

Newsletter



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A word from the Chair

Dear Colleagues,

Dear Friends,



With only a few months to go before the publication of the new legislative proposals, the REGI Committee is actively debating what cohesion policy should look like after 2020. In our March meeting, we will vote on our draft report on the 7th Cohesion Report, which outlines our Committee's thinking for the future.

In this meeting, we will also begin our work on the new Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) proposal. It aims to build on the legislation that entered into force in 2017. The Programme provides tailor-made support to all EU countries for their institutional, administrative and growth-supporting reforms.

Furthermore, as part of our Committee's regular dialogue with the Commission, the Commissioner in charge of our policy area, Ms Corina Crețu, will come to our meeting to talk about recent and likely future developments in Regional Policy. You can follow the discussion live on the REGI website.

I look forward to seeing you at our next meeting,

Yours,

Iskra Mihaylova

Border Focal Point



[a new EU network to break down cross-border barriers to jobs and investments](#)



Last time

REGI meeting – 20 February 2018

Implementation report on Article 9(7) of the Common Provisions Regulation



Andrey Novakov

Mr Andrey Novakov, the rapporteur of the implementation report entitled “Cohesion Policy and thematic objective ‘promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures’ - Article 9(7) of the Common Provisions Regulation”, presented his draft report in the REGI February meeting.

In his presentation, he said that this is a crucial moment for transport, and that it should be made clear that the policy area is a priority for the EU. He also stressed that a strong voice from the REGI Committee is needed.

The draft report aims at drawing conclusions on the implementation of the thematic objective “promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures” and offering recommendations for concrete actions to be taken.

The vote on the draft report is foreseen for REGI March meeting.

Cohesion Policy reform: presentation of the Joulaud report



Marc Joulaud

Mr Joulaud’s draft report on the 7th Cohesion Report, published by the Commission on 9 October, was discussed during the last meeting. The report intends to deliver the Parliament’s position ahead of the upcoming reform of the Cohesion Policy for the next programming period.

The rapporteur highlights the added value of cohesion policy and considers that it should continue to cover all European regions, with a budget commensurate with the challenges.

He supports a strong thematic concentration on a limited number of priorities linked to major European political objectives; expresses its support for a balanced link with economic governance and calls on the Commission to overhaul the European Semester to strengthen its territorial dimension.

He calls for a genuine single set of rules to be introduced for the various funds and for the Commission to provide a framework which guarantees legal stability through simple, clear and predictable rules.

He supports a shift towards a greater focus on results, allowing managing authorities more flexibility as to how to achieve targets (contract of confidence) and support the need to take account of indicators complementary to per capita GDP.

The necessity to improve compliance with the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity and to increase administrative capacities is also underlined.

Exchange of views with Ms Iliana Ivanova, Member of the European Court of Auditors



Iliana Ivanova

On 20 February, the Committee held an exchange of views with Ms Iliana Ivanova, Member of the European Court of Auditors (ECA) responsible for Investment, for Cohesion, Growth and Inclusion. The discussion centred on the work of the ECA in the field of cohesion policy.

Last time Ms Ivanova exchanged views with REGI, she presented the ECA special report on financial instruments.

In this meeting, she outlined ECA's role in cohesion policy and its functioning. Although the error-rate in Cohesion Policy has decreased over the last decade it still remains one of the main risk areas together with agricultural policy. It has to be noted that an error does not necessarily imply fraud or waste of resources, but can indicate administrative errors. The ECA has observed notable improvements in terms of performance of cohesion policy projects; an increasing number of projects meets the users' needs and the defined objectives. A lack of impact- appropriate indicators, a lack of needs' and gaps' assessments and implementation delays continue to be the largest barriers for better performance.

Ms. Ivanova also told the Committee about the recent changes in the assessment of legality and regularity. While projects were previously always assessed by the ECA itself, the Court has started a pilot project to check whether it can depend more on the assessments carried out by the European Commission and the Member States themselves. By relying more on the work of others, the Court aims to remove administrative burdens for beneficiaries.

Finally, Ms Ivanova told the Committee about ECA's upcoming work. Two topics are especially of interest to REGI: a briefing paper about the simplification of the EU cohesion policy that will be published in the first half of 2018, and a review of the landscape on transport and mobility.

Exchange of views with Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis on the Structural Reform Support Programme



Valdis Dombrovskis

On 20 February, the Committee held an exchange of views with Mr Valdis Dombrovskis, Vice-President of the European Commission for the Euro and Social Dialogue, in charge of Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union. The discussion surrounded the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP).

During the meeting, Mr Dombrovskis provided more information about the proposal recently adopted by the Commission to increase the SRSP budget by an additional 80 million euros until 2020, and to supplement the Programme in order to support Member States that are preparing themselves for eurozone membership.

The Vice-President outlined the importance of structural reforms for economic and social cohesion, convergence, and inclusive growth in EU regions and Member States. The SRSP can enhance structural reforms, while it can help Member States to overcome challenges related to institutional and administrative capacity.

According to Mr Dombrovskis, the interest shown by the Member States in the SRSP to date illustrates the importance of the Programme. For 2017, the Commission received 271 requests from 16 Member States. For this year, 24 Member States have so far submitted a total of 444 requests under the Programme, worth 152 million euros combined.

Some of the REGI members asked about the origin of the extra resources made available and the future of the SRSP after 2020. Mr Dombrovskis stressed that the SRSP budget would be reinforced by using the flexibility Instrument and encouraging Member States to transfer part of their resources from the ESIF technical assistance component to the SRSP. He also believed that the SRSP would continue to exist under the post-2020 MFF, as it is a relatively new programme that has proven to be successful in its initial phase.

