Press release

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European Parliament

Special measures for Greece: 100% absorption rate

- 131 projects finished on time and no funding was lost
- Greece among the member states with the best absorption rates of funding for this period

The specific financing measures agreed in 2015 led to the successful completion of projects in Greece, underlined the EP in a vote adopted on Tuesday.

The rapid decline in GDP faced by all Greek regions due to the crisis, combined with liquidity shortages, the lack of public funds and the unprecedented refugee crisis had stopped a lot of projects, which it was not possible to complete, because they did not fulfil financing conditions.

As such, the European Parliament and the Council agreed in 2016 to implement additional specific financing measures for Greece, in order to not lose cohesion funds under the 2007-2013 programming period and to be able to start projects under the current period (2014-2020), in particular in 2015 and 2016.

The text was adopted with 591 votes for, 71 against and 19 abstentions.

Positive effects on the economy in a period of inadequate liquidity

The implementation of Regulation 2015/1839 allowed programmes and projects to continue thanks to the increase in the EU co-financing rate to 100% for the 2007-2013 period, something which has never occurred for any country or programme. Greece was therefore the first member state to fully take up all of the resources at its disposal and absorbed 100% of community funding in 2007-2013.

In order for projects to be completed during programming period 2014-2020, pre-financing from cohesion funds was increased. As a result, in 2015 and 2016 Greece received additional funding of 2 billion euros, which played an important role in sustaining the Greek economy at a time of stretched financial liquidity.

MEPs noted that according to European Commission data, Greece is among the member states with the best absorption rates of funding during the current programme period.

Need for effectiveness and quality investments

However, MEPs noted that the absorption of funds should not be at the expense of effectiveness, added value and quality of investments.

Quote

Rapporteur Pascal Arimont (EPP, BE), said :

“We as Parliament always emphasised that the funding (...) is tied to putting in place and completing these important projects and to structural reforms, which Greece absolutely had to accomplish. (...) We checked in-depth whether the financial means, 2 billion Euros, have been well invested and used. The result is: Greece has delivered. The country has established a priorities list of important projects and has worked it off. 131 projects were finished in time and no funding has been lost.”

“(The EU) was able to help the Greek people in an efficient way. Yes, these measures were a sign of lived solidarity. (...) In the future, we will need to make sure, that these investments are sustainable, secure jobs and increases quality of life.”

Background

The funding under Regulation 2015/1839 was made available to complete projects in Greece in the following sectors: transport, the environment, tourism, culture, urban renovation and rural reconstruction, social housing, information society and development of human resources. From the 50,000 projects, only 79 remain to be completed, according to the European Commission.

The projects were financed under the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

Further information

Procedure file
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