Point 15 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Victor Boştinaru (S&D)
Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho
Procedure: 2011/0274(COD)

The Rapporteur, Mr. Bostinaru, has submitted in the REGI meeting of 26 April, his first draft report only in English, containing 11 amendments. He is now to present his final draft report in all languages, now containing 13 amendments, resulting from some modifications that emerged after the debates held during the past weeks, either within the committee or with the Commission. Modifications result from acknowledging the importance of district heating and cogeneration plants in the Cohesion Fund's Member States, and from the consideration of the institutional goal of the Cohesion Fund in supporting environmental related investments and the shift towards a low-carbon economy. The exclusion of support should therefore only entail the combustion activity of such installations and therefore the source of GHG emissions, leaving the possibility for support under the Cohesion Fund in favour of the remaining elements and of the distribution network. Moreover, the Commission's proposal to transfer the amount of EUR 10 000 000 000 from the Cohesion Fund to the Connecting Europe Facility to support transport infrastructure projects needs to be specified and clarified within the Cohesion Fund Regulation.

TIMETABLE

Exchange of views: 22/11/2011, 25/01/2012
Consideration of working doc.: 28/02/12, 20/03/12
Consideration of draft report: 26/04/2012, 08/05/2012, 30/05/2012
Deadline for amendments: 31/05/2012 (tbc)
Adoption REGI: July 2012 (tbc)
Adoption in plenary: September 2012 (tbc)

14. Support from the European Regional Development Fund to the "European Territorial Cooperation" goal (Point 16 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Riikka Manner (ALDE)
Responsible administrator: Franck Ricaud
Procedure: 2011/0273(COD)

The Rapporteur, Ms Rikka Manner (FI, ALDE) will present the second version of her draft report that have raised new amendments to put forward to the Commission's proposal on the European Territorial Cooperation.

The Rapporteur has already presented the First Version of her Draft Report in last REGI meeting, mainly concentrating on three topics: the financing provision (the Rapporteur defends the position already agreed by the Parliament for the levels of financing and flexibility required by the cooperation programmes); the thematic concentration and investments priorities (the Rapporteur proposes more flexibility with 6 objectives to choose instead of 4); new concepts and tools to improve the management of programmes (the Rapporteur welcomes the provisions of the proposal on these topics, but will propose amendments on some points that are not completely clear).

The second Version of the Draft Report is mainly adding new issues to be discussed such as the list of Investment priorities, the content of cooperation programmes and indicators.

TIMETABLE

Exchange of views: 22/11/2011, 25/01/2012

Consideration of working doc.: 28/02/2012, 20/03/2012

Consideration of draft report: 08/05/2012, 30/05/2012

Deadline for amendments: 31/05/2012

Adoption REGI: July 2012 (tbc)

Adoption in plenary: tbc

15. European Social Fund and repeal of Regulation (EC) N° 1081/2006 (Point 17 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: María Irigoyen Pérez (S&D)

Responsible administrator: Gabriel Alvarez

Procedure: 2011/0268(COD)

Main committee: EMPL - Elisabeth Morin-Chartier

The Rapporteur will present the state of play of her draft opinion and the second wave of amendments she proposes to put forward to the lead committee.

In terms of scope, the draft ESF Regulation for 2014-2020 proposes to target the ESF on four "thematic objectives" throughout the European Union: i) Promoting employment and labour mobility; ii) investing in education, skills and lifelong learning; iii) promoting social inclusion and combating poverty; iv) enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration. In addition the ESF should contribute also to other thematic objectives such as supporting the shift towards low-carbon, climate resilient and resource efficient economy, enhancing the use on information and communication technologies, strengthening research, technological development and innovation and enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Furthermore, the draft Regulation aims to reinforce social innovation and transnational cooperation under the ESF and clarifies its contribution to the Union's commitment to eliminate inequalities between women and men and prevent discrimination. Social partners and non-governmental organizations are attached great importance to the programming and implementation of ESF priorities and operations.

Finally, specific provisions are introduced for financial instruments to encourage Member States and regions to leverage the ESF and thus increase its capacity to finance actions supporting employment, education and social inclusion.

Amendments proposed so far, have involved the integration of young people in the working life, reintegration of workers when crisis conditions arise and mobility programs.

