
REGI News

Newsletter from the European Parliament Committee on Regional Development

VII Legislature N. 26 - 15 November 2011



Meeting on

Tuesday 22 November 2011

15.00 - 18.30

Wednesday 23 November 2011

9.00 - 12.30

15.00 - 18.30

Room PHS 4 B 001

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Next Committee meeting

***Monday 19 December 2011
15.00 - 18.30***

***Tuesday 20 December 2011
9.00 - 12.30
Brussels***

*Comments and subscriptions at
regi-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu*

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PART I

Here you will find the topics which will be discussed at the next REGI Committee meeting on 22-23 November 2011

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. Amendment of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 as regards certain provisions relating to risk sharing instruments for Member States experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability (Point 3 of the draft agenda)

Following the two previous proposals for amending Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 in response to the current financial crisis the Commission proposes the third Amendment that lays down provisions for creation of a risk sharing instrument.

The objective of the proposal is to help countries particularly hit by the financial crisis to provide additional financial resources to these countries in order to support liquidity and fund absorption and through this continuation of the programmes.

According to the proposal in order to implement the risk sharing instrument the transfer of part of the financial allocations available to these Member States back to the Commission would be allowed. The objective would be to provide capital contributions to cover expected and unexpected losses of loans and guarantees to be extended under a risk-sharing partnership with the European Investment Bank and/or other financial institutions with a public policy mission who are willing to continue to lend to project sponsors and banks with a view to provide private match funding for projects implemented with Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund contributions. The overall allocation under cohesion policy for the period 2007-2013 would therefore not be modified. Article 36 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 provides that the EIB may, at the request of Member States, participate in activities relating to the preparation of projects, in particular major projects, the arrangement of finance, and public-private partnerships. It provides further that the Member State, in agreement with the EIB, may concentrate the loans granted on one or more priorities of an operational programme. The current proposal should facilitate the approval of such loans by the EIB, or by other international financial institutions as may be the case, at a moment when due to the downgrading of the public and private debt of the

State and financial institutions of the Member States such loans would not be available.

In the first Exchange of views the Commission will be asked to explain comprehensively functioning of the risk sharing instrument.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Danuta Hübner	Exchange of views: 22/11/2011 (tbc)
Responsible administrator: Dagmara Stoerring	Consideration of draft report: tbc
Procedure: 2011/0283(COD)	Deadline for amendments: tbc
	Adoption REGI: tbc
	Adoption in plenary: tbc

2. Common provisions on European Funds and repealing Regulation (EC) N° 1083/2006 (Point 4 of the draft agenda)

Common provisions governing all CSF Funds

The general principles governing the support of all CSF Funds will include partnership and multi-level governance, compliance with applicable EU and national law, promotion of equality between men and women and sustainable development. In order to streamline the delivery of the priorities, the Commission proposes to reinforce the strategic programming process through defining a list of thematic objectives. These objectives are in line with Europe 2020 strategy and aim to promote innovation, competitiveness, environmental sustainability, employment and social inclusion, education, and other.

The Common Strategic Framework

The CSF translates the objectives of the Union into key actions for the CSF Funds, in order to ensure an integrated use of the CSF Funds, to deliver common objectives and to provide clearer strategic direction to the programming process at the level of Member States and regions. It will be adopted by a delegated act by the Commission.

Partnership contract

Multi-level governance is supported through initiation of partnership contracts among regional, local, urban and other public authorities, economic and social partners, and bodies representing civil society, including environmental partners, nongovernmental organisations, and other. The partnership contract arrangements will ensure alignment with the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and set up a integrated approach to territorial development.

Conditionalities and performance

New conditionality provisions will be introduced, taking form of 'ex ante' conditions that must be in place before funds are disbursed and 'ex post' conditions that will make the release of additional funds contingent on performance. The Commission also proposes the introduction of macro-fiscal conditionality to sanction unsound macroeconomic policies. The proposal also includes an expansion of the performance reserve that will be allocated according to the achieved milestones in the performance framework.

Financial instruments

In addition to grant funding, it is proposed that support for enterprises and projects expected to generate substantial financial returns will be delivered primarily through innovative financial instruments.

Monitoring and evaluation

Common provisions for all CSF funds in the area of monitoring and evaluation include the role and composition of the monitoring committee, annual implementation reports, and annual review meetings, progress reports on the implementation of the Partnership Contract, *ex ante* and *ex post* evaluations.

Simplified and streamlined eligibility rules

A range of measures will be implemented to ensure that administrative costs are proportionate and that the administrative burden associated with the management of EU funds by beneficiaries is reduced. The aim is to harmonise, to the extent possible, these basic rules for instruments implemented under shared management, in order to reduce the multiplicity of rules applied on the ground.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteurs: Constanze Krehl, Lambert van Nistelrooij	Exchange of views: 22/11/2011
Responsible administrator: Diana Haase	Consideration of draft report: Spring 2011
Procedure: 2011/0276(COD)	Deadline for amendments: tbc
	Adoption REGI: tbc
	Adoption in plenary: tbc

3. Specific provisions concerning the European Regional Development Fund and the "Investment for growth and jobs" goal and repeal of Regulation (EC) N° 1080/2006 (Point 5 of the draft agenda)

This Regulation sets out the provisions governing the European Regional Development Fund, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006. The common rules governing the ERDF are included in an overarching regulation proposed in COM(2011)0614 (referred to as General Regulation). The ERDF Regulation sets out the scope of support and investment priorities for the regional development programmes.

