

regi news

newsletter of the committee on regional development



Next Committee meeting

Wednesday 27 November 2013

9.00 - 12.30
15.00 - 18.30

Thursday 28 November 2013

9.00 - 12.30

Room JAN 4 Q 2

in focus

- **5th Interparliamentary Committee Meeting with National Parliaments**
- **Vote on :**
 - **Smart specialisation: networking excellence for a sound Cohesion Policy**
 - **EU Member States preparedness to an effective and timely start of the new Cohesion Policy Programming period**
 - **How can the EU contribute to creating a hospitable environment for enterprises, businesses and start-ups to create jobs?**
- **External study on "Internet, digital agenda and economic development of European regions"**

comments and subscriptions at regi-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu

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EP Library - Info on items related to regional development

OEIL - The Legislative Observatory

Regional Policy Info regio

EUR-Lex

Committee of the Regions

EP studies Website

REGI Website



part 1 meeting of 27 and 28 November 2013

Here you will find the topics which will be discussed at the next REGI committee meeting on 27 and 28 November 2013. The following items will be discussed as foreseen in [the draft agenda](#). Please note that most committee documents (working documents, draft reports, etc.) are available at our website [REGI](#).

1. Local and regional consequences of the development of smart grids (Point 4 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Elisabeth Schroedter (Verts/ALE)
Responsible administrator: Monika Makay
Procedure: 2013/2128(INI)
Main committee: REGI

In the exchange of views the Rapporteur, Ms Schroedter will present her draft report, in which she welcomes a paradigm shift for the regions in the way energy is produced and consumed. She also highlights the opportunities for geographical (or territorial) changes to the energy grid for disadvantaged regions, which can develop from energy consumers into energy producers. Furthermore she calls on Member States and the regions to invest as early as possible in local smart grids by using the European Structural and Investment Funds. She stresses that the deployment of smart grids requires a stable, long-term policy framework and calls on the Commission to propose ambitious, binding targets for 2030 for energy efficiency and renewable energies as well as for greenhouse gas emissions. She also stresses that citizens must be involved in all phases of energy and grid planning, implementation and transformation, with public participation at each stage, and the active involvement of distribution service operators and providers of smart grid technologies. Further in her draft report she outlines in detail smart energy systems, positive impacts on local employment, the role of citizens, data protection and privacy and the framework for successful smart energy systems.

TIMETABLE
Consideration of working document: 14/10/2013
Presentation of draft report: 27/11/2013 (tbc)
Deadline for amendments: 29/11/2013 (tbc)
Adoption REGI: 18/12/2013 (tbc)
Plenary: tbc

2. Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking (Point 5 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska (PPE)
Responsible administrator: Dagmara Stoerring
Procedure: 2013/0241(NLE)
Main committee: ITRE

One of the main aims of Horizon 2020, the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation covering the period 2014-2020, is to strengthen European industry through actions supporting research and innovation across a range of industrial sectors. In particular, it provides for the creation of public-private partnerships that will contribute to tackling some of the key challenges Europe is facing.

This proposal concerns setting-up the Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking (BBI JU) for a period ending on 31 December 2024. It will have its seat in Brussels, Belgium. It will be founded by the EU, represented by the European Commission, and the Biobased Industries Consortium (BIC). The activities of the BBI JU will be jointly funded by its founders. The Commission and BIC will contribute in equal parts to the running costs of the BBI JU. The research and demonstration activities will be funded through contributions by the BIC member companies with monetary and non-monetary resources (staff, equipment, consumables, etc.), and monetary resources from the EU. The level of EU resources will vary, in line with Horizon 2020 rules, depending on the type of activity considered. In her draft opinion the Rapporteur presented amendments which, inter alia, emphasise the role of interregional cooperation and the active participation of the regions in drawing up strategies for the bio-economy. She also points at cross financing opportunities and the role of the so-called 'Triple Helix' actors for Joint Technology Initiatives on Bio-based Industries.

TIMETABLE

Consideration of draft opinion: 27/11/2013

Deadline for amendments: 27/11/2013 (tbc)

Adoption REGI: 18/12/2013 (tbc)

Adoption ITRE: 09/01/2014 (tbc)

Plenary: March 2014 (tbc)

3. Long-term financing of the European economy (Point 6 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur Joachim Zeller (PPE)

Responsible administrator: Susanne Pillath

Procedure: 2013/2175 (INI)

Main committee: ECON – Wolf Klinz (ALDE)

The financial crisis has affected the ability of the financial sector in Europe to channel savings to long-term investment needs. Above all, it has created a climate of uncertainty and risk aversion, particularly in those Member States under financial pressure and for SMEs. With the Green Paper 'long-term financing of the European economy' the Commission is seeking to initiate a broad debate about how to foster the supply of long-term financing and how to improve and diversify the system of financial intermediation for long-term investment in Europe.

The Commission identifies the following areas for action to enhance the long-term financing: (1) the capacity of financial institutions to channel long-term finance;(2) the efficiency and effectiveness of financial markets to offer long-term financing instruments; (3) cross-cutting factors enabling long-term saving and financing instruments; (4) the ease of SMEs to access bank and non-bank financing.

The Rapporteur underlines the role of the European Structural- and Investment Funds for long-term financing of regional economies and points out to the diverse instruments of cohesion policy to provide necessary financing, particularly to SMEs. He asks to take into account the special requirements of the local and regional level when considering the regulation of financial markets.

TIMETABLE

Consideration of draft opinion.: 27/11/2013

Deadline for amendments: 27/11/2013

Adoption REGI : 18/12/2013 (tbc)

Adoption in Lead committee (ECON) : 20/01/2014 (tbc)

Adoption in plenary: tbc

4. European Commission's 7th and 8th progress reports on the EU Cohesion Policy and the Strategic Report 2013 on programme implementation 2007-2013 (Point 7 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Vilja Savisaar-Toomast (ALDE)
Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho
Procedure: 2013/2008(INI)
Main committee: REGI

The procedure on this own-initiative report was on stand-by for a long period, pending the adoption of the Eighth progress report by the Commission, which was several times postponed until the end of June 2013, when it was finally adopted.