*** VOTED IN THE LAST MEETING ***

During the Committee meeting on 20 February 2018 the following texts were adopted (for more information please follow the hyperlink):

TITLE	RAPPORTEUR
Draft report on "Lagging regions in the EU" 2017/2208(INI)	Michela Giuffrida (S&D)
Draft report on " The role of EU regions and cities in implementing the COP 21 Paris Agreement on climate change " 2017/2006(INI)	Ángela Vallina (GUE/NGL)
Draft opinion on "European Semester for economic policy coordination: Annual Growth Survey 2018" 2017/2226(INI)	Iskra Mihaylova (ALDE)
Draft opinion on "2016 discharge: EU general budget - Commission " 2017/2136(DEC)	Iskra Mihaylova (ALDE)

Ahead of us

REGI meeting – 26 & 27 March 2018

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

Cohesion policy and the circular economy



Davor Škrlec

On 26 March, Mr Davor Škrlec (Verts/ALE) will present his draft report, outlining his main ideas on the implementation of cohesion policy and the circular economy.

His draft report underlines that EU cohesion policy is key to making the circular economy a reality and analyses the way to strengthen existing policy tools within both policies to fully exploit their potential.

The draft report also indicates areas where improvement could be made for the post-2020 cohesion policy framework: amongst others, it suggests the implementation of a relevant methodology to allow accurate monitoring of the contribution of cohesion policy to the achievement of a circular economy.

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The rapporteur also believes that the future framework would benefit from a new ex ante conditionality provision related to the achievement of a circular economy. The REGI vote on this own-initiative report is planned for May 2018, with a view to adopting it in the June plenary.

Cohesion policy: last chance for the EP to put forward its point of view



Marc Joulaud

Since the presentation of the 7th Cohesion report by the European Commission, REGI discussed the future of cohesion policy at several meetings. Experts and representatives from other institutions, as well as stakeholders were invited to debate with the Members of the Committee on several occasions.

Mr Marc Joulaud, rapporteur, presented his report during the last meeting (see separate article):. 356 amendments were tabled and 50 compromises are on the table.

The moment of truth has arrived and the Committee will vote on the report to enable Parliament to adopt its position during the April plenary meeting, ahead of the reform proposals that should be presented by the Commission in spring this year.

Cohesion Policy and thematic objective “promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures” - Article 9(7) of the Common Provisions Regulation



Andrey Novakov

Mr Novakov’s draft report on “Cohesion Policy and thematic objective ‘promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures’ - Article 9(7) of the Common Provisions Regulation” is put to the vote in the REGI March meeting.

A total of 131 amendments were received by the deadline and based on those, the rapporteur is proposing several compromise amendments. There is one opinion-giving committee - the Committee on Transport and Tourism.

Increase of the financial envelope of the Structural Reform Support Programme and adapt its general objective



Ruža Tomašić

The Commission proposal on the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) seeks to amend Regulation (EU) 2017/825 to increase the financial envelope of the SRSP and adapt its general objective.

In particular, the Amending Act seeks to amend the article on the objective of the SRSP by adding support for Eurozone membership preparation to the goals of the Programme (the words ‘which will also prepare for participation in the euro area’ are added to the article). It also inserts an article permitting funding for euro preparation actions and activities. Finally, the overall financial envelope for the SRSP is increased from EUR 142.8 million to EUR 222.8 million, which could be further complemented through the technical assistance budget, to an approximate total of EUR 300 million.

The rapporteur for this proposal is Ruža Tomašić (ECR). Ms Tomašić is in favour of the proposal, as she considers that it could be a valuable tool assisting Member States to join the euro area. At this

meeting, she will lead the initial exchange of views on this proposal. She will then aim to submit a draft report for the April meeting of the Committee. As the change affects the SRSP funding for the years 2019 and 2020, it would be desirable for the modifications to enter into force as soon as convenient.

Members may wish to note that the ECON and BUDG committees have associated status under Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure in relation to this proposal.

Exchange of views with Corina Crețu, Commissioner for Regional Policy



Corina Crețu

On Tuesday 27 March, the REGI Committee will hold an exchange of views with Corina Crețu, Commissioner for Regional Policy.

During the Committee meeting she will, amongst others, talk about recent and likely future developments in regional policy. The meeting is a part of our Committee's regular dialogue with the Commission. The last time Ms Crețu appeared before our Committee was in December last year.

Upcoming events in Brussels or near to your home

Date	Event	Place	Additional info
21-23 March	REGI mission	Northern Ireland	
26 March pm 27 March am	REGI committee meeting	EP, Brussels	
03-05 April	REGI mission	Slovenia	
10 April	The future of the EU and the role of the regions / BREXIT: a regional perspective	CoR, Brussels	Registration deadline: 9/04/18
24 May	Conference on Good Governance for Cohesion Policy	EC, Brussels	Registration deadline: 27/04/18
31 May 8.30 - 11.30	STOA-ERC (European Research Council) event "Investing in Young Researchers, Shaping Europe's Future" (STOA@europarl.europa.eu)	EP, Strasbourg	Registration deadline: 28/03/18

Useful internet links

[REGI Website](#)

[EP studies Website](#)

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

[OEIL - The Legislative Observatory](#)

[EUR-Lex](#)

[EC Regional Policy - InfoRegio](#)

[Committee of the Regions](#)

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