The ERDF aims to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union by correcting imbalances between its regions. The ERDF should contribute to the Europe 2020 Strategy objectives. The key elements are the strengthening of thematic concentration and reinforcing territorial cohesion, which is done by focusing the support from the ERDF on a limited number of thematic objectives, further detailed in investment priorities. Due to their particular relevance for growth three thematic priorities are obligatory, Research and Development and Innovation, enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs and shift to a low carbon economy. In well developed regions 80% ERDF funding must be invested in these 3 objectives whereby at least 20% of the total ERDF resources should be allocated for shift to a low carbon economy. Given the ongoing restructuring needs in those regions phasing out from the Convergence objective, the minimum percentage shall be reduced to 60%. And in less developed regions 50% whereby at least 6% are to be foreseen for shift to a low carbon economy.

The proposed ERDF Regulation also defines a negative list of activities which will not be eligible for support. It defines investment priorities for each of the thematic objectives.

Moreover, the proposal provides for an increased focus on sustainable urban development. The increased focus is to be achieved through the earmarking of a minimum of 5% of ERDF resources for sustainable urban development, the establishment of an urban development platform to promote capacity building and exchange of experience, and the adoption of a

list of cities where integrated actions for sustainable urban development will be implemented.

The proposed Regulation aims to contribute to an increased orientation on results of funding by defining common indicators related to physical outputs as well as results relating to the final objective of funding.

The proposed Regulation mentions the need to pay special attention in operational programmes to specific difficulties of regions with severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps.

Finally, the proposed Regulation contains specific provisions for the use of the specific additional allocation for the outermost regions.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Jan Olbrycht	Exchange of views: 22/11/2011 (tbc)
Responsible administrator: Dagmara Stoerring	Consideration of draft report: Spring 2011
Procedure: 2011/0275(COD)	Deadline for amendments: tbc
	Adoption REGI: tbc
	Adoption in plenary: tbc

4. Cohesion Fund and repeal of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1084/2006 (Point 6 of the draft agenda)

The proposed regulation is part of the legislative package for cohesion policy, and establishes the tasks and the scope of intervention of the Cohesion Fund.

In accordance with the thematic priorities set out in the proposal for a regulation laying down common provisions on all the funds, the Cohesion Fund as proposed will support investments in the environment, in trans-European networks and in technical assistance.

The field of environment appears to be the one deserving the greatest number of investment priorities, aiming in particular at supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy, at promoting climate change adaptation, as well as at protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency. As far as the other two themes are concerned, the priorities are directed, respectively at promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures, on one hand, and at enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration by strengthening institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services related to implementation of the Cohesion Fund, on the other.

The proposed regulation also provides that a common set of indicators (a list of which is set out in the annex) to assess the implementation, which are to be complemented by programme-specific indicators, will be defined before Member States draft their operational programmes.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Victor Boştinaru	Exchange of views: 22/11/2011 (tbc)
Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho	Consideration of draft report: Spring 2011
Procedure: 2011/0274(COD)	Deadline for amendments: tbc
	Adoption REGI: tbc
	Adoption in plenary: tbc

5. Support from the European Regional Development Fund to the "European Territorial Cooperation" goal (Point 7 of the draft agenda)

The goal of economic, social and territorial cohesion is promoted through three EU funds. As stipulated in Article 176 of the TFEU, the aim of the ERDF is promote the development and structural adjustment of lagging regions and of declining industrial regions.

A separate regulation is proposed for European Territorial Cooperation to take better account of multi-country context of the programmes and make more specific provisions for cooperation programmes and operations, as has been requested by the European Parliament. The aim of a separate regulation for ETC is to allow clearer presentation of the specificities of ETC to facilitate implementation , since terminology can be directly adapted to the multi-country context of cooperation programmes. The proposal thus makes references to third country participation where necessary to better reflect the reality of cooperation. It also contains more systematic references to the role that European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) can play in a cooperation context.

The proposal establishes the scope of the European Regional Development Fund with regard to the European Territorial Cooperation goal. It defines the priority objectives and organisation of the ERDF, as well as eligibility criteria. The proposal sets out the financial resources available for each strand and the criteria for their allocation to Member States. This also includes the continuation of the mechanism for the transfer of resources for cooperation activities at the external borders of the Union, to be supported under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument and the instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance. Synergies and complementarity between programmes under the European Territorial Cooperation goal and programmes financed under external instruments shall be promoted.

It also sets the implementation arrangements, including provisions for financial management and control. The Common Provisions Regulation and the ERDF regulation both apply subject to the specific provisions contained in this regulation.

A new element in the proposal are the provisions on **thematic concentration and investment priorities**. This is to be seen in the overall context of improving the strategic focus of programmes and their results orientation. Programmes can choose a limited number of priorities from a thematic menu with corresponding investment priorities, thus ensuring the focus on European priorities and interventions where cooperation will yield most added value. In addition, selection criteria have been defined more strictly to ensure that funding is given to genuinely joint operations. Programmes will also contain a performance framework defining programme-specific milestones against which progress in implementation can be assessed.

The 2007-2013 programming period has seen the emergence of new forms of territorial cooperation, tailor-made responses to address macro-regional challenges, such as macro-regional strategies and Integrated Maritime Policy. Given the possible overlap between existing and future macro-regions, sea-basins and transnational programme areas, the

proposed regulation explicitly foresees that transnational cooperation can also support the development and implementation of macro-regional strategies and sea-basin programmes (including the ones established on the external borders of the EU).

The implementation modalities have been streamlined for cooperation programmes. The number of authorities involved in programme implementation has been reduced and roles and responsibilities further clarified.. Content requirements for cooperation programmes and implementation reports have been made more precise in order to reduce administrative burden for programme authorities. Common indicators have been defined to better capture the outputs of and increase the overall orientation on results.