TIMETABLE

Exchange of views: 22/11/2011, 25/01/2012, 28/02/2012

Consideration of working doc.: 19/03/2012, 26/04/2012

Consideration of draft opinion: 30/05/2012

Deadline for amendments: 31 May 2012 (tbc)

Adoption REGI: 21/06/2012 (tbc)

Adoption EMPL: 10/07/2012 (tbc)

Plenary: September 2012 (tbc)

16. Evolution of EU Macro-Regional Strategies: Present practice and future prospects, especially in the Mediterranean (Point 18 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: François Alfonsi (Verts/ALE)
Responsible administrators: Franck Ricau
Procedure: 2011/2179(INI)

Following the working document presented in the December REGI meeting, the Rapporteur will now present his draft report. The Rapporteur acknowledges that macro-regional strategies put together a cohesive approach for territorial cooperation, meeting the demand for investing in Europe on a territorial basis in this new way. Macro regional strategies also help rebuilding links and cooperating in a new fashion. In this regard, the Rapporteur supports macro regional strategies to be based on the principle of multi-level governance, in order to ensure the collaboration among local, regional and national bodies.

However, he also recognizes that macro-regional strategies are a complex structure in terms of governance, harder to coordinate and to enable to cooperate.

Therefore, he agrees with the Commission that macro-region should not become a huge consumer of funds if it is not efficient and there needs to be a balance when considering such a format in the new period.

The Rapporteur welcomes the positive outcome of the Baltic Sea strategy, that has showed how macro regional strategies can add value to the Cohesion Policy and asks the Commission and the Council to keep on supporting the development of the strategy for the Danube area, guaranteeing an adequate financial coverage but starting a monitoring and evaluating process at the same time.

The Rapporteur asks for a higher level of coordination among the various funds and invites the Commission to reflect on the future of the macro regional approach in Europe, identifying priority zones to be involved in new strategies, especially when lack of cooperation among neighbouring territories laying in different Member States is evident. In this regard, the Rapporteur welcomes the implementation of a macro regional strategy for the Mediterranean basin, in order to structure this essential space for the future of Europe.

TIMETABLE

Exchange of views: 11/07/2011, 06/10/2011

Consideration of working doc.: 22/11/2011

Consideration of draft report: 30/05/2012

Deadline for amendments:

Adoption REGI: 21/06/2012 (tbc)

Adoption in plenary: July 2012 (tbc)

17. Common Fisheries Policy (Point 19 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Younous Omarjee (GUE/NGL)
Responsible administrator: Gabriel Alvarez
Procedure: 2011/0195(COD)
Main committee: PECH - Ulrike Rodust

The Rapporteur will present his draft opinion on the reform of the Common Fisheries Policies.

The Common Fisheries Policy needs a fundamental reform by repealing the current Council Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 on the conservation and sustainable exploitation of fisheries resources under the Common Fisheries

Policy, and replacing it on 1 January 2013 by a new CFP adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on the basis of this proposal.

It has been highlighted that, despite progress since the 2002 reform, the objectives to achieve sustainable fisheries in all its dimensions (environmental, economic and social) have not been met. The European Parliament and the Council of Ministers supported this conclusion.

The main problems that still persist in the CFP are:

- lack of focus in the objectives on environmental, economic and social sustainability;
- insufficient integration of environmental concerns into the policy;
- lack of reliable data to assess all stocks and fleets;
- substantial public financial support to fisheries that does not contribute to achieving the objectives of the CFP;
- low attractiveness of the fishing activities and decline of some coastal communities dependent on fishing;
- top-down micro-management at Union level, lacking flexibility and adaptation to local and regional conditions.

TIMETABLE

Consideration of draft opinion: 30/05/2012

Deadline for amendments: 31 May 2012 (tbc)

Adoption REGI: 21/06/2012 (tbc)

Adoption EMPL: 10/07/2012 (tbc)

Plenary: September 2012 (tbc)

18. Innovative financial instruments in the context of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (Point 20 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Mojca Kleva (S&D)

Responsible administrator: Dagmara Stoerring

Procedure: 2012/2027(INI)

Main committee: BUDG - Eider Gardiazábal Rubial

The Commission Communication of 19 October 2011 on "A new framework for the next generation of innovative financial instruments – the EU equity and debt platforms" (COM(2011)622 final) presents the Commission's view on the future of innovative financial instruments in EU budget spending. Innovative financial instruments should play an increasingly important role in the EU budget spending of the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

