
REGI News

Newsletter from the European Parliament Committee on Regional Development

VII Legislature N. 20 - 5 April 2011



Meeting on

Tuesday 12 April 2011

9.00 - 12.30

15.00 - 18.30

Room PHS 3 C 050

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Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 25 May 2011
15.00 - 18.30
and
Thursday 26 May 2011
9.00 - 12.30
Brussels

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

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

Here you will find the topics which will be discussed at the next REGI Committee meeting on 12 April 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. Mandate for the Trilogue on the 2012 Draft Budget (Point 4 of the draft agenda)

The new budgetary procedure is now characterised by a single reading, making increased cooperation and coordination more necessary (see, in this respect Rule 75c of the Rules of procedure), in order to facilitate a final agreement on the EU Budget at the conciliation stage. In this context, and in accordance with the Joint Declaration on transitional measures applicable to the budgetary procedure after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, agreed on 30 November 2009, the institutions meet for an exchange of views, in good time before the Council completes its reading (by the end of July at the latest). This trilogue is therefore held after the presentation by the Commission of the proposal containing the draft budget and aims at promoting consultation, at reconciling the respective positions of the institutions and at identifying the points of agreement before the Council adopts its position on the draft budget in accordance with Article 314(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

In this framework and concerning Heading 1 b of the EU Budget, the Rapporteur, Mr. Surján, is presenting his opinion where he makes the case for the need for higher payment appropriations to be duly reflected in the 2012 Budget and for a thorough planning that ensures a successful and effective implementation of cohesion policy, while insisting on the indisputable added value of this policy and on the need for adequate and sufficient resources in order to comply with the objectives set out in the Treaties.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: László Surján (EPP)	Consideration of draft opinion: 12/04/11
Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho	Deadline for amendments: 14/04/2011 (tbc)
Procedure: 2011/2019(BUD)	Adoption REGI: 25-26/05/2011 (tbc)
Lead committee: BUDG; Rapporteur: Francesca Balzani (S&D)	Adoption in lead committee: 14/06/2011 (tbc)

2. Exchange of views with Ms Elena Udrea, Romanian Minister on Regional Development, on the implementation of EU Cohesion Policy in Romania and on the report of the visit of a REGI delegation to Romania from 3 to 5 November 2010 (Point 5 of the draft agenda)

The Minister will have an exchange of views with the Members on the implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in Romania. The exchange will be followed by a discussion on the final report, wrapping up the REGI delegation visit to Romania (Bucharest, Giurgiu, Arad, Timisoara) that took place 3-5 November 2010.

3. European Broadband - Investing in digitally driven growth (Point 6 of the draft agenda)

The REGI Committee held a first exchange of views on this file on its meeting of 21 March 2011, where the draft opinion was presented. The draftsman took the view that full broadband coverage should be a universal service. Furthermore she called on the Commission and the Member States to simplify the conditions of the funding systems in order to increase the amount of support. She considered it also necessary to simplify the rules concerning state aids.

59 amendments were tabled to this opinion and a set of compromise amendments are under negotiation and may be put forward before the vote on 12 April.

Amendments point out inter alia that full broadband coverage is essential to enhancing cohesion across EU regions and highlight the need to make best use of complementary technologies like broadband by satellite in order to achieve broadband coverage in rural areas without undue burdens on consumers or the industry. Other amendments concern state aids and call on the Commission to apply more investment incentivised elements within the regulatory framework and provide stimulus to use synergies from infrastructure projects.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Sabine Verheyen (PPE)	Consideration of draft opinion: 21/03/2011
Responsible administrator: Monika Makay	Deadline for Ams: 24/03/2011
Procedure: 2010/2304(INI)	Planned adoption REGI: 12/04/2011 (tbc)
Lead Committee: ITRE - Niki Tzavela (EFD)	Planned adoption ITRE: 05/05/2011 (tbc)
	Planned plenary: July 2011 (tbc)

4. The future for social services of general interest (Point 7 of the draft agenda)

The REGI Committee held a first exchange of views on this file on its meeting of 28 February 2011, where the draft opinion was presented. The draftsman deems that, on the basis of the relevant provisions of the Treaties, social services of general interest (SSGI) are essential for the accomplishment of the EU2020 Strategy goals. Emphasising the principle of subsidiarity, Mr. Alves considered that regional and local authorities play a pivotal role in

the provision of such services, and calls therefore for adequate funding to be provided for the appropriate accomplishment of these tasks.