The proposal foresees a greater harmonisation of rules. Eligibility rules will be either fixed at EU level or by the Monitoring Committee for the programme as a whole. National rules will only apply in the absence such rules. This will also facilitate a joint approach in carrying out the management verifications and audits by the audit authority and thus contribute to greater harmonisation in this field.

Finally, an extension of the deadline for the de-commitment rule and specific provisions for the application of the rules on state aid and the conversion of foreign currencies into Euro will further facilitate programme implementation.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Rikka Manner	Exchange of views: 22/11/2011 (tbc)
Responsible administrator: Franck Ricaud	Consideration of draft report: Spring 2011
Procedure: 2011/0273(COD)	Deadline for amendments: tbc
	Adoption REGI: tbc
	Adoption in plenary: tbc

6. Amendment of Regulation (EC) N° 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) as regards the clarification, simplification and improvement of the establishment and implementation of such groupings (Point 8 of the draft agenda)

This amending Regulation makes changes, on the one hand, to respect the terminology introduced by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and on the other hand in response to the weaknesses and areas of potential improvement identified in the Report referred to above.

These changes concern the Membership, the content of the Convention and Statutes of an EGTC, its purpose, the process of approval by national authorities, applicable law for employment and for procurement, approach for EGTCs whose members have different liability for their actions and more transparent procedures for communication.

On Membership, new legal bases are employed to permit regions and bodies in non-Member States to be members of an EGTC, while the other members are from one or many Member States. The eligibility of membership of bodies under private law is also clarified.

The convention and statutes of an EGTC are re-defined and the distinction in approval procedure underlined. The criteria for approval or rejection by national authorities are specified, and a limited time for examination proposed.

Solutions, in line with the *acquis* of the Union, are proposed for tax and social security

regimes for employees of an EGTC, who may be employed in any of the Member States whose territories comprise the EGTC. A similar approach is proposed for procurement rules. For liability, where some local or regional bodies are required by their national laws to have limited liability and others, in different Member States, are required to have unlimited liability, an insurance-based solution is proposed.

Finally, Member States will be required to inform the Commission of any provisions adopted to implement the EGTC Regulation, as amended, and each newly established EGTC should inform the Commission of its purpose and membership, for publication in the Official Journal (C Series).

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Joachim Zeller	Exchange of views: 22/11/2011
Responsible administrator: Monika Makay	Consideration of draft report: Spring 2011
Procedure: 2011/0272(COD)	Deadline for amendments: tbc
	Adoption REGI: tbc
	Adoption in plenary: tbc

7. European Social Fund and repeal of Regulation (EC) N° 1081/2006 (Point 9 of the draft agenda)

The European Social Fund (ESF) is established by Article 262 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The timing of the review of the EU funding to promote cohesion is linked to the proposal for a new Multiannual Financial Framework.

In terms of scope, the draft ESF Regulation for 2014-2020 proposes to target the ESF on four "thematic objectives" throughout the European Union: i) Promoting employment and labour mobility; ii) investing in education, skills and lifelong learning; iii) promoting social inclusion and combating poverty; iv) enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration. In addition the ESF should contribute also to other thematic objectives such as supporting the shift towards low-carbon, climate resilient and resource efficient economy, enhancing the use on information and communication technologies, strengthening research, technological development and innovation and enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Furthermore, the draft Regulation aims to reinforce social innovation and transnational cooperation under the ESF and clarifies its contribution to the Union's commitment to eliminate inequalities between women and men and prevent discrimination. Social partners and non-governmental organizations are attached great importance to the programming and implementation of ESF priorities and operations.

Finally, specific provisions are introduced for financial instruments to encourage Member States and regions to leverage the ESF and thus increase its capacity to finance actions supporting employment, education and social inclusion.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Maria Irigoyen Pérez	Exchange of views: 22/11/2011 (tbc)
Responsible administrator: Gabriel Alvarez Recarte	Consideration of draft report: Spring 2011
Procedure: 2011/0268(COD)	Deadline for amendments: tbc
Lead Committee: EMPL	Adoption REGI: tbc
	Adoption in plenary: tbc

8. A resource-efficient Europe (Point 11 of the draft agenda)

The REGI Committee held an exchange of views of the draft opinion on its meeting of 11 July, where the draftsman presented his draft opinion. He welcomed the flagship initiative and pointed to its crucial influence on the quality of life for present and future generation. He stressed that in order to achieve a resource-efficient Europe, increased coordination and synergies between a wide range of policy areas and their various instruments should be implemented at regional, national and EU level and noted that trade-offs between certain policy areas exist, and these need to be addressed. He also pointed to the crucial role of regional policy in supporting initiatives aiming at efficient use of resources. He emphasized that resource efficiency should be addressed at regional and local level, and regional and local authorities and partners should be directly involved in the planning and implementation of relevant measures. He further pointed out that decision-takers at national and regional level should be fully aware of the importance of decoupling growth from resource use and called on every Member State and region to make further efforts in the efficient use of resources.

58 amendments were tabled to this draft opinion. Amendments concern inter alia energy efficiency, renewable energy, green jobs, eco-innovation, importance of the dissemination of best practice, partnership principle and territorial cooperation.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Derek Vaughan	Consideration of draft opinion: 11/07/11
Responsible administrator: Monika Makay	Deadline for amendments: 14/07/2011
Procedure: 2011/2068(INI)	Adoption REGI: 23/11/2011 (tbc)
Lead committee: ENVI - <i>Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy</i>	Adoption in lead committee: February 2012 (tbc)

9. Evolution of EU Macro-Regional Strategies: Present practice and future prospects, especially in the Mediterranean (Point 12 of the draft agenda)

Following the exchange of views held in October REGI meeting, the rapporteur will present his draft report.