In her draft opinion the rapporteur welcomes the Commission's proposal to enhance the use of financial instruments (FI) in the next programming period and stresses that at a time of heavy fiscal constraint and reduced lending capacity on the part of the private sector, the increased use of innovative FI can foster public-private partnerships, achieve a multiplier effect with the EU budget, open up alternative sources of finance and guarantee an important financing stream for strategic regional investments; the rapporteur believes that FI could, as a complement to grants, evolve to become an important aspect of the EU's regional growth strategies. Furthermore the rapporteur urges a legal definition of FI to be included in the upcoming revised Financial Regulation and to become a coherent reference in all legislative acts dealing with FI. The opinion also underlines the importance of the ex ante assessment in identifying situations of market failure or sub-optimal investment and believes that adequate monitoring, reporting and auditing are of the utmost importance in order to ensure that EU resources are being used for the purpose intended. The rapporteur is concerned about the limited institutional capacity of the Commission to accommodate the projected increased role of FI and acknowledges the increased role for cities in the programming and implementation of CSF funds in the next programming period.

TIMETABLE

Consideration of draft opinion: 30/05/2012

Deadline for amendments: 03/06/2012 (tbc)

Adoption REGI: 20/06/2012 (tbc)

Adoption BUDG: 12/07/2012

Plenary: tbc



part 2 meetings of 26 April and 8 May 2012

Here you will find information on the issues discussed in the last REGI meetings held on 26 April and on 8 May 2012. The following items were discussed as foreseen in the draft agendas. No changes were introduced to the draft agendas. Please note that most committee documents (working documents, draft reports, etc.) are available at our website [REGI](#).

MEETING OF 26 APRIL 2012

1. Chair's announcements

Before the debate, the Chair announced the committee and the committee endorsed, the changes proposed by Working Party on the Future Cohesion Policy on the committee's calendar of the EU cohesion legislative package, according to which the draft legislative report on the CPR is further to be debated in REGI meetings of 8th and 29 May. A deadline for amendments was opened from 8 May up to 31 May. The debate of the amendments will be held on the 20-21 June REGI meeting, with a view to a vote of the draft reports in the July 2012 REGI meeting, and in order to establish a mandate for negotiation with the Commission and the Council. The final vote is intended to take place in Autumn 2012 exact timing of which is yet to be decided depending on the circumstances. Referral to plenary is done after the final vote in line with the Conference of Presidents' approach to structural policies related to the MFF.

The Fund specific regulations will in principle also be voted in July, as decided earlier, but -as the draft reports will not be sent to the plenary but used as eventual mandate for negotiations-, flexibility is possible provided that the Rapporteurs consider appropriate and they present to the committee a strong request.

On the Common Strategic Framework (CSF), the Rapporteurs on the CPR have proposed in their draft report that the CSF is set out in Annex of the CPR, and will be available in English and debated on the 29 May REGI meeting. The CSF Annex is a text linked to the CPR and will be formally presented as an amendment to the Commission's proposal, meaning that it is intended to be voted in July together with the other amendments to the Commission's proposal on the CPR. Therefore, the calendar and the deadline for amendments is the same as for the CPR: from 8 May to 31 May.

2. Common provisions on European Funds and Repealing Regulation (EC) N° 1083/2006

After having debated in several Committee meetings the Working Document on the Common Provisions Regulation, in April, the Rapporteurs, Constanze Angela Krehl and Lambert van Nistelrooij, have presented their draft legislative report (only available in English), containing 67 amendments to the Commission's proposal, which elaborate key issues previously identified and extensively debated, and in particular:

- The legislative nature of the CSF and its scope;
- Enhancing the principle of partnership;
- Ensuring a more place-based approach while maintaining concentration of resources;
- Fine-tuning the timeline foreseen for adoption of PC and OPs;
- Content of the PC;

- Feasibility of the performance reserve as presented in the proposal;
- Concerns about macroeconomic conditionality and its implication on policy implementation;
- Clarifications regarding the provisions on financial instruments (ex-ante assessment and re-use of legacy resources);
- Clarifications of ex-ante conditionality provisions;
- Simplifying the provisions on the audit authority.

In the debate that followed, there was a large consensus between Members, and some particularly important issues were discussed in more detail, including with the Commission, such as the Common Strategic Framework, the performance reserve, macro-economic conditionality and the partnership principle. The Commission has emphasised their wish to maintain the collaboration and "constructive path" with the Parliament, as it has been the case so far.