After the adoption of the Eighth progress report, a request to change the title of the own-initiative report was submitted by the Chair to the Conference of Committee Chairs, in order to allow for the inclusion of that progress report, as well as of the European Commission Strategic Report 2013 in the subject. The authorisation was granted on 4 July 2013.

After a preparatory phase, where the Draftswoman, Ms. Savisaar-Toomast has held meetings with the different units in the Commission responsible for the above-mentioned reports, the draft report will be submitted in the meeting of 27-28 November 2013.

In her draft report, the Draftswoman voices her concerns over the performance of the policies of budgetary consolidation in the EU and over the lack of sufficient public financial resources, in particular at sub-national level to implement the Europe 2020 Strategy adequately, as well as over the increasing risk of poverty or social exclusion in Europe.

Considering that the alignment with the Europe 2020 strategy is important, the Draftswoman asks to keep in mind the aims of economic, social and territorial cohesion, as well as the necessary territorial dimension in the implementation of the Strategy.

Regarding the pace of implementation, the Draftswoman considers that while there is strong evidence that implementation of cohesion policy has accelerated, a number of Member States risk not implementing their programmes until the end of the programming period, in particular in certain key-areas such as innovation, encouraging therefore the Member States to explore synergies between cohesion policy financing and other sources of EU funding.

Expressing her concern about the fact that lack of data makes it impossible to properly monitor progress made at regional and local level towards the established targets, the Draftswoman considers that the progress reports do not fully provide a clear picture of the progress made in the implementation of cohesion policy and towards the established targets, asking therefore the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the quality of programming and implementation is improved by making full use of the monitoring and evaluation tools available in the context of the next legislative framework.

TIMETABLE
Presentation of draft report: 27/11/2013
Deadline for amendments:
Adoption REGI: 22/01/2014 (tbc)
Plenary: February 2014 (tbc)

5. Statistics for the macroeconomic imbalances procedure(Point 8 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Ivars Godmanis (ALDE)
Responsible administrator: Stefan Donea
Procedure: 2013/0181(COD)
Main committee: ECON

The Rapporteur is going to present his draft Opinion on the "Provision and quality of statistics for the macroeconomic imbalances procedure". He highlights that this Opinion is drafted because the cohesion policy umbrella regulation¹ (laying down common provisions on 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 and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006) includes in article 21 and annex X the macroeconomic imbalances procedure as a trigger for funds suspension.

The Rapporteur calls in his draft opinion on the responsible committee, Economic and Monetary Affairs, to incorporate several amendments taking into account that the quality of statistical data could influence a possible decision on suspension of the European Structural and Investment Funds for Member States which are under the macroeconomic imbalance procedure.

TIMETABLE
Consideration of draft opinion: 27/11/2013
Deadline for amendments: 02/12/2013 (tbc)
Adoption REGI: 22-23/01/2014
Adoption main committee: 13/02/2014
Plenary: (tbc)

6. 5th Interparliamentary Committee Meeting with National Parliaments

"The implementation challenges of the future Cohesion Policy: Towards productive investment for growth and cohesion through improved synergies between local, national and EU level to deliver the EU 2020 Strategy" (Point 10 of the draft agenda)

Following the tradition, REGI is organising its 5th meeting with national Parliaments who have gained new powers with the Lisbon Treaty and now can monitor EU legislative proposals and even suggest modifications if certain principles (subsidiarity; proportionality) are not observed.

This year's meeting with national Parliaments will focus on the implementation phase of the new Cohesion Policy. Now that the EU legal framework is in place all the attention is focused on how Member States and EU's regions will translate the embedded EU priorities into concrete engagements at the ground.

Indeed, in order to produce the expected results, the future Cohesion Policy needs to be implemented in a strategically coordinated way. Not only should there be strong synergies amongst the various EU policies, implementing the EU 2020 strategy, but also a strong and binding partnership with all the parties involved would be fundamental to the successful implementation of this complex policy.

For more details on the event, find the programme here bellow:

¹ To be voted in the November plenary of the European Parliament

Wednesday, 27 November 2013

József Antall (JAN) 4Q2

- 14.00 - 15.00 **Registration of participants**
- 15.00 - 15.10 **Keynote speech by Danuta HÜBNER** Chair of the Committee on Regional development of the European Parliament

15.10- 16.40	SESSION I - <i>The future Cohesion Policy - A modernised and result based policy for sustainable growth and jobs in the EU</i>
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Moderator: **Ms Danuta HÜBNER**, Chair of the Committee on Regional Development of the European Parliament

Speakers:

- 15.10-15. 20 **H. E. Mr Raimundas KAROBLIS**
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Lithuania to the EU
- 15.20-15.30 **Ms Natalia KOKKONI**, Expert Counsellor, Permanent Representation of Greece to the E.U.
- 15.30-15.40 **Mr Johannes HAHN**, Commissioner for Regional Policy, European Commission
- 15.40-15.45 **Mr Lambert VAN NISTELROOJ**, MEP, co-rapporteur, on the Common Provisions Regulation for the 2014-2020 Cohesion policy
- 15.45-.15.50 **Mr Jan OLBRYCHT**, MEP, rapporteur on the legislative proposal on specific provisions concerning the: European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Investment for growth and jobs goal
- 15.50-16.40 Debate with national Parliamentarians and MEPs

16.40 - 18.30	SESSION II - <i>The implementation of the new policy in Member States: What challenges?</i>
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Possible topics for discussion in this session could include:

- The role of national Parliaments and of European Parliament in monitoring the new cohesion policy;
- Strategic programming and coordination of the funds (European Structural and Investment funds) and policies (Cohesion Policy; Horizon 2020; COSME;...);
- How to improve synergies in a multi-level governance process;
- Co-financing, administrative capacity and quality of projects;
- How to strengthen the territorial dimension of the new policy