It gives the opportunity to have a state of play for macro-regional strategies in the EU, presenting the lessons learnt and their added-value, the cost-benefit analysis of such strategies, to conclude by the conviction and evidence of a macro-regional strategy in the Mediterranean.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: François Alfonsi	Exchanges of views: 11/07/2011, 06/10/2011
Responsible administrator: Franck Ricaud	Consideration of working document: 22/11/11 (tbc)
Procedure: 2011/2179 (INI)	Consideration of draft report: 25/01/2012 (tbc)
	Adoption REGI: 20/03/2012 (tbc)
	Adoption in plenary: April 2012 (tbc)

10. Connecting Europe Facility: Exchange of views with Mr Paquet, Director, DG MOVE, and a representative of DG REGIO, European Commission (Point 13 of the draft agenda)

The EC is proposing a new integrated instrument for investing in EU infrastructure priorities in Transport, Energy and Telecommunications, which has been called the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). The horizontal regulation sets out provisions governing the CEF and proposes new guidelines for the mentioned three sectors in one regulatory package. This regulation is completed with other three sectorial regulations.

REGI has a strong interest on this proposal as it is very much linked to the cohesion policy initiatives, especially those financed by the Cohesion Fund from where 10 billions would be taken.

DG MOVE and DG REGI representatives will present the proposals to the committee.

11. Presentation of an External Study on the "Impact and effectiveness of the Structural Funds and EU policies aimed at SMEs in the regions" (Point 14 of the draft agenda)

In the meeting of 22-23 November the above-mentioned study will be presented by Herta Tödtling-Schönhofer, one of the authors of the study, and Director at Metis GmbH, Vienna/Austria.

Providing a description of the general nature of SMEs and their development factors, as well as the support that Cohesion Policy and other EU policies provide to them, the main objectives of this study are:

- to provide a definition and analysis of the nature of SMEs;
- to explore the factors influencing the development of SMEs;
- to describe the SME-relevant EU policies, including Cohesion Policy;
- to assess the Cohesion Policy performance for SMEs on the basis of a literature review and an analysis of eight case studies based on selected ERDF OPs;
- to elaborate relevant policy and operational recommendations; and,
- to develop a questionnaire for a potential future, more in-depth assessment on grounds of primary data.

The study acknowledges the complexity of the issue, stemming *inter alia* from the diversity of SMEs, as well as from the significant differences between them in character, in different life cycles, and in their corresponding requirements.

The study contains a number of policy recommendations directed at the need to put in practice a more target-oriented support approach in accordance with the nature of SMEs and their different life cycles and sectors of activity, the need for further simplification of administrative procedures, the need for further strengthening of complementarities and

synergies between programmes, among others.

12. The role of Cohesion Policy in the outermost regions of the European Union in the context of EU 2020 (Point 15 of the draft agenda)

In the context of the presentation by the Rapporteur, Mr. Nuno Teixeira, of his working document, an exchange of views will take place, with the guest speakers, Mr. Pedro Solbes Mira, former European Commissioner and author of the report "Europe's outermost regions and the Single Market: The EU's influence in the world", as well as Ms. Ana-Paula Laissy, Head of Unit, Co-ordination of outermost regions at EU Commission DG REGIO.

In his working document, the Rapporteur makes the case for the specificity of the Outermost Regions (ORs) of the EU, due to their specific structural, social and economic situation, and due to their remoteness, insularity, small size, difficult topography and climate, as well as economic dependence on a few products.

Indeed, the permanence and the combination of these factors severely restrain the ORs' development and justify the adoption of particular measures in order to tackle these constraints, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Treaty.

The Rapporteur suggests that the priorities as far as the ORs are concerned can be summarised as follows: a differentiated and joint treatment that takes duly into account the specificities of the ORs in the framework of EU policies, with particular emphasis on cohesion policy, as the main leverage of their small economies; the adaptation of European policies; and finally a better insertion of the ORs in the internal market as well as in their specific geographical areas.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Nuno Teixeira	Consideration of working document: 23/11/11 (tbc)
Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho	Consideration of draft report: 25/01/2012 (tbc)
Procedure: 2011/2195 (INI)	Adoption REGI: 20/03/2012 (tbc)
	Adoption in plenary: April 2012 (tbc)

13. Multiannual financial framework for the years 2014-2020 (Point 16 of the draft agenda)

On 29 June 2011, the Commission adopted the proposal for the next multiannual financial framework for the period 2014-2020: a budget for delivering the Europe 2020 strategy (COM(2011)0398 contains the Commission proposal for a Council regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the years 2014-2020, and consists in fact of the legal transposition of another Communication, entitled "A Budget for Europe 2020" (COM(2011)0500), which is a detailed political/strategic explanation of the above proposal).

According to the political framework of the proposal, solidarity constitutes a principle underpinning the EU Budget, and in particular solidarity with the poorest Member States and regions, by concentrating the biggest part of cohesion spending on their needs.

It is moreover affirmed that Cohesion policy is more than an important expression of solidarity with the poorer and weakest regions of the EU, in a reference to its capacity to

raise living standards for all its citizens and to its role in the integration of the Single Market, whose size delivers markets and economies of scale to all parts of the EU.

The Commission has evaluated past spending and has found many examples of added value and of growth and job creating investment that could not have happened without the support of the EU budget.