3. EU programme for social change and innovation

The Rapporteur, Mr. Tomasz Poreba, presented his draft opinion, containing 21 amendments, whereby he stresses that the Commission provides no indication of the added value of combining the three programmes that are already in place and that it fails to show the demarcation between the activities provided for under the new Programme and the support available under cohesion policy funds (ESF, ERDF). Therefore the Rapporteur indicates the need to clearly establish how the new instrument will be integrated with the complementary instruments in place in the cohesion policy field. The Rapporteur believes that the fixed percentage set by the Commission for social experimentation under the Progress access should be made more flexible, and stresses that the social innovation objectives should be pursued only in support of national social systems, and must not take their place. In the current economic climate, of the three instruments, microfinance is the most likely to produce tangible results and accordingly, microfinance's percentage share of the budget for the new Programme should be increased and the essential role it plays in the fight against exclusion should be emphasised. In view of the current economic crisis and the severe budget restrictions introduced in the Member States, the Rapporteur is opposed to an increase in administrative costs (Article 5(3)) and to the 5% budget reserve, whose use is not clearly specified by the Commission. The Rapporteur draws attention to the need for involvement of regional and local authorities in all the operational stages of the programme implementation and he tables amendments that should give priority to the young people for the EURES activities.

4. Establishing a European Neighbourhood Instrument

The Rapporteur has presented his draft opinion, on the establishment of a new European Neighbourhood Instrument 2014-2020 in the framework of the reform of the EU external action financial instruments and following on from the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument 2007-2013, containing 12 amendments. In the debate that followed the presentation, Members focused in particular on the partnership principle and its limits, and on the best ways to implement neighborhood policies, where regional policy could play an important role. The Rapporteur has also clarified that he left out any reference to macro-regional strategies because these cover countries under the partnership instrument.

5. Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II)

The Rapporteur, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, has presented her draft opinion, including 13 amendments, which focus on the fact that cross-border cooperation programmes financed by the Instrument in question are outstanding from the point of view of regional development policy, defending also that dedicating a bigger share of IPA funding towards boosting cross-border cooperation is both necessary and justified, especially from the point of view of Cohesion policy. However, the Rapporteur draws attention to the fact that the criteria of fund allocation concerning IP, would need to be adapted, as should the scope and conditions of funding from IPA and the rules of participation and eligibility applicable.

6. Voting time

- **Adoption of draft opinion: The reform of the Common Fisheries Policy - Overarching Communication**
The opinion was adopted by 35 votes in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention.
- **Adoption of draft opinion: The small scale and artisanal fisheries and the CFP reform**
The opinion was adopted by 35 votes in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention.
- **Adoption of draft opinion: Attractiveness of investing in Europe**
The opinion was adopted by 35 votes in favour, 4 against and 2 abstentions.

7. Cohesion Fund and Repeal of Regulation (EC) N° 1084/2006

After several debates in the REGI committee on the cohesion policy legislative, the Rapporteur, Mr. Bostinaru, has submitted to the Committee his first draft report in English, containing 11 amendments, essentially focusing on energy issues, and aiming at modifying the scope of support of the Cohesion Fund through the provision of the eligibility of district heating and cogeneration plants, as well as the support to energy efficiency in the housing sector. In this context, the Rapporteur emphasises the need to create synergies between the Cohesion Fund and the ERDF in order to boost energy efficiency in housing. The Rapporteur also highlighted the need to focus on promoting focus on accessibility in the context of the development of interoperable railway systems. The Commission has highlighted the need for consistency in the use of EU Funds, by noting that the Cohesion Fund should not undermine the ETS scheme. Members have essentially supported the Rapporteur's positions in the draft report. However, the Commission, in its assessment, expressed some concerns over the possibility that some amendments may put in question the consistency in the use of EU Funds and the specific vocations of each of the Funds, in particular the Cohesion Fund and the ERDF. Indeed, on the housing issue, the Commission accepts the importance of investing in energy efficiency, but stresses however that the vocation of the Cohesion Fund, as provided for in the Treaty, does not cover this issue. Indeed, the ERDF covers all the needs of that type of investment, and extending the scope of the Cohesion Fund would, in the Commission's view, create a risk of dilution of this Fund as to its objective and scope.

8. European Social Fund and Repeal of Regulation (EC) N° 1081/2006

The Rapporteur has submitted her legislative draft opinion only on the 8 May REGI meeting. However, in the meeting of 26 April, the Rapporteur had already presented the main issues, to be included in the proposed amendments to the Commission's proposal, focusing in particular on discrimination, thematic concentration, partnership and indicators, and a large consensus emerged within the Committee on these issues. Members have nevertheless stressed some issues, such as the need to improve the assessment over the ESF, as well as to provide for a better specification of the scope of this Fund. The Commission has communicated that a specific proposal on food for deprived people will be presented after the summer. On indicators, the Commission referred that the proposal contains the minimum common indicators, as there will also be programme-specific indicators. The Commission has also warned that if the performance framework is eliminated, the indicators will no longer make any sense.