Moderator: **Ms Danuta HÜBNER**, Chair of the Committee on Regional Development of the European Parliament

Speakers:

- 16.40-16.50 **Mr Normunds POPENS**, Deputy Director General for implementation, DG REGIO, European

Commission, *"Presentation of the state of play of the preparations with the Member States"*

16.50-17.00	Ms Virginija BALTRAITIENĖ , Chair of the Committee on State Administration and Local Authorities of the Lithuanian Parliament. <i>"The role of national Parliaments in monitoring the new cohesion policy"</i> .
17.00-17.10	Mr Ioannis KEFALOGIANNIS , Member of the Special Permanent Committee of the Regions of the Hellenic Parliament <i>"The role of national Parliaments and the Greek experience in relation to the EU cohesion policy and regional development"</i> .
17.10-17.20	Mr Rainer ROBRA , Minister of State and Head of the State Chancellery of Saxony-Anhalt, Member of the Committee on European Affairs, German <i>Bundesrat</i> . <i>"How can one strengthen the territorial dimension of the new cohesion policy?"</i>
17.20-17.30	Ms Mette Hjerminde DENCKER , Member of The Rural Districts and Islands Committee, Danish <i>Folketing</i> . <i>"How Denmark made a productive and sustainable investment in a small local Danish community"</i> .
17.30-18.20	Debate with national Parliamentarians and MEP's
18.20-18.30	Closing remarks by Ms Danuta HÜBNER , Chair of the Committee on Regional Development of the European Parliament
18:30	Cocktail

7. European Union Solidarity Fund (Point 11 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
Responsible administrator: Stefan Manev
Procedure: 2013/0248(COD)
Main committee: REGI

The Solidarity Fund: 10 years of success in applying the solidarity principle in the EU

Following the devastating floods in central Europe in 2002, and given the lack of a tool that would enable it to respond in order to assist the population and Member State affected by a disaster, the Union created a new instrument: the European Union Solidarity Fund.

Since then, not even minor changes have been made to the regulation governing the Solidarity Fund to adapt it to the new needs and correct some of the shortcomings that have become apparent in its 10 years of operation.

Since its creation and up to September 2012, the Fund has provided financial aid to offset the damage caused by 49 disasters, chiefly fires and floods.

In July 2013 the European Commission has presented its legislative proposal to revise the EUSF regulation.

The main objective of the proposal is to improve the functioning of the existing Solidarity Fund instrument by making it quicker to respond and more visible to citizens, simpler to use and its provisions clearer. This is to be achieved by a limited number of technical adjustments to the Regulation. The principles of the instrument remain unchanged as do its financing method outside the multiannual financial framework (MFF) and the likely level of spending.

A year ago, in December 2012, the European Parliament adopted an INI report on the reform of the EUSF. In this context, the EP's rapporteur, Mrs Rosa Estarás Ferragut (EPP) will to a great extent follow the recommendations of the Parliament's resolution to be introduced in the revised Regulation.

Some of the main recommendations for this revision are:

- A clear definition of the scope of the EUSF;
- A new and simple single criterion for the exceptional mobilisation of the EUSF for so-called extraordinary regional disasters based on a GDP-related threshold;
- The introduction of the possibility to make rapid advance payments upon request of the affected Member State;
- The inclusion of a specific provision for slowly unfolding disasters such as drought

REGI committee is also looking forward to organising a public hearing on the reform of the EUSF either in december 2013 or in January 2014.

TIMETABLE

Exchange of views: 27/11/2013

Presentation of draft report: 18/12/2013 (tbc)

Deadline for amendments:

Adoption REGI: 10/02/2014 (tbc)

Plenary: March 2014 (tbc)

8. Smart specialisation: networking excellence for a sound Cohesion Policy (Point 12 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Hermann Winkler (PPE)

Responsible administrator: Dagmara Stoerring

Procedure: 2013/2094(INI)

Main committee: REGI

In his Draft Report the Rapporteur emphasised that policymakers have very high expectations of the smart specialisation strategy approach, which was developed as a research concept just a few years ago and is now being implemented in the form of an ex-ante conditionality. The challenges for all stakeholders are already becoming clear, as are the risks of this new and demanding process. The draft report is divided into the following parts: first general remarks are presented, which is followed by the part concerning setting up of the "right" priorities by the regions, then the role of the regional management and cooperation among stakeholders is discussed, afterwards the role of synergies between different EU programmes is presented, and finally the challenges connected with external dimension of smart specialisation strategies are described.

Some 70 AMs were tabled by the Members and the Rapporteur, Mr Winkler, is currently working on a comprehensive pack of compromises which will fully reflect the content of tabled AMs.

TIMETABLE

Consideration of working document: 11/07/2013

Presentation of draft report: 14/10/2013

Deadline for amendments: 18/10/2013

Adoption REGI: 28/11/2013

Plenary: January 2014 (tbc)

9. EU Member States preparedness to an effective and timely start of the new Cohesion Policy Programming period (Point 13 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Derek Vaughan (S&D)
Responsible administrators: Stefan Donea, Carla Carvalho
Procedure: 2011/2095 (INI)
Main committee: REGI

The Rapporteur presented his draft report on "EU Member States preparedness for an effective and timely start of the new Cohesion Policy Programming period" in the October REGI meeting. Like during the presentation of the Working Document in the September REGI meeting, many questions were raised by the Members, who paid a real interest to the topic.

In his draft report, the Rapporteur mentions the current context when the European Union is facing difficult economic and social challenges with Member States and regions struggling to get economies back on track and emerge from the crisis. Therefore, at this time of economic uncertainty, Cohesion Policy funding can make a valuable contribution to helping Member States and regions create employment, increase competitiveness and encourage sustainable growth.

The Rapporteur points out that the European Parliament has succeeded in negotiating many important improvements to the Cohesion Policy package, including greater local and regional involvement in the planning and implementation phases, more flexibility and a focus on environmental issues. After the vote of the Parliament on the new legislation and the adoption of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014 - 2020, the Commission can agree national partnership agreements and operational programmes so that funds can be allocated as soon as possible. These agreements and programmes should be in line with the new elements brought by the Cohesion Policy package such as thematic concentration, smart specialisation, effectiveness of funds, etc.

