

In Focus



REGI-COTER Joint Public Hearing on Urban Agenda

25 January 2016

On 25 January, REGI Committee organized together with COTER Members (Committee of the Region's) a joint hearing to discuss the future of EU Urban policy and the Pact of Amsterdam with experts and practitioners. They stress the need for a practical and concrete approach, based on the needs on the ground, and building partnerships with different levels of government. The new European Urban Agenda should improve the quality of life in cities, and also EU governance. New working methods, including partnerships, are crucial to kick start the Urban Agenda after years of debate and declarations.

Iskra Mihaylova, Chairwoman of the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Development (REGI), said: "I firmly believe that the European Parliament, together with the other EU institutions, national governments and local and regional actors, has a key role to play in shaping the new urban paradigm."

It is important to identify and tackle bottlenecks between different levels of government, both with regards to rules and funding instruments. In addition, improved coordination and implementation of existing policies and programmes impacting on cities is crucial."

"I welcome the efforts announced by the Dutch presidency of the Council of Ministers to put forward the EU Urban Agenda," said Raffaele Cattaneo (EPP, IT), chairman of the CoR's Committee for Territorial Cohesion Policy and the EU Budget (COTER). "However, it is crucial that the EU Urban Agenda goes beyond the intergovernmental level and is closely linked to the Better regulation Agenda of the European Commission, including within its framework the use of Territorial and Urban Impact Assessments "

This was the first joint hearing held by the two assemblies. Prof. Parkinson, from Liverpool University, introduced elements for debate, in particular on the need to reconsider regional policy in light of the development of vast metropolitan areas in Europe. Members considered several case studies, particularly that of Accessible Housing & Urban Poverty presented by Jelena Ricov, Office for EU Programmes and Projects of Zagreb. The Dutch Presidency of the Council reaffirmed its commitment to promoting partnerships with regional and local authorities and to presenting in May the final text of the Amsterdam Pact.

Picture Gallery:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/cor-photos/sets/72157663358551490>



Last time - REGI meeting – 11 and 14 January 2016

Exchange of views with Mr. Ronald Plasterk, Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations and with Mr. Martijn van Dam, Minister for Agriculture, on the priorities of the Dutch Presidency of the Council



Two representatives from the Dutch Presidency highlighted the most important issues for the upcoming months.



Ronald PLASTERK
Minister of the Interior
and Kingdom Relations

Mr Van Dam first presented the Presidency's philosophy, speaking about the focus on the bigger issues such as simplification, transparency and creation of growth and jobs. He announced that the meeting of the Director Generals on 13 May will be devoted to simplification, synergies between ESIF and Horizon 2020, and smart specialisation.



Martijn van DAM
Minister for Agriculture

Mr Plasterk focused on the importance of the [Urban Agenda](#) when presenting the new European re-urbanisation trend. He also announced that the Pact of Amsterdam will be finalised on 30 May, and it is planned that the Council will adopt conclusions on this topic in June. The initial cooperation projects developed under the Pact of Amsterdam are due to start in the first half of the year.

Following short presentations from the Dutch Presidency, there was an exchange with REGI Members. The full discussion is available on video [HERE](#).

Ahead of us - REGI meeting – 15 – 16 February 2016

(*) agenda of the forthcoming meeting might be changed after publication of the Newsletter

Presentation of a study on "Review of the role of the EIB Group in European Cohesion policy"



The aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive analysis and assessment of how Cohesion Policy objectives have been delivered through measures that involved the European Investment Bank. The study finds that the role of the European Investment Bank in Cohesion Policy increased significantly in the 2007-13 programme period and continues to increase in 2014-20. Research results show that there is limited understanding of the effectiveness of European Investment Bank contributions to Cohesion Policy. In order to increase accountability, the inter-institutional relationship between the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Development and the European Investment Bank should be strengthened. The study was commissioned by Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies upon request of the REGI Committee, and carried out by the European Policies Research Centre (University of Strathclyde).

Implementation of the thematic objective "enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs" (Article 9(3)) of the Common Provisions Regulation

[2015/2282\(INI\)](#)



Rapporteur:
Rosa D'AMATO

This is the first implementation of the REGI Committee in this parliamentary Term. the thematic objective 'enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs' (TO 3) is of primary importance in order to reach the objectives of cohesion policy and the Europe 2020 strategy.

Introducing thematic concentration in the cohesion policy programming 2014-2020 provided an effective tool to design operational programmes with better focus on investment priorities; through thematic concentration, operational programmes appeared to be better targeted towards a limited number of strategic goals, in particular in terms of growth enhancement and high quality job creation potential for SMEs.

The vote is planned in April.

Cohesion Policy and Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation RRIS3

[2015/2278\(INI\)](#)



Rapporteur:
Ramón Luis VALCÁRCEL SISO

Under the rules of the reformed Cohesion Policy 2014-2020 national or regional "Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3)" are an ex-ante conditionality for the allocation of ESI funding. These strategies are important because they support thematic concentration and strategic programming of the ESI Funds and lead to an increased performance orientation of their implementation on the ground. Based on each region's relative strengths and opportunities, their aim is to create knowledge-based growth not only in well-developed areas, but also in less-developed and rural regions.

Member States or regions who have not yet complied with this conditionality are currently working on their strategies – in cooperation with the Commission - in the framework of actions plans.

The draft report is a contribution to a first assessment of the implementation of the RIS3. The vote on this draft report is planned for April 2016.

Exchange of views with Siim Kallas, chair of the High-Level Group on simplification of cohesion policy



Siim KALLAS

The "High Level Expert Group on Monitoring Simplification for Beneficiaries of ESI Funds" has started working in October 2015 to reduce the impact of the complex administrative rules on beneficiaries. In this context, it has addressed important issues, such as the simplified cost options, e-cohesion, accessibility of EU funding for SMEs and Financial Instruments.

The REGI Committee has expressed strong support for this important work, hoping that through simplification barriers can be lifted so that the benefits of ESI Funds are accessible to an even wider variety of recipients in the regions. The chair of the HLG, Siim Kallas will report about the activities and discuss the first results with REGI Members.

Upcoming events in Brussels or near to your home

Date		Place	Additional info
12/02/2016	European Metropolitan Authorities (EMA 2016) FORUM: Towards a Common European Metropolitan Agenda	Torino, Italy	
15-16/02/2016	REGI Committee meeting	EP, Brussels	
04/03/2016	REGIO-ERSA Joint Lecture on Smart Specialization	EC, DG Regio Brussels	
07-08/03/2016	Implementing the European Structural and Investment Funds Regulations, 2014-2020	Maastricht, Netherlands	
29-31/03/2016	REGI Delegation	Martinique, France	

Useful internet links

[REGI Website](#)

[EP studies Website](#)

[EP Library - Info on items related to regional development](#)

[OEIL - The Legislative Observatory](#)

[Regional Policy Inforegio](#)

[EUR-Lex](#)

[Committee of the Regions](#)