9. 2013 Budget - Mandate for trilogue

Mr. Stavrakakis, REGI Rapporteur for the budgetary procedure 2013, has submitted his draft opinion on the mandate for the trilogue, drawing the attention of Members to certain major issues concerning the budgetary implementation in the field of Cohesion Policy, and in particular the possibility of spillover problems in 2013 in terms of payments. Indeed, the Rapporteur warns of the need to address sufficiently in time the issue of the availability of payment appropriations in order to fully satisfy the acceleration of the implementation in heading 1b at the end of the programming period. He furthermore proposes to make clear that any cuts or decreases operated

by the Council in the level of payments which will be proposed by the Commission in its draft budget will be refused.

10. Trans-European energy infrastructure and Repeal of Decision N° 1364/2006/EC

The Rapporteur has presented his draft report, containing 26 amendments, placing emphasis on the regional dimension of energy infrastructure, bearing in mind especially their direct impact on citizens. The Rapporteur proposes a wider treatment of gas infrastructure projects in a sense of inclusion of all their necessary elements into the eligibility list in order to achieve technical consistency and facilitate smooth operation of vital gas corridors throughout Europe, while advocating procedural simplicity and further participation of stakeholders, as general guiding principles of development of Trans-European energy infrastructure. In the debate that followed, Members have noted several issues, and in particular on the decision-making process at regional level for the selection of projects, defending that regional authorities and not the Commission, should be competent for the organisation of procedures. The Commission has raised some "points of concern" as far as some specific amendments are concerned, notably amendments 6 and 16 of the draft report.

11. European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (2014-2020)

Although there is a possibility of postponement of the vote in the lead committee, as a result of an ongoing Rule 50 procedure (requested by AGRI), the committee decided to keep the calendar in REGI, including the deadline for amendments. In case the lead committee vote is indeed postponed, the decision on the date of the vote in REGI can be reviewed at a later stage. Therefore, the Rapporteur has presented his draft opinion, containing 23 amendments, expressing support to maintain the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund after 2013, but highlighting the need for modifying the scope of the fund. In this context, the Rapporteur disagrees with the Commission's proposal for expanding the scope of the Fund to the agricultural sector. The Rapporteur also opposes the idea to include owner-managers of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises to the EAGF, because the EAGF is intended to focus on the social sectors more severely affected by globalisation. Members have highlighted that in some cases the disruption of businesses is not due to globalisation, and should therefore be the responsibility of the Member States and of the companies involved. The Commission has given an exhaustive explanation of the proposal, clarifying that their intention was to open the door to fairness. The Commission has also communicated that the Council has only now started the discussion of the proposal at the technical level, and that the continuation of the Fund as such is being debated at another political level. Finally, the Commission has clarified that the funding under the EAGF cannot come from the Structural Funds, and that the EAGF cannot benefit a company as it only intervenes to assist workers.

MEETING OF 8 MAY 2012

1. EU Cohesion Policy Strategy for the Atlantic Area

Following a political request from the Council and Parliament for a strategy for the Atlantic area, the Commission published in 2011 a communication entitled 'Developing a Maritime Strategy for the Atlantic Ocean Area'. In 2012 and 2013 the public and private Atlantic partners will be involved in the preparation of an action plan proposing specific actions. The strategy will then be launched in 2014 and will receive European, national and regional funding.

Mr Cadec (FR, PPE) presented his draft report on the EC proposal. It was followed by a debate with the Shadows and the Members. The European Commission gave its position on the issues raised in the debate.

The aim of the report is to put forward concrete proposals to define the political priorities of the action plan. The report proposes that the Atlantic strategy should take the form of a macro-regional strategy in order to promote synergies among the various instruments and levels of action involved in spatial planning policies.

The deadline for amendments was set for 15 May, at 12:00.

2. Exchange of views on the Cohesion Policy Legislative Package with the representatives of the Major EU Regional Organisations

The stakeholders invited gave their detailed position on the Cohesion Policy Legislative Package, as well as presenting their own proposal for amendments to the Commission proposal. An exchange of views followed with the Members and the European Commission that closed the debate by answering the risen questions.

In this regard, the representatives of the four major EU regional organizations highlighted their overall agreement with the amendments presented by Rapporteurs in their draft report.