Cohesion policy is thus crucial in delivering the Europe 2020 objectives and targets throughout the EU. Proposing to strengthen the focus on results and the effectiveness of cohesion spending by tying Cohesion policy more systematically to the Europe 2020 objectives, the Commission proposes therefore to allocate €376 billion for the 2014-2020 period for spending in cohesion policy instruments.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Andrey Kovatchev	Exchange of views: 23/11/11 (tbc)
Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho	Consideration of draft opinion: (tbc)
Procedure: 2011/0177 (APP)	Adoption REGI: (tbc)
Lead committee: BUDG	Adoption in lead committee: (tbc)

14. Report on the visit of a REGI delegation to Northern Greece from 13 to 15 July 2011 (Point 17 of the draft agenda)

From the 13th to 15th July, a delegation of Members of the REGI committee visited Northern Greece : Lambert Van Nistelroij headed the delegation. He's with Constance Krehl, Co-Rapporteur for the new General Regulation on Cohesion Policy issued by the European Commission on October 2011. Other participating members were .

By meeting the Central Government, as well as Regional and local Authorities, and projects directors, REGI MEPs could both better understand the very short term needs to avoid an "absorption crunch" in implementing Cohesion policy programmes due to austerity measures, and receive the key proposals from Greek Central, Regional and Local Authorities to turn these cyclical difficulties into long terms opportunities for the future through structural reforms and changes that Cohesion Policy and the EU regulation can support : the MEPs pointed out the need to go on empowering the new decentralized Greek administration and could check in "situ" the importance of supporting the SMEs for local growth and jobs creation.

The full programme as well as the list of participants of the visit is available on the committee's website [REGI](#), as well as the full report that will be shortly available there.



PART II

Here you will find information on the issues discussed in the last REGI meetings held on 5-6 October 2011 and during Open Days on 10-11 October 2011

5 October 2011

1. Adoption of draft calendar of REGI Meetings for 2012 (point 3 of the draft agenda)

The calendar of REGI meetings for 2012 has been adopted as here below:

Week	Day		Timetable	Venue	Observations
4	Wednesday	25 January	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.	Brussels	
	Wednesday	25 January	3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.		
	Thursday	26 January	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.		
9	Monday	27 February	3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.	Brussels	
	Tuesday	28 February	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.		
12	Tuesday	20 March	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.	Brussels	
	Tuesday	20 March	3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.		
17	Thursday	26 April	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.	Brussels	
	Thursday	26 April	3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.		
22	Tuesday	29 May	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.	Brussels	
	Tuesday	29 May	3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.		
25	Wednesday	20 June	3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.	Brussels	
	Thursday	21 June	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.		
	Thursday	21 June	3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.		
28	Wednesday	11 July	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.	Brussels	
	Wednesday	11 July	3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.		
38	Tuesday	18 September	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.	Brussels	
	Tuesday	18 September	3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.		
41	Wednesday	10 October	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.	Brussels	
	Wednesday	10 October	3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.		
	Thursday	11 October	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.		
48	Monday	26 November	3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.	Brussels	
	Tuesday	27 November	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.		
51	Monday	17 December	3 p.m. - 6.30 p.m.	Brussels	
	Tuesday	18 December	9 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.		

2. Amendment of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1083/2006 as regards certain provisions relating to financial management for certain Members States experiencing or threatened with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability - Danuta Maria Hübner (Point 6 of the draft agenda)

The objective of the proposal is to help countries particularly hit by the financial crisis by providing additional financial resources to these countries, also ensuring the continued implementation of projects. This would be done through temporarily topping-up the EU co-financing of cohesion policy programmes, and would not modify their overall allocation under cohesion policy for the period 2007-2013. The assisted countries would include to date: Hungary, Romania, Latvia, Portugal, Greece and Ireland. The proposal fall under the ordinary legislative procedure.

In the exchange of views the Rapporteur presented her draft report. Given the political urgency of the proposal, the committee has the highest interest in reaching an agreement, referring the report to the plenary as soon as possible and finding an agreement with the Council in the first reading.

3. Amendment of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1083/2006 as regards repayable assistance and financial engineering - Danuta Maria Hübner (Point 7 of the draft agenda)

Member States have had positive experiences with repayable assistance schemes at the level of operations during the programming period 2000-2006 and have therefore continued such schemes or have started to implement repayable assistance schemes in the current programming period 2007-2013.

Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund set out financial engineering instruments with precise areas and scope of intervention. However, the schemes implemented by Member States in the form of reimbursable grants and of credit lines managed by managing authorities via intermediate bodies are neither appropriately covered by the provisions on financial engineering instruments, nor by other provisions of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

It is therefore necessary to set out in a new Section of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 that the Structural Funds may co-finance repayable assistance. The Commission proposal aims to provide clarity about the legality of an existing legal practice. It provides for a definition of reimbursable grant as a direct financial contribution by way of donation which can be totally or partially reimbursable without interest. It clarifies that the assistance repaid, to the body providing the assistance or to another competent public authority of the Member State shall be kept in a separate account and reused to the same purpose or in line with the objectives of the operational programme. Furthermore, it introduces reporting of financial engineering instruments, having regard to the need to ensure appropriate monitoring, by the Member States as well as by the Commission, of the implementation of financial engineering instruments. It also introduces a legal obligation in order to ensure that the financial contribution paid by managing authorities for establishing or contributing to financial engineering instruments is spent for eligible expenditure within a timeframe of two years of the payment into the fund.

In the exchange of views the Rapporteur presented her draft report. Given the political

urgency of the proposal, the committee has the highest interest in reaching an agreement, referring the report to the plenary as soon as possible and finding an agreement with the Council in first reading.

4. Comparative Study on the visions and options for the Cohesion Policy after 2013 (Point 8 of the draft agenda)

This study presented by their authors Prof. John Bachtler and Prof. Carlos Méndez, from the European Policies Research Centre (University of Strathclyde, Glasgow) has created a lot of interest from Members as to address the key strategic options and to discuss in order to decide on the position of the European Parliament in the upcoming negotiations on the legislative package of regulations for Cohesion policy.