However, the Member States are at very different stages. Some of them are making good progress and will be able to present the Commission their Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes in the near future, while others are further behind in the process. The Rapporteur stresses the different approaches used by the Member States in preparing for the implementation of the future Cohesion Policy. He comes with suggestions for the advanced Member States as well as for those whose progress is slower. Based on the lessons learnt from the previous programming cycles and taking into consideration the current preparedness stages, the Rapporteur makes recommendations, which should underpin the on-going efforts for an effective and timely start of the new Cohesion Policy Programming period.

84 amendments were tabled to this report, to which 7 suggestions of the BUDG opinion are added. All amendments concern inter alia the timely start of the new Cohesion Policy programming, evolution of various partnership agreements and operational programmes, lessons from the 2007 - 2013 period, effectiveness of funds, simplification process and partnership among different authorities within a multilevel-governance system. Due to the high number of amendments tabled, possible compromise amendments have been envisaged by the Rapporteur.

TIMETABLE
Consideration of working doc.: 23/09/2013
Consideration of draft report: 14/10/2013
Deadline for amendments: 18/10/2013
Adoption REGI: 28/11/2013
Adoption in plenary: January 2014 (tbc)

10. How can the European Union contribute to creating a hospitable environment for enterprises, businesses and start-ups to create jobs? (Point 14 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Karin Kadenbach (S&D)
Responsible administrator: Susanne Pillath
Procedure: 2013/2176(INI)
Main committee: EMPL - Anthe McIntyre (ECR)

The initiative report tabled in EMPL points out that Member States, with support from the EU institutions, in order to create a hospitable environment to create jobs must address skills, entrepreneurship, demographics, market access, finance and the labour market. In particular the report notes that Europe's education and training systems are not adapted to businesses' skills needs. European programmes should be further promoted to help entrepreneurs develop and create jobs. Reforms on the labour market and the creation of opportunities on the single market through opening up borders are important tools to help start-ups to grow and create jobs. Furthermore the report underlines that providing better regulation and reducing of administrative burden are essential for a hospitable environment to create jobs.

The Rapporteur Karin Kadenbach points out in her draft opinion that cohesion policy provides with the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds a wide range of measures to support the creation of jobs, especially for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) as the main job creators in the European economy. The opinion asks also for a widening of the possibilities for small and medium-sized enterprises to have access to finance and so diminishing one of the main obstacles obstructing the growth of SMEs.

31 amendments have been tabled which focus on the possibilities to improve any kind of support for enterprises creating jobs, especially SMEs.

TIMETABLE
Consideration of draft opinion: 14/10/2013
Deadline for amendments: 18/10/2013
Adoption REGI: 28/11/2013
Adoption EMPL: 05/12/2013 (tbc)
Plenary: tbc

11. External study on "Internet, digital agenda and economic development of European regions" (Point 15 of the draft agenda)

Internet and economic development in the EU

Investments in Information and communications technologies may have major impacts on the development of European regions. Expansion of the internet network and on-line services may increase their competitiveness and the quality of life of their inhabitants. A new study presents the 'Digital Agenda for Europe', which focuses on the development of information society in Europe and on the contribution of Structural funds to its implementation.

The study will be presented by the authors.

12. Amendment to Decision 2002/546/EC as regards its period of application(Point 16 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur:

Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho

Procedure: 2013/0387(CNS)

Main committee: REGI

Council Decision 2002/546/EC of 20 June 2002, adopted on the basis of Article 299(2) of the EC Treaty (now Article 349 TFEU), authorised Spain, up to 31 December 2011, to apply exemptions from or reductions in the taxes to a list of products produced locally in the Canary Islands, setting out the reasons for adopting specific measures, which are designed to strengthen local industry by making it more competitive.

The global economic crisis of 2009, with its impact in the reduction of travelling, had severe consequences on the economy of Canary Islands, and the unemployment rose from a rate oscillating between 10,4% and 12%, for the 2001-2007 period, to 26,2% in 2009.

On 16 November 2010, Spain submitted a request to the European Commission to extend the period of application of Decision 2002/546/EC for two years, so that its expiry date coincided with the expiry of the Guidelines on National Regional Aid for 2007-2013. The Commission has assessed it in light of the scale of the handicaps affecting the Canary Islands, concluding that it was justified to grant the request on the basis of the available elements.

Council Decision 895/2011 of 19 December 2011 has thus extended the period of application of Decision 2002/546/EC until 31 December 2013.

The Spanish authorities have requested the renewal of these special rules for the period 2014-2020, which needs to be approved both by a Council decision under Article 349 TFEU and by a Commission decision on State Aid.

As the new regional aid guidelines for the period 2014-2020 as adopted by the Commission in 2013 will enter into force on 1 July 2014, the Commission considers it is justified to extend the period of application of Decision 2002/546/EC, as amended by Decision 895/2011/EU, for six months, so that its expiry date coincides with the date of entry into force of the Guidelines, proposing that decision to be amended accordingly.

Given that this measure is intended at continuing to stimulate economic activity and stabilise employment in the outermost region of the Canary Islands, and that the extension is proposed for a limited period of time, the Chair will propose to the committee that the Commission's proposal is approved without amendment, under the simplified procedure in accordance with Rule 46 of the Rules of Procedure.

TIMETABLE

Decision on procedure: 28/11/2013

Deadline for amendments:

Adoption REGI:

Plenary: tbc

13. Discharge 2012: EU General Budget - European Commission (Point 17 of the draft agenda)

Rapporteur: Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)

Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho/Stefan Donea

Procedure: 2013/2195(DEC)

Main committee: CONT

After the presentation in July 2013 by the Commission of its annual accounts for 2012, the presentation by the European Court of Auditors of its Annual Report before CONT on 5 November 2013, and before Plenary on 21 November 2013, and on the basis of the Annual Activity Report 2012 of DG Regional and Urban Policy, the REGI Rapporteur for opinion on the discharge 2012 procedure, Mr. Stavrakakis, will submit his draft opinion (in English only) in the meeting of 27-28 November.