The main points covered by each representative were, among others:

Jean-Yves LE DRIAN, President of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)

Macroeconomic and ex-ante conditionality

- Why the macroeconomic conditionality should apply only to the cohesion policy and no to the other European Budgets;
- Agreement with the EP's position on the CSF as an annex (against the position of the Commission for a delegated act);
- The ex-ante conditionality should have a direct link with the structural funds.

Michèle SABBAN, President of the Assembly of European Regions (AER);

Thematic concentration and flexibility

- With the main objective of improving the economic activities and reducing the social disparities inside the regions, the cohesion policy must be flexible and integrated and be part of a global territorial strategy;
- In order to face the current economical crisis, choosing priorities is essential but it is essential leaving to the regions flexibility to implement policies that make sense considering peculiarities and specificities of that region, at the same time. Priorities must be defined at regional level and developed and agreed at national level: the regions must have a central place in choosing the thematic of the Partnership Contracts with the Member States and the Commission;
- The focus on the EU2020 strategy and objectives cancel the main objective at the base of the CSF out: the economical, social and territorial cohesion.

Carola GUNNARSSON, Chair of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR);

Partnership Contracts and Multilevel Governance

- Strong support to the partnership principle seen as a general principle as for the European policy that affects local and regional authorities;
- The competent local and regional public authorities shall be fully involved in the preparation of the PC as well as in all phases of cohesion policy implementation, in a structured and systematic way;
- It would be essential to have a clear definition of the 'partners' and how they will be involved in the policy process.

Paul TILSLEY, Member of Executive Committee, EUROCITIES;

Urban dimension in the Cohesion Package

- The proposed new instruments ITIs seen as positive element but fully effective only if the management and implementation process will be well developed. ITIs should fully facilitate the combination of ESF, ERDF and CF funding across operational programmes;
- The major cities must be involved in the national process of determining investments priorities. Enhancing the role of cities is crucial to ensure effective multi-level governance and better value for money; this must be clarified in article 5;

- 5% minimum allocation for integrated sustainable urban development: with 75% of EU's population, urban areas deserve a much greater share of investments than 5%;
- List of cities: disagreement among the various representatives, with the EURO CITIES board that strongly support its creation, arguing at the same time, that Member States should develop clear and transparent criteria for adding cities to the list. Explicit and transparent selection of cities for delegation of funds based on a national process and criteria developed in partnership with cities needed. This must be clarified in article 7 of the ERDF regulation;
- Urban Development Platform: it could provide added value if it facilitates a direct dialogue between the commission and the cities on integrated sustainable urban development.

3. Consideration of draft reports and/or draft opinions on the legislative package for the future cohesion policy

The deadline for amendments was set for the whole package, for May 31st, at 18:00.

3.1 Common provisions on European Funds and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006

The Rapporteurs, Constanze Angela Krehl (DE, S&D) and Lambert van Nistelrooij (NL, EPP), briefed Members on the state of play of their work, presenting the second version of the draft legislative report, putting forward a second wave of amendments. As explained by the Rapporteurs, the new amendments presented in the draft report centre key issues already identified in the working document, among others the following:

- Gender equality
- Discrimination and marginalized communities;
- Budgetary issues;
- Alignment with EU2020;
- Technical assistance;
- Financial instruments.

A third debate will take place in the meeting of the 29 of May, with a view to consider these in June and vote in REGI in July.

The Rapporteurs also introduced a draft version of the CSF skeleton, presented in their report, to be set out in Annex of the CPR, as argued in the previous meetings.

In the debate that followed, Members and the Commission discussed in more detail some particularly important issues, such as the Common Strategic Framework and the money to be devoted to 'Connecting Europe Facility'. In addition, the Commission emphasised its wish to maintain the collaboration on a "constructive path" with the Parliament, as it has been the case so far.

3.2. Specific provisions concerning the European Regional Development Fund and the 'Investment for growth and jobs' goal and repeal of Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 (exchange of views)

The Rapporteur Mr Olbrycht (PL, EPP) presented his position and the reasons justifying the amendments he intends to put forward in his Draft Report to be presented during the next Committee meeting on the 29th of May. The Rapporteur also stressed that a major part of the ERDF regulation depends on the provision of the Common Provisions Regulation.

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aims to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions. The ERDF supports regional and local development by co-financing investments in R&D and innovation; climate change and environment; business support to SMEs; services of common economic interest; telecommunication, energy and transport infrastructures; health, education and social infrastructures; and sustainable urban development.