The study provides a detailed critical analysis of EU Cohesion Policy reform perspectives for the post-2013 period. On the basis of a literature review and budgetary modelling, the study offers an assessment of the policy's strengths and weaknesses, the main reform ideas and counter-positions, including the implications of different reform proposals. It also provides interesting recommendations to inform the position of the European Parliament in the upcoming negotiations on the legislative package of regulations for Cohesion policy.

The full Study is available at the website [REGI](#).

5. Evolution of EU Macro-Regional Strategies: Present practice and future prospects, especially in the Mediterranean - François Alfonsi (Point 10 of the draft agenda)

In the framework of the initiative report on the evolution of EU Macro-Regional Strategies for which Mr François Alfonsi is draftsman, REGI Committee is pleased to have had an exchange of views on two essential aspects of the report under preparation.

The guest speakers Ms Henryka Moscicka-Dendys (Deputy Director, Directorate for European Policies, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and Mr Bellardi (Region of Marche, Italia), have exposed to the Members, respectively, the state of play of the Baltic Sea strategy and the Adriatic Ionian Initiative, its results and achievements, that opened the debate amongst members, as well as the Council and the European Commission on the future working document to be issued by the Rapporteur.

6. Votes:

- **Parliament's position on the 2012 Draft Budget as modified by the Council - all sections (Point 11 of the draft agenda)**
Rapporteur for the opinion: László Surján (PPE)
The draft opinion 2011/2020(BUD) was adopted with 41 votes in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention.
- **Demographic change and its consequences for the future Cohesion Policy of the EU (Point 12 of the draft agenda)**
Rapporteur for the report: Kerstin Westphal (S&D)
The draft report 2010/2157(INI) was adopted with 36 votes in favour, 2 against and 6 abstention.

- **Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system (Point 13 of the draft agenda)**
Rapporteur for the opinion: Wojciech Michał Olejniczak (S&D)
The draft opinion 2011/2096(INI) was adopted with 40 votes in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention.
- **The review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (Point 14 of the draft agenda)**
Rapporteur for the opinion: Lena Kolarska-Bobińska (PPE)
The draft opinion 2011/2157(INI) was adopted with 40 votes in favour, 2 against and 1 abstention.
- **Temporary suspension of autonomous Common Customs Tariff duties on imports of certain industrial products into the Canary Islands (Point 15 of the draft agenda)**
Rapporteur for the report: Danuta Maria Hübner (PPE)
The draft report 2011/0111(CNS) was adopted without amendments (Internal EP Rules of Procedure, Article 46, allowing the simplified procedure).

7. Exchange of views with Mr Dirk Ahner, Director General, DG REGIO, European Commission, on the Staff Working Paper to be published by the European Commission on Analysis of errors in Cohesion Policy for the years 2006-2009 and actions taken by the Commission and the way forward (Point 16 of the draft agenda)

Mr Dirk Ahner presented the main outcomes of this working paper, then he answered and explained the questions and concerns from the Members on this issue, that can sometimes become sensitive for the certain countries.

This Staff Working Paper on errors in cohesion policy presents the methodology used for quantifying errors and an analysis of the errors found by the Court and the Commission. It provides an analysis of the main types of errors (public procurement and eligibility make up ca 80% of the error rate) identified and their geographical distribution (programmes from two countries contribute half of the error rate), as well as the on-going actions to prevent and remedy detected errors and ensure a continuously effective implementation of systems for the 2007-2013 programmes. It builds on this assessment to highlight further improvements proposed by the Commission to increase the assurance for the 2014-2020 programming period.

6 October 2011

8. 3rd Interparliamentary Committee Meeting with National Parliaments (Point 19 of the draft agenda)

"FUTURE COHESION POLICY IN THE LIGHT OF NEW LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS"

Mr Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for Regional Policy, did an overall presentation on the strategic points of the new legislative proposals: the new approach should make it easier to reduce disparities among regions and strengthen the internal market by concentrating

resources on 11 thematic objectives linked to the Europe 2020 strategy. It was followed by the presentation of the working programme of the Polish Presidency. A successful and fruitful exchange of views then followed between members and national Parliaments that could already raise important national concerns to be taken into account during the negotiations.

Most MEPs and MPs said that they were confident that these measures would boost the effectiveness of Community support for regions and deliver results faster - provided that the specific needs of each region can be matched flexibly with thematic objectives.

Mr Hahn sought to allay their concerns about the Commission's wish to introduce macroeconomic conditions. "This is an instrument of very last resort", he said. Taking the example of Greece, he stressed that its current plight would not "trigger such sanctions", i.e. a suspension of structural fund payments.

Parliament's rapporteurs have already been appointed to fuel the debate from November, and Ms Hübner stressed their wish to achieve an agreement on the reform proposals by the end of 2012, so that the new rules can take effect from January 2013.

10-11 October 2011

9. The OPEN DAYS 2011 "9th European Week of Regions and Cities"

The event took place on the 10-13 October 2011. The same as last year, REGI Committee has contributed to it by

(1) hosting its opening session and

(2) organising a workshop in the form of a joint meeting with the COTER commission of the Committee of the Regions.

Opening session

The Opening Session of the OPEN DAYS 2011 was held in the hemicycle of the European Parliament. This event was at the same time a meeting of REGI and the plenary session of the Committee of the Regions. **Welcoming speeches** were delivered by Mrs **Danuta Hubner** and Mrs **Mercedes Bresso** confirming the commitment to foster growth and territorial cohesion by involving partnership contracts within a multi-level governance system. **Ms Hubner** expressed the strong position of the European Parliament against the macroeconomic conditionality included in the proposal of the Commission.