TIMETABLE

Consideration of draft opinion: 28/11/2013

Deadline for amendments:

Adoption REGI: 10/02/2014 (tbc)

Adoption CONT: 17/03/2014 (tbc)

Plenary: April 2014 (tbc)



part 2 previous meetings

Here you will find information on the issues discussed in the last REGI meetings held on 14 October, 7 November and 18 November 2013. The following items were discussed as detailed below. Please note that most committee documents (working documents, draft reports, etc.) are available at our website [REGI](#).

14 October 2013 meeting

1. Consideration and set of deadlines for tabling amendments

Rapporteur / Draftsperson	Report / Opinion	Deadline for amendments	Tabling procedure
Jan Olbrycht	DRAFT REPORT on the " Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 as regards the financial allocation for certain Member States " 2013/0271(COD) - (PE521.556)	17.10.2013 at 18:00	AT4AM application
Hermann Winkler	DRAFT REPORT on " Smart Specialisation: networking excellence for a sound Cohesion Policy " 2013/2094(INI) - (PE519.699)	18.10.2013 at 12:00	AT4AM application
Karin Kadenbach	DRAFT OPINION on " How can the European Union contribute to creating a hospitable environment for enterprises, businesses and start-ups to create jobs? " 2013/2176(INI) - (PE519.736)	18.10.2013 at 12:00	AT4AM application
Derek Vaughan	DRAFT REPORT on " EU Member States preparedness to an effective and timely start of the new Cohesion Policy Programming period " 2013/2095(INI) - (PE519.777)	18.10.2013 at 12:00	AT4AM application

2. Votes

Rapporteur / Draftsperson	Report / Opinion	Result of the votes for/against/abstentions
Patrice Tirolien	DRAFT OPINION on the " Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending certain Directives in the fields of environment, agriculture, social policy and public health by reason of the change of status of Mayotte with regard to the Union " 2013/0192(COD) - (PE519.804)	adopted with amendments 25/1/4
Patrice Tirolien	DRAFT OPINION on the " Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending certain Regulations in the field of fisheries and animal health by reason of the change of status of Mayotte with regard to the Union " 2013/0191(COD) - (PE519.805)	adopted with amendments 27/0/4
Rosa Estaràs Ferragut	DRAFT OPINION on the " Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 concerning the opening of the market for domestic passenger transport services by rail " 2013/0028(COD) - (PE514.699)	adopted with amendments 29/0/1
Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid	DRAFT OPINION on the " Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the interoperability of the rail system within the European Union (Recast) " 2013/0015(COD) - (PE514.700)	adopted with amendments unanimously 31/0/0
Joachim Zeller	DRAFT OPINION on " Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2012/34/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 establishing a single European railway area, as regards the opening of the market for domestic passenger transport services by rail and the governance of the railway infrastructure " 2013/0029(COD) - (PE514.715)	adopted with amendments 29/0/3
Oldřich Vlasák	DRAFT OPINION on " Regional quality branding: towards best practice in rural economies " 2013/2098(INI) - (PE516.946)	adopted with amendments unanimously 30/0/0

7 November 2013 meeting

1. Votes

Rapporteur / Draftsperson	Report / Opinion	Result of the votes for/against/abstentions
Jan Olbrycht	DRAFT REPORT on the " Financial allocation for certain Member States from the European Social Fund " 2013/0271(COD)	adopted without amendments 39/0/0
Lambert van Nistelrooij, Constanze Krehl	Outcome of Interinstitutional negotiations. Vote of the agreed text in the form of consolidated text on the " Common provisions on European Funds and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 " 2011/0276(COD)	adopted without amendments 27/4/10

Following the vote on the CPR, several Members took the floor to explain their vote. Several Members abstained or voted against because they were not satisfied with the agreement reached on macro-economic conditionality and/or performance reserve. Others voted in favour arguing that the compromise reached is a good or very good compromise. Several mentioned the numerous safeguards introduced to the MEC and the structured dialogue with EP in the whole process of implementing the suspension of the funds.

2. Provisions relating to financial management for certain Member States experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability and to the decommitment rules for certain Member States (Rapporteur: Oldrich Vlasak)

The rapporteur reported back to the committee on the achievements of the inter-institutional negotiations. A debate in substance followed with a majority of the committee pushing for an agreement with Council as soon as possible.

Given the urgency of this file it was decided to speed up the procedure and to organize a further trilogue the week before Strasbourg, in order to come to an agreement in time to vote it in an extraordinary meeting Monday in Strasbourg (18/11).

18 November 2013 meeting

1. Modification of the draft agenda/modification of the CPR consolidated text (CT)

At the beginning of the meeting, before the adoption of the draft agenda, the Chair proposed the Members to add a new point to the draft agenda on the correction of the CPR consolidated text (CT). A vote on this proposal was taken and the modification of the draft agenda was approved as such by the majority of votes in committee.

The Chair explained that following the vote in REGI on 7 November 2013 of the CT on the CPR, the Coreper insisted that the compromise between the co-legislators did not include the word "persistent" in article 21(6) CPR. Acknowledging that there were different views in Parliament and Council on the agreement reached on this particular issue, which is the only open issue in the whole package, the Presidency considered that a pragmatic arrangement could be achieved by replacing the word "persistent" with "significant".

The Chair has further informed that the Rapporteurs and the remaining Negotiating Team had been consulted prior to the meeting, and that EPP, S&D and ECR had accepted the modification in the CT, insisting however that the word "persistent" was part of the agreement, while Greens/ALE and the GUE had rejected to correct the text reflecting the Interinstitutional agreement. The remaining groups had not expressed their views until the time of the meeting.