3.3. Support from the European regional Development Fund to the 'European territorial cooperation' goal

The European Territorial Cooperation is one of the goals of cohesion policy and provides a framework for the implementation of joint actions and policy exchanges between national, regional and local actors from different Member States. This is all the more important given that the challenges faced by Member States and

regions increasingly cut across national /regional boundaries and require joint, co-operative action at the appropriate territorial level.

The Rapporteur, Ms Riikka Manner (FI, ALDE) presented her draft opinion containing the first wave of amendments she proposes to put forward to the Commission's proposal, mainly on three topics: the financing provision (the Rapporteur defends the position already agreed by the Parliament for the levels of financing and flexibility required by the cooperation programmes); the thematic concentration and investments priorities (the Rapporteur proposes more flexibility with 6 objectives to choose instead of 4); new concepts and tools to improve the management of programmes (the Rapporteur welcomes the provisions of the proposal on these topics, but will propose amendments on some points that are not completely clear). Shadows and Members showed an overall agreement with these issues.

In the following, Mr Petr Osvald, Rapporteur on the opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the ETC goal, presented the essential elements of his opinion.

3.4. European Social Fund and repeal of Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006

The draft opinion was presented. The Rapporteur, Ms. Perez (ES, S&D) included in it the amendments she intends to put forward to the Commission's proposal, focusing, in particular, on integration of young people in the working life, reintegration of workers when crisis conditions arise and mobility programs. A debate followed with the shadow Rapporteurs.

The European Social Fund (ESF) is established by Article 262 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The timing of the review of the EU funding to promote cohesion is linked to the proposal for a new Multiannual Financial Framework.

In terms of scope, the draft ESF Regulation for 2014-2020 proposes to target the ESF on four "thematic objectives" throughout the European Union; i) Promoting employment and labour mobility; ii) investing in education, skills and lifelong learning; iii) promoting social inclusion and combating poverty; iv) enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration. In addition the ESF should contribute also to other thematic objectives such as supporting the shift towards low-carbon, climate resilient and resource efficient economy, enhancing the use on information and communication technologies, strengthening research, technological development and innovation and enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Furthermore, the draft Regulation aims to reinforce social innovation and transnational cooperation under the ESF and clarifies its contribution to the Union's commitment to eliminate inequalities between women and men and prevent discrimination.

4. Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs): competitiveness and business opportunities

This Communication is a new yearly initiative that looks specifically at the competitiveness of the Member States. It will contribute to the evaluation of the Member States under the broader framework of the European semester and Europe 2020. SMEs represent the most dynamic sector of EU's economy and the main driving force for occupational growth and innovation. In a globally changing landscape, characterised by continuous structural changes and competitive pressure, the EU must foster the potential of SMEs, as they will be decisive for the future prosperity of Europe.

The Rapporteur, Ms. Hyusmenova (BG, ALDE) presented her draft opinion on SMEs' competitiveness in the EU. The Rapporteur proposed measures to boost the competitiveness of SMEs focused on reduction of the bureaucracy and administrative procedures; access to finances; support from the CP and coordination with other sources of financial support.

5. Optimising the role of territorial development in Cohesion Policy

The Rapporteur, Mr. Vaughan (GB, S&D), presented his working document, focused on exploring effective and efficient mechanisms to create synergies between the European funding programmes at regional and local level. Exchange of views with guest speakers and experts will take place during the forthcoming REGI meetings.



part 3 - other news

Here you will find the latest news related to Committee activities and cohesion policy issues



Chair's participation on events on behalf of the Committee

Ms Hübner has participated as a chairperson of the Committee in the following events since the last meeting:

07 May	Brussels Solvay Library	Polish Ministry on Regional Development	High-Level Conference on 'Searching for growth and jobs in the time of austerity measures in the EU'
8 May	Brussels EP	European Disability Forum	Workshop organised by Ms Hübner in the EP on request of EDF on the topic "Disability in the Structural Funds framework 2014- 2020".
10 May	Brussels	Forum of the Committee of the Regions	Regions and cities for integrated territorial development A Common Strategic Framework for cohesion policy, rural development and fisheries funds for the period 2014-2020

* * *

Ms Hübner, representing the committee, has accepted so far an invitation to participate (during the coming weeks) in the following events:

30 May, 8.00-10.00	EP Brussels	MEP BREZINA Jan	Breakfast debate on "Territorial dimension of growth in Central Europe - EU Funds 2014"
31 May - 1st June	Brussels CoR	ETF (European Training Foundation)	International Conference on "Multilevel governance in education and training: challenges and opportunities"
4 June Morning	EP Brussels	Roma Education Fund	Final Closing Conference of the 'A Good Start' project Agenda - Policy implications of the use of Structural Funds 2014-2020 for Roma early childhood development

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More information is available at the Chair's website <http://danuta-huebner.pl/> or with the secretariat.



