

## Support for development projects must continue in all EU regions after 2020, MEPs say

- Cohesion policy coverage of all EU regions “a red line” for Parliament’s consent to next EU multi-annual budget
- MEPs worry that EU Commission may propose cutting the cohesion policy budget
- Cohesion policy should not be presented as the sole solution to each and every crisis

### **All EU regions should continue receiving sufficient resources to co-fund their regional development projects after 2020, MEPs say.**

The EU cohesion policy budget must remain large enough after 2020 to fund EU investments in regional development projects that are capable of meeting current and future challenges, say Regional Development Committee MEPs in a non-legislative resolution passed by 35 votes to 4, with 1 abstention.

They stress that concentrating cohesion policy on the EU’s least-developed regions in response to a loss of funds due to Brexit “would hinder progress in political priorities of the whole European Union”.

### **Concerns over upcoming post-2020 EU budget proposals**

MEPs are “extremely concerned” that many EU regions would be excluded from the scope of cohesion policy in the scenarios recently presented by the EU Commission for the EU’s long-term budget, the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF).

They call for an ambitious budget to match the challenges faced by the regions, and say that cohesion policy must not be made an “adjustment variable”, stressing that cohesion policy “coverage of all EU regions is a ‘red line’ for the European Parliament”.

### Cohesion policy is not a solution to all crises

Employment, social inclusion, fighting poverty, supporting innovation, digitalisation, support for SMEs and start-ups, climate change, the circular economy and infrastructure should constitute priority areas for future cohesion policy, says the text. Cohesion policy can also help to meet new challenges, such as security or the integration of refugees under international protection, but “it cannot be the solution to all crises”, it adds.

### New criteria for allocating funds

Although regional per capita GDP should remain the main criterion for allocating EU cohesion funds, other criteria should also be taken into account, to provide a more precise picture of socio-economic conditions, MEPs stress. They advocate using social, environmental and demographic criteria, in particular the unemployment rate and the youth unemployment rate.

### Quote

Rapporteur [Marc Joulaud \(EPP, FR\)](#) said: “With this vote, the Regional Development Committee sends a strong message for an ambitious cohesion policy covering all EU regions ahead of the Commission's proposal on the next Multiannual Financial Framework. Based on a broad consultation with local and regional authorities and beneficiaries on the ground, the report adopted today stresses the need to simplify cohesion policy and to bring Europe closer to its citizens through concrete projects.”

### Background

Data on EU cohesion policy contributions to growth, jobs, transport, energy, the environment, education and training in the 2014-2020 programming period, including help for 1.1 million SMEs; are set out in the [Seventh Cohesion Report](#), published by the European Commission in October 2017.

These contributions led directly to the creation of an extra 420,000 new jobs, helped more than 7.4 million unemployed people to find jobs and over 8.9 million people to gain new qualifications.

The Commission will present its proposals in May for the next Multiannual Financial Framework and the regulatory framework for the next European Structural and Investment Funds after 2020.

Current EU funding for regional and cohesion policy projects proposed by EU countries to create growth and jobs and reduce economic gaps between EU regions amounts to €351.8 billion, or 32.5% of the EU budget for 2014-2020.

### Further information

[Regional development committee](#)

[Meeting documents](#)

[Profile of rapporteur on the 7th Cohesion report, Marc Joulaud \(EPP, FR\)](#)

[Procedure file on the 7th Cohesion report](#)

[EP Briefing note on the Challenges for EU cohesion policy: Issues in the forthcoming post-2020 reform](#)

[EU Commission webpage on successful regional projects](#)

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