The future of cohesion policy post-2020

• reduce regional disparities
• adequate budget needed
• simplify procedures and improve synergies
• increase visibility of structural funds

An adequate budget, synergies between funds and simplification can improve EU’s post-2020 cohesion policy aimed at reducing regional disparities.

The existing cohesion policy has mitigated the impact of the recent economic crisis and that of austerity measures, but regional disparities and social inequalities remain high, say MEPs in a resolution adopted by 350 votes to 149, with 171 abstentions.

They call for consolidated action in the post-2020 cohesion policy to reduce these disparities, and to prevent new ones from developing in all types of regions.

Key proposals to improve the post-2020 cohesion policy:

• an adequate budget
• better synergies between funds
• the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) “should not undermine the strategic coherence, territorial concentration and long-term perspective of cohesion policy programming”
• simplifying its overall management system at all governance levels
• harmonisation between cohesion policy and competition policy, in particular regarding state aid rules
• keeping grants as the basis of its financing, whilst the use of loans, equity or guarantees “should be used with caution”

For more information on the funds received by each member state click on the interactive map (EU Commission website)
Find all projects funded by regional policy in your country here.

The rapporteur, Kerstin Westphal (S&D, DE), said: “The EU structural funds create jobs and help deal with problems like climate change. They are a driving force for growth and sustainable development. The Parliament sends out today a clear signal about how important retaining cohesion policy is. We want a modern, non-bureaucratic cohesion policy, one which provides funding where necessary, for all regions, designed for people and simpler.

Boost visibility of Structural Funds

In a separate resolution adopted by 469 votes to 51, with 13 abstentions, MEPs propose ways to increase the visibility of EU cohesion policy, as one of the most recent Eurobarometer studies revealed that only one third of EU citizens are aware of the positive impact of EU investments in the regions where they live. MEPs point to the “increase in Euroscepticism and in anti-European populist propaganda that distorts information on Union policies”.

Improving access to information by creating a communication strategy for digital and social media and highlighting the benefits that cohesion policy brings to the real economy (i.e. by fostering innovation and creating jobs and growth) could enhance the visibility of cohesion policy, say MEPs.

The rapporteur, Daniel Buda (EPP, RO), said: “The communication methods on the results of European structural investments have not been the most effective so far and they are different in each and every member state. A better coordination among public authorities, social and economic partners and civil society is needed in order to better communicate the goals of the EU and increase the interest of citizens in the European projects.”

Procedure: non-legislative resolutions
Further information:
Adopted texts will soon be available here (13.06.2017)
Video recording of the joint debate (click on 12.06.2017)
Procedure file (post-2020 EU cohesion policy)
Procedure file (increasing visibility of ESI Funds)
EP Research study on post-2020 cohesion policy
Briefing note: Building blocks for post-2020 cohesion policy
Briefing note: Increasing partnership in cohesion policy
Profile of rapporteur Kerstin Westphal (S&D, DE)
Commission website on EU Regional policy
Audiovisual material for media

Political groups
News pages of the EPP group
News pages of the S&D group
News pages of the ECR group
News pages of the ALDE group
News pages of the GUE/NGL group
News pages of the Greens/EFA group
News pages of the EFDD group
News pages of the ENF group

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