The Chair has explained that, in case the change would be adopted, the last paragraph of Article 21(6) CPR would read as follows: "**Priority shall be given to the suspension of commitments: payments shall be suspended only when immediate action is sought and in the case of ~~persistent~~ significant non-compliance**".

The Chair has thus put to the vote the replacing of the word "persistent" with "significant" in Article 21 (6) CPR: 27 of the votes cast were in favour and 5 were against, with 1 abstention.

2. Olbrycht report on the proposal for a regulation amending the General Regulation on the ESF allocations

Regarding the Olbrycht report *on the proposal for a regulation amending the General Regulation on the ESF allocations*, the Chair has informed the Committee that the Council, by letter of 14 November 2013, has accepted the report as adopted by the committee and that there is no need for Interinstitutional negotiations, and that this report is to be adopted by Parliament during the November 2013 Plenary session.

3. Vlasák report on the proposal for a regulation amending the General Regulation on decommitment rules

After the submission of the draft report by Mr. Vlasák in the REGI meeting of July, containing 13 amendments, six amendments were further tabled, and voted in committee on 23-24 September. The final report as adopted in committee contained 4 amendments to the Commission proposal.

After the adoption of the mandate on 24 September, two trilogues took place: on 23 October and on 6 November.

In the trilogue of 23 October agreement was reached, in principle, on most of the text of the amending regulation, except for the text modifying Article 77(2) of the General Regulation as introduced by the Council, and which was incompatible with Amendment 3 of the mandate for negotiations, and for the text of the corresponding recital (recital 4a of the amending regulation, as introduced by the Council).

The divergence had to do with the scope of application (both in terms of time and in terms of beneficiary Member States) of the top-up increase as proposed in the mandate for negotiations, on the one hand, and in the Council's text, on the other. The Council and the Commission both rejected the relevant amendment of Parliament on the grounds of its budgetary impact as well as of the lack of consistency that it would introduce regarding the rules applicable to both programming periods regarding the increase in payments for Member States with temporary budgetary difficulties.

This divergence was not overcome in the trilogue of 6 November. The Presidency explained that the compromise text that it had put forward to Coreper, and that intended to accommodate to a certain extent the concerns of Parliament's amendment on the top-up increase, was rejected by a blocking minority of Member States. However, a new Coreper meeting would take place on Wednesday, 13 November 2013, in order to revisit this issue, and the Presidency has undertaken to present a new draft compromise to that Coreper meeting, by reducing the absolute budgetary impact of the amendment and by spreading this impact throughout the entire programming period. The Commission, while insisting on the urgency of the conclusion of this procedure, has underlined that any compromise agreed should be looked at from the point of view of its budgetary impact. It was therefore decided upon agreement of the three institutions that a trilogue would be scheduled for Tuesday, 19 November 2013, in Strasbourg, in order to look into the open issues of the FCT (recital 4a and Article 77(2)).

In the REGI extraordinary meeting of 7 November 2013, where a vote on the agreed text was tentatively scheduled, the political groups requested that the decision on the calendar taken in the trilogue of the previous day be revisited and it was decided that the Negotiating Team would agree, on the basis of the Coreper's decision expected to be taken during its meeting of 13 November 2013, with the Council and the Commission on the final text through written procedure until Friday, 15 November in order to speed up the procedure.

A final compromise has been reached on 14 November 2013, by written procedure and on the basis of the Coreper approved draft as transmitted to Parliament on 13 November 2013, without modifications. The Coreper has transmitted on 15 November 2013 a letter confirming the approval of the text thus agreed.

This agreed text was put to the vote in committee in accordance with Rule 70(5) of the Rules of Procedure in the REGI extraordinary meeting of 18 November 2013. Before the vote, the Rapporteur has reported back to the committee on the conclusion of the negotiations, making a brief presentation and stating that while respecting the decision of the majority on this compromise, he would abstain in the vote on the final agreed text.

The agreed text was adopted without amendments by 30 in favour, 0 against and 3 abstentions, and tabled for Plenary in view of voting during the November 2013 Plenary session.



part 3 - other news

Here you will find the latest news related to Committee activities and cohesion policy issues



Chair's participation on events on behalf of the Committee between the last and next REGI meeting

08/10/2013	Strasbourg, EP	Contact Group Meeting on Multi-annual Financial Framework	
28/10/2013	Santander (Spain)	Region of Cantabria and the University of Cantabria	Open University of the University of Cantabria on "European Regional Policy after 2013"
05/11/2013	Brussels	Future of Rural Energy in Europe (FREE)	Launch of a FREE guide to 'Financing Energy projects in rural areas' - "Translating EU priorities into energy opportunities for rural regions in 2014-2020?"
07/11/2013	Liège (Belgium)	Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)	Annual conference on Cross-Border Urban and Rural Integrated Areas – Challenges and Chances
07//11/2013	Brussels	Legal Publisher Lexxion Berlin (Representation in Brussels)	Conference on European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and launching conference of the ESIF Journal
08/11/2013	Brussels, EP	High-Level-Event under the patronage of President Herman Van Rompuy, European Commissioner for Regional and Urban Policy Johannes Hahn and Minister President of Flanders, Kris Peeters	"Regions as motors of new growth through smart specialisation – matching strategies for common growth"

More information is available at the Chair's website <http://danuta-huebner.pl/> or with the secretariat.



Chair's meetings with relevant regional policy actors between the last and next REGI meeting

17/10/2013	Mr Clodovaldo Ruffato, President of the Veneto Regional Legislative Assembly and coordinator of the Financial Federalism working group of the CALRE
05/11/2013	Ms Annika Annerby Jansson, new President of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR)
19/11/2013	Mr Brian Hayes TD, Irish Minister of State at the Department of Finance and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
20/11/2013	Mr Duarte Freitas, President of SDP from the Azores



"COHESION: Hübner's first reaction to compromise on reform"

Brussels, 08/11/2013 (*Agence Europe*) - After having brilliantly steered negotiations on behalf of the European Parliament on reform of cohesion policy, Danuta Hübner (EPP, Poland) gave *EUROPE* her comments, on Thursday 7 November, on the final compromise reached by the regional development committee under her chairmanship (see *EUROPE 10959*). The reform, which is due to apply from 1 January 2014, must still pass the hurdle of the plenary session at the end of the month. Failure cannot be ruled out, if Hübner's colleagues maintain their rejection of macro-economic conditionality. The former commissioner for regional policy explains why amendments along these lines would not be judicious.