Jerzy Buzek underlined the importance to keep the budget and link it to the Europe 2020 goals of growth and job creation. **Jose Manuel Barroso** pointed to the challenges that had to be met today - unemployment, recapitalisation of banks, provision of SME support, new regulation for co-financing, and others. He also talked about the tying of the Europe 2020 Strategy to the Cohesion Policy to achieve a fair and balanced proposal and about adopting better regulation. **Elizbieta Bienkowska** expressed the commitment of the Polish Presidency and the Trio to undertake a rapid pace on the negotiations in order for the Cohesion Policy to be operational by January 2014. She reminded of the importance of putting an emphasis on the territorial and urban dimensions of the Cohesion Policy in the context of Europe 2020.

Johannes Hahn presented the proposed 2014-2020 Cohesion policy regulation which links

the Cohesion policy with Europe 2020 goals. He elaborated on the new features such as thematic concentration and partnership contract. Commissioner Hahn underlined the drive to achieve greater effectiveness through stronger target setting and monitoring system, ex ante and ex post conditionalities, and the use of performance reserve. However, he emphasised that the effectiveness is dependent upon the regulatory and physical context in the regions and therefore, the conditions should be checked before the programmes are adopted. Other important points in the proposal are the ex-post conditionalities that reward well performing programmes and the simplification that would streamline the procedures.

The subsequent debate was marked with the recurrent topics on the effects of macroeconomic conditionality on the poorest regions, the meaning of the integrated approach, transition regions, and the flexibility required when accounting for the territorial specificities. **Mrs Huebner** and **Mrs Bresso** expressed their strong opinion against macro-conditionality clauses in the Commission's proposal as well as their concern for the prescriptive nature of the proposal that might limit flexibility in the use of the funds. The last comments were given by **Mrs Bresso** who reminded of the commitment to fight climate change and restated the importance to bolster urban policies. Also, **Mr Hahn** underlined that the Cohesion policy is there to make Europe tangible for citizens, and to generate added value for everyone in Europe.

Mrs Huebner delivered the closing statements. She emphasized that the Cohesion policy should be considered as an effective investment policy that can also be used to answer the challenges of the debt crisis and foster better governance solutions. However, adequate macroeconomic and financial framework is needed as well as a critical mass of financial resources.

REGI - COTER Meeting

The workshop was a joint meeting of COTER and REGI Commissions, offering the possibility to MEPs and COTER Members to exchange views with the stakeholders attending the workshop (representatives of local and regional authorities, EU institutions, civil society, etc.). The meeting was scheduled at a particular moment of the year, as the legislative package ruling cohesion Policy after 2013 was adopted and published by the European Commission just a few days before (6 October).

The thematic scenario of the event was drawn up based on the following key issues, related to the territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy:

- 1- Multilevel governance and partnership in the post 2013 era
- 2- The pursuit of territorial cohesion: rural-urban linkages, urban dimension and functional areas
- 3- Territorial cooperation
- 4- Interplay between Union policies: synergies between policy areas, territorial impact assessment of EU policies

The exchange of views and debate between participants on these issues ended up with concluding remarks that sum up the state of play of the discussions:

Mrs Hübner, chair of REGI committee, underlined that we are in the process of inter-institutional cooperation and negotiation. Topics high on the agenda will certainly be: macroeconomic conditionality, simplification, partnership contract, result orientation. However, the negotiations on the future EU budget will have a strong impact on the process.

Michel Delebarre, chair of COTER committee, stressed that the policy should evolve towards a simplified architecture; a more complicated framework harms the added value of the policy as well as concerns and difficulties in urban areas which needed to be taken seriously.

PART III - 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

Ms Hübner has participated as a chairperson of the Committee in the following event since the last meeting:

02 October	Glasgow	32nd Meeting of the European Policies Research Centre	"The European Parliament's role in negotiating a future Cohesion policy"
03 October	Warsaw	XLVIth COSAC Meeting	MFF for 2014-2020 from the cohesion policy perspective (debate together with the Polish Minister Ms Bienkowska)
10 October 15.00-17.30	Brussels	OPEN DAYS Opening session	Investing in Europe's future: Regions and cities delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth
11 October 9.00-10.30	Brussels	OPEN DAYS REGI-COTER meeting	Workshop on "Territorial dimension of Cohesion policy after 2013"
11 October p.m.	Brussels	OPEN DAYS hosted by Combined Universities in Cornwall (CUC)	"Smart Specialisation In Practice"
11 October p.m.	Brussels	OPEN DAYS (workshop co-organised by Polish Presidency)	"Urban dimension of Cohesion Policy"
12 October 11:15-13:00	Brussels	OPEN DAYS Invitation from Marshal of Lodzkie	High level seminar dedicated to the Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3)
12 October 14.30-17.30	Brussels	OPEN DAYS CoR and DG REGIO (invitation from Commissioner Hahn)	High level Workshop and Panel Debate: "Smart Specialisation Strategies For Regional Growth"

14 October	Brussels	Polish Presidency (Invitation by Ambassador Tombinski)	Seminar on Strategic Programming in Cohesion Policy
18 October (postponed from 4 October)	Brussels, EP	General Electric (GE)	Launch of GE's Polish Innovation Barometer "The importance of regional policy for innovation in today's economy, especially in Poland"
19 October	Madrid	Polish Embassy in Madrid	Seminar on "Cohesion for economic growth of European regions" "Smart Cohesion - new challenges of European regional policy"
27 October	Warsaw, Pl	3rd annual conference on JEREMIE and JESSICA (in the framework of Polish Presidency)	Official opening of the conference (VIDEO Message)
3 - 4 November	Brussels	European Commission, DG for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries	Conference "Sustainable futures for fisheries areas – Opportunities and first achievements of Axis 4 of the EFF"
15 November	Strasbourg	EP plenary session	Plenary debate on "the future of Cohesion Policy and the CAP post 2013"