Recent publications in the field of Regional Development

Books and articles



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[Wie können Ziele der EU und regionale Strategien verbunden werden?](#) / Anne Schopp, DIW Wochenbericht Nr. 5, 2012, 11p.

Auf den Europäischen Fonds für Regionale Entwicklung entfällt rund ein Fünftel des gesamten EU-Haushalts. Am Beispiel Deutschlands wird hier untersucht, inwieweit es beim Einsatz der Mittel gelingt, sowohl die strategischen Ziele der Europäischen Kommission als auch Prioritäten der Empfängerregionen – Bundesländer – zum Tragen kommen zu lassen. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass die auf sieben Jahre angelegten Förderperioden – aktuell von 2007 bis 2013 – die Bundesländer dabei unterstützen, langfristige Strategien der Regionalentwicklung zu verfolgen und dabei auch europäische Ziele zu berücksichtigen. Allerdings besteht in Bezug auf die Integration von europäischen und regionalen Zielen Verbesserungsbedarf. Der zurzeit diskutierte Vorschlag der EU-Kommission zum künftigen EU-Finanzrahmen 2014 bis 2020 strebt eine engere Verbindung der „Europa 2020“-Strategie mit regionalen Förderschwerpunkten an. Hier bedarf es jedoch weiterer Konkretisierungen. So hängt die effektive Verfolgung der EU-Energie- und Klimaziele innerhalb des Europäischen Fonds für Regionale Entwicklung auch davon ab, ob es klare Kriterien gibt, die festlegen, welche Förderung tatsächlich zur Steigerung von Energieeffizienz und zum Ausbau erneuerbarer Energien beiträgt.

Latest analysis



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[Compact City Policies: A Comparative Assessment](#) / OECD Green Growth Studies - OECD Publishing, May 2012, 283 p.

This book examines the concept of the compact city and the implication of the current urban context for compact city policies. It explores their potential outcomes, particularly in terms of how it can contribute to Green Growth and looks at developing indicators to monitor compact city and track policy performance. It reviews compact city policies currently being implemented across the OECD in relation to the pursuit of Green Growth objectives and provides ideas to achieve better outcomes. And it assesses the key governance challenges faced by decision-makers as they seek to implement practical compact city strategies. This report is thus intended as "food for thought" for national, sub-national and municipal governments as they seek to address their economic and environmental challenges through the development and implementation of spatial strategies in pursuit of Green Growth objectives. It also illustrates best practices (which present key elements of successful compact city policies) based on empirical evidence that can be shared across OECD member countries. (Source: OECD)



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[Challenges and Funding Opportunities for the Energy Efficient Renovation of Spain's Residential Building Stock](#) / WWF Spain, May 2012, 27 p.

This report highlights the fact that "it is necessary to remove regulatory barriers to greater energy efficiency, such as the ones that hinder decision-making in multi-unit dwellings, and to clearly promote the benefits of deep renovation through information campaigns to Spanish citizens. In addition, it is also critical to align the economic interests of the different building sector stakeholders, concentrate investments in deep renovations, and deliver long-term and low-cost funding for retrofits."



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[EUROCIITIES response to the Commission consultation on financial support for energy efficiency in buildings](#), May 2012, 3 p.

In its response to the to the Commission consultation on financial support for energy efficiency in buildings Eurocities concludes that "City authorities are key to increasing the energy efficiency of buildings in the EU. As they are closest to citizens, SMEs and building owners, they are best placed to raise awareness, assist with energy efficiency measures and support a holistic, integrated approach that brings all relevant actors and needs together. City actions on energy efficiency must be supported by an effective legal and financial framework at the EU, national and regional level that enables cities to act and provides the right incentives for the private sector."



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[Differences and similarities between CIP and COSME: briefing note](#) /Policy Department A - Economic and Scientific Policy, April 2012, 20 p.

Abstract: This briefing note presents a comparison between the current Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) and the proposed programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs (COSME) for 2014-2020. Particular emphasis is placed on the transfer of measures as well as the synergies with other funding opportunities, in particular in the field of research and innovation with the upcoming Horizon 2020 programme.