Agence Europe: Are you generally pleased with the compromise your committee adopted this week?

Danuta Hübner: We managed to find a compromise that, I think, is the best possible. But it was a very difficult package, not only because of the huge disparity of views between the EP and the Council but also surprisingly with the European Commission on the approach to those financial issues negotiated over the last two months. This package is acceptable to all political groups as it reflects the diversity of situation across Europe and the regions. The policy will now be much more territorially responsible and moves towards simplification of the policy from the point of view of final beneficiaries, not only from the point of view of management authority. Also, we managed, as the Parliament, to finally achieve a compromise that has dramatically reduced all the risks linked to macro-economic conditionality from the point of view of the interests of regions, of their interest.

It has really been the burning issue of the final negotiations. On this point, is it really such a good deal even if, initially, the EP rejected conditionality?

It is not as if it is a bad compromise. We have changed the initial proposal of the Commission and of the Council dramatically. It just maintains this instrument of sanctioning as a good stimulus for performing well, which was important for the Council and the Commission. I also convinced the Council to change the name, moving away from macro-economic conditionality towards "measures linking the structural funds and investment with sound economic

governance in the EU". I think this link is important because we clearly now have cohesion policy as THE investment tool for the EU which is linked to the entire process of the European Semester, and which is part of this process. But the price for it is that the policy is used as a sanctioning instrument. However, we have deleted the risk of using this instrument too often or too automatically. Indeed, the list of social economic factors to be taken into account before the process of suspension of funding starts is very convincing. It is not only unemployment but the length of the recession, or the poverty level, for example. Additionally, involving the EP in the whole process of suspension of funding was really important.

All these safeguards make us think that the mechanism will, in the end, be impossible to apply.

That is true. It is such a very light form that it brings close to zero the probability of abusing it or using it in a way that would put at risk the funding for continuing the programme. That's why I don't think it deserves a second reading.

However, half of the payments may still possibly be suspended. Does that not give a bad signal to investors? If they are reluctant, then the policy itself might become counter-productive ...

Indeed, one might imagine that, if the government is not responsible in its activities on the macro-economic discipline side, then there might be uncertainty given that financing can be suspended. But it will also be the duty of those governments to compensate for the loss, and reimburse from their own budget to allow the projects to be continued. Also, governments care about their political position at home and would not risk being accused of the fact that, because of them, regions or SMEs do not receive their funding. Keeping that in mind, I trust that there is no big risk that will lead to real uncertainty on the continuity of the programmes.

If these arguments are not convincing, is it possible for the whole package to fail in plenary and go into second reading?

That would be a disaster because funding is really awaited by the regions. The second reading would mean an extremely limited possibility for reopening issues already negotiated and agreed. And, in my opinion, there is no hope that we can find a different solution in second reading. That is why I do not see much added value to a second reading. Of course, some colleagues would like a stronger penalty instrument, while others would like to completely abolish this link. It means that there might be a tendency to go to the plenary with amendments. What I find surprising is that, at the end of the day, you just focus on the one or two things that you personally think you did not achieve. But you do not see the 99.9% of solutions with which we are very satisfied. I hope that, before the plenary session, colleagues will take into account the fact that we have a policy framework that is much better than it was in the Commission's initial version back in October 2011.

REGI-COTER meeting

'Cohesion policy 2014-2020: From programming to implementation, main challenges ahead'

This year REGI-COTER meeting will take place on 17 December, from 14.30 to 17.00, at the Committee of the Region premises (JDE 52).

Programme outline:

The new Cohesion policy package 2014-2020 will shape the Union policy for regional development in the upcoming years. It is expected that this package will be adopted soon and subsequently enter into force beginning of 2014. It is therefore time to already focus on the future implementation of the new Cohesion policy package. In this regard, the take up of the new territorial-approach oriented instruments in the new wave of operational programmes, the involvement of local and regional authorities in the elaboration and implementation of the partnership agreements, as well as the future absorption of Structural and Investment Funds are of particular importance for cities and regions.

Draft Agenda:

- 13:00 – 14:30 Networking event for REGI and COTER members (JDE building, Atrium 5, Lunch provided)
- 14:30 – 14:50 Introductory speeches by the Chair of the Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy of the Committee of the Regions, Mr Marek Wozniak, and the Chair of the Committee on Regional Development of the European Parliament, Mrs Danuta Hübner
- 14:50 – 15:50 Is the "Place based approach" reflected in the new wave of partnership agreements and operational programmes?

The new Cohesion policy sees a substantial strengthening of the principles of partnership and multi-level governance, inter alia by the introduction of partnership agreements and the elaboration of a European Code of Conduct on Partnership (ECCP), which will guide Member States in the implementation of these principles. At the same time, the new Cohesion policy package introduces new instruments to promote a place-based approach to territorial development, namely Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI), Community-led local development (CLLD), as well as joint action plans, territorial pacts (for ESF) or multi-fund operational programmes. The first session will have a first look into the take up of these instruments in the preparatory process of the new wave of operational programmes, and examine to what extent national governments have effectively engaged local and regional authorities in the elaboration of partnership agreements and how the principles of partnership and multilevel governance should be ensured in the implementation phase.

- Introduction by Mr Fabrizio Barca (*to be invited, tbc*)
- Discussion with COTER and REGI members

- 15:50 – 16:50 Absorption of Structural and Investment Funds: how will it improve in the next financing period?

The second session will focus on the potential absorption of the Structural and Investment Funds by local and regional authorities and discuss how to ensure that the new Cohesion policy package impacts positively on absorption. The discussion will explore possible ways to facilitate absorption, inter alia by looking at measures to increase the capacity building of public administrations dealing with EU funds. Within this discussion the evolution of the outstanding commitments (RAL), the difficulties of local and regional authorities to co-finance investments, and the impact of the new n+3 rule will also be highlighted.