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Ms Hübner, representing the committee, has accepted so far an invitation to participate (during the coming weeks) in the following events:

17 November	Poland	AGORADA 2011 Conference On Smart Specialisation	Video recording displayed at the beginning of the conference "What means smart specialisation for European regions"
24 November	Poznan, PL	Polish Presidency Informal meeting of Ministers responsible for EU Cohesion Policy, Territorial and Urban Devevelopment on	POLITICAL SESSION: "Strategic Choices For Europe" DEBATE of Ministers: "How to deliver"

		"Integrated approach to development - a key to smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe"	
25 November	Poznan, PL	Polish Presidency Informal meeting of ministers responsible for EU Cohesion Policy, Territorial and Urban Devevelopment	POLICY ROUNDTABLE: Promoting integrated territorial approach and increase of efficiency of Cohesion Policy
29 November 9.00 to 12.30	Brussels	Conference organised by Ms Hübner with the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland and the German Rectors' Conference	Seminar on Cohesion Policy "Looking behind the metaphors: How to build stairways to excellence in EU regions?"
30 November	Brussels, Committee of the Regions	Konwent of Polish Marshals in the framework of Polish Presidency, on "the Future of the Baltic Sea Strategy - Innovation and Transfer of Knowledge"	Opening session - Integrated approach of EUSBSR - future developments
6 December 15.00 - 16.00	Brussels	Meeting with representatives of Organisation France-Cluster	Answers to 4 questions to be published in France-Cluster "Annuaire"
12 December	Brussels	Joint conference of EC, CoR and EESC "Governing in Partnership"	Roundtable discussion with Commissioner Hahn
13 - 15 December	Beirut	Conference of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	Integrated Spatial Strategy for Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, Workshop Meeting "Territorial Dimension of Regional Cohesion"

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

Library News

Latest analysis



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[Errors in Cohesion Policy](#) / DG Regional Policy, November 2011. 8 p

The European Commission has recently published its '[Analysis of errors in cohesion policy for the years 2006-2009](#)', as well as actions it has taken to reduce their occurrence, and the way forward.

The Commission's analysis highlights the most common examples of errors, such as contracts awarded without following the correct tender procedure; inadequate documentation to support expenditure (lack of audit trail); inaccurate calculation of overheads; application of incorrect co-financing rate; and, overestimated payment claims.



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[Reaching the Heights with ICT: Best practices guide for mountain and rural areas](#) / IMMODI - IMplementing Digital Mountain, INTEREG IVC, 2011, 40 p.

IMMODI is an INTERREG IVC project which brings together 10 partners from European Regions representing 7 countries: Italy, France, Spain, Bulgaria, Germany, Finland and Sweden. It aims to address the development of e-government and e-health services in mountainous and rural regions of the EU. A general overview of the regional partners and a summary of the identified good practices in the field of e-health, broadband and e-government are presented in this guide.



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[The impact of structural funds on affordable housing: Success stories and recommendations for the future](#) / CECHODHAS - Housing Europe, May 2011

This publication intends to draw the lessons from the positive experience of the use of Structural Funds for housing-related projects as well as from the identified obstacles for a more efficient and broader scale use of those funds. It is therefore about making the case for a consolidation of this "affordable housing-friendly" approach as well as about putting more emphasis on housing as a necessary tool to face societal challenges in the EU: ageing, climate change, increasing segregation, difficulties to house the youth...(Source: CECHODHAS [website](#))



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[2012 Housing Europe Review: The nuts and bolts of European social housing systems](#) / CECHODHAS - Housing Europe, October 2011

This Review provides an update of the 2007 report Housing Europe 2007- Review of social, co-operative and public housing in the 27 EU member states. While the previous review aimed at providing an overview of the main development in housing policies and housing markets affecting the social, cooperative and public housing sector, the current study focuses on social housing and aims at providing a clearer picture of the way social housing systems are structured across the EU, while identifying the main recent trends in the sector.

Publications



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[Innovation Union competitiveness report 2011](#) / European Commission, 2011. 768 p.

This report monitors progress towards the EU and national R&D headline targets and provides economic evidence and analysis to underpin EU and national policy making in support of Innovation Union. It aims to complement the overall review of Europe 2020 targets in the European Commission Annual Growth Survey by offering a deeper perspective on R&D intensity targets at EU and national level and presenting

evidence on the dynamics of knowledge-intensive firms and other aspects of innovation. The report also extends and complements the Innovation Union scoreboard indicators to address the whole cycle of innovation, including the impact of research and innovation on raising competitiveness and tackling societal challenges. (Available in the Library - make a reservation [here](#))



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European urban and regional studies / Harlow, Essex, England: Longman Group, quarterly

European Urban and Regional Studies provide an original contribution to academic and policy debate related to processes of urban and regional development in Europe. It offers a European coverage from the Atlantic to the Urals and from the Arctic Circle to the Mediterranean. Its aims are to explore the ways in which space makes a difference to the social, economic, political and cultural map of Europe; highlight the connections between theoretical analysis and policy development; and place changes in global context. (Available in the Library - see catalogue entry [here](#))

Selected articles from vol. 18, issue 4, 2011:

Regional convergence and growth in Europe: understanding patterns and determinants / George Petrakos, Dimitris Kallioras, and Ageliki Anagnostou, pp. 375-391 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)