- Introduction by Mr Nicholas Martyn, Deputy Director-General, DG REGIO, European Commission (*to be invited, tbc*)
- Discussion with COTER and REGI members

- 16:50 – 17:00 Conclusions by Mr Marek Wozniak and Mrs Danuta Hübner

- 17:00 End of the meeting



Members' Research Service - News

Recent publications in the field of Regional Development

Briefings



[EU Cohesion Policy 2014-20](#) / by Ivana Katsarova, posted on 14 November 2013, 1 p.

The [EU's Cohesion Policy](#) provides the framework for a wide range of programmes aimed at increasing economic growth and social cohesion and reducing disparities among the Member States (MS) and their 270 regions. Perceived weaknesses of the current arrangements include complexity, inadequate integration with other policies, and low absorption rates in many MS.

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[2014-20 Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\)](#) / by Alessandro D'Alfonso posted on 14 November 2013, 1 p.

Setting the maximum allocation of resources for each major category ("heading") of EU spending, the MFF gives a budgetary overview of priorities. The political agreement on the next MFF includes provisions to increase the flexibility of the system and to prepare reforms of the own resources system. A review of the MFF by the end of 2016 is also provided for.

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[The new European Social Fund for 2014-20](#) / by Ron Davies, posted on 14 November 2013, 1 p.

The European Social Fund (ESF) is the EU's main tool to support employment through investing in human capital. Two proposed Regulations for 2014-20 establish new ESF priorities and funding rules. During trilogue negotiations, compromise on several issues proved very difficult to reach.

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[Horizon 2020: boosting research and innovation](#) / by Marcin Szczepanski posted on 14 November 2013, 1 p.

Parliament and Council negotiators have reached a trilogue agreement on the Horizon 2020 framework research programme. This new instrument for European research and innovation funding seeks to simplify the rules for gaining funding, improve the commercialisation of research results and increase the participation of industry, SMEs and scientific community.

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[Future of the Trans-European transport network](#) / by Ariane Debyser, posted on 14 November 2013, 1 p.

The priorities and objectives for the development of the Trans-European transport network (TEN-T) are set out in the TEN-T guidelines. Parliament is currently examining a Commission proposal to overhaul the existing guidelines.

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Publications



Climate change and sustainable cities / by Hugo Priemus and Simin Davoudi. Abingdon: Routledge, 2013, 192 p.

The book brings together nine contributions ranging from broad overviews to sector-specific analysis, paying particular attention to the role of urban planning. Contributors cover climate change mitigation and adaptation, deal with different scales of analysis ranging from international and European to national and city perspectives, and discuss a range of policy sectors including housing, transport, energy, sea level rise as well as pathways for climate policy implementation. (Available for loan - make reservation [here](#))

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Latest analysis



[Aspect of durability in the assessment of effectiveness of support for businesses under Structural and Cohesion Funds](#) / authors Blomeyer & Sanz; Policy Department on Budgetary Affairs, September 2013, 88 p.

"Abstract: This study reviews experience with the sustainability of business support interventions under the European Union's Structural Funds (focus on experience under the programming period 2007-2013). Moreover, the study highlights best practices from selected Member States to contribute to further strengthening the sustainability of business support. Finally, a series of conclusions and recommendations focus on the regulation, measurement, and enforcement of sustainability. The study was conducted in the first half of 2013 on the basis of desk research, stakeholder consultations, surveys and case study work." (Source: the study)

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[Annual report on the implementation of the EU Budget 2012](#) / ECA - European Court of Auditors, November 2013, 259 p.

"The annual report on the EU budget for 2012 financial year was published by the European Court of Auditors (ECA). The report finds that in most spending areas of the EU budget the legislation in force is still not fully complied with. The ECA calls for a rethink of EU spending rules and recommends simplifying the legislative framework. The 2014-2020 programming period looks likely to remain expenditure oriented - designed for getting the EU budget allocated and spent - rather than focusing on the value it is intended to bring." (Source: the press release ECA on the Annual report)

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For Regional policy see chapter 5 on pp. 133-164; for info on errors, see 2012 Annual report - [Frequently asked questions](#)



[Investment and Investment Finance in Europe](#) / EIB - European Investment Bank, 2013, 340 p.

"Combining in-house research and work by leading academics, this report assesses how the crisis has impacted investment across the non-financial sector, in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in infrastructure, and in R&D and innovation. It explains why and where investment has declined, looking at the impact of structural imbalances, policy uncertainty, new capital requirements for banks and the fragmentation of Europe's financial markets. In terms of policy options, it warns against poorly targeted responses and provides, instead, support for key policy interventions at the European level." (Source EIB website) See also: the [Key findings](#), 12 p.

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EVALSED guide and sourcebook updates / DG Regional and Urban Policy, September 2013

The evaluation unit of DG REGIO has published a revised version of the [Evalsed Guidance on Evaluation](#) and a new [Sourcebook on Methods and Techniques](#). The Guidance takes account of the changes in the regulations for Cohesion Policy in the 2014-2020 period. The Sourcebook has new sections on Impact Evaluation - theory based and counterfactual - as well as new material on beneficiary surveys and regression analysis. (Source: DG Regional Policy website)

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[A roadmap to reform in public administration, fiscal decentralisation and territorial cooperation](#) / Aston Centre for Europe; Committee of the Regions, November 2013, 120 p.

The Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership has identified two strategic areas of focus for cooperation with Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs) in the Eastern Partnership countries: the need to enhance the capacity of LRAs and the need to enhance their responsiveness to citizens, thus improving the quality of local democracy. Progress can be made in addressing these needs through a focus on three priority areas for action across the EaP countries, which will add an enhanced territorial dimension to the Eastern Partnership. These are: public administration reform, fiscal decentralisation and territorial cooperation. (Source: Study)

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