18 amendments were tabled to this opinion and a set of compromise amendments are under negotiation and may possibly be put forward before the vote on 12 of April.

The amendments tabled concern inter alia the need to improve accessibility and the quality of SSGI in all EU regions, and especially in the remotest, the least developed ones and those lagging-behind. From the point of view of the tabled amendments as a whole, the most controversial issue of the draft opinion appears to be the methodology to apply to the legislative framework of SSGI and the interests to safeguard in this respect.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Luís Paulo Alves (S&D)	Consideration of draft opinion: 28/02/2011
Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho	Planned deadline for Ams: 03/03/2011
Procedure: 2009/2222(INI)	Planned adoption REGI: 12/04/2011
Lead Committee: EMPL - Proinsias De Rossa	Planned adoption EMPL: 24-25/05/2011 (tbc)
	Planned plenary: June 2011 (tbc)

5. The CAP towards 2020: Meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future (Point 8 of the draft agenda)

In his opinion the Rapporteur states his conviction that Europe needs a strong vibrant CAP which will boost development and competitiveness in the global market. More attention should be paid to small holdings which he says should be helped to diversify. Lastly he considers that the disparities which subsist between Member States and regions justify the maintenance of the present system of funding for rural development.

76 amendments have been tabled to this opinion.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Czeslaw Adam Siekierski (PPE)	Consideration of draft opinion: 21/03/2011
Responsible administrator Christian Chopin	Planned deadline for Ams: 02/04/2011
Procedure: 2011/2051(INI)	Adoption REGI: 12 April 2011
Lead committee Agri: Albert Deß (PPE)	Vote in lead committee: 02/05/2011 (tbc)

6. Energy infrastructure priorities for 2020 and beyond (Point 9 of the draft agenda)

The Communication of the Commission, entitled "Energy infrastructure priorities for 2020 and beyond - A blueprint for an integrated European energy network" (COM (2010)677), outlines ideas to provide the EU with a vision of what is needed for making the EU's networks efficient. It puts forward the method of strategic planning to map out necessary infrastructures, decide upon which are of European interest, and provide a toolbox to ensure their timely implementation, including how to speed up authorisation, improve cost allocation and target finance to leverage investment.

In his opinion, the Draftsperson underlined the importance of upgrading the energy infrastructure, with a view to achieving the objectives of the EU20 Strategy, insisted on the integrity of cohesion policy and rejected the idea of creating sectoral funds, advocated for a market based approach and underlined the importance of territorial cooperation. 71 amendments have been tabled to this opinion, further stressing the need for a market-based

approach, better involvement of the EIB, the involvement of regional and local level in infrastructure planning, as well as the special needs of regions with specific geographic features.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Joachim Zeller (PPE)	Consideration of draft opinion 21 March 2011
Responsible Administrator: Diana Haase	Planned deadline for Ams: 24 March 2011
Procedure: 2011/2034(INI)	Adoption REGI: 12 April 2011
Lead committee ITRE -Francisco Sosa Wagner (NI)	Vote in lead committee: 26 May 2011 (tbc)

7. European system of national and regional accounts in the European Union (Point 10 of the draft agenda)

A first exchange of views on this file was held the meeting of 21-22 March 2011, where the Chair, Ms. Hübner, presented as Rapporteur her draft opinion, which aims at bringing national accounts in the European Union in line with the new economic environment, the advances in methodological research and the needs of users. The rapporteur insisted on the fact that the ESA is an essential tool for major administrative purposes (e.g. own resources, excessive deficit procedure, structural funds) and for the analysis of the coordination and convergence of Member States' economic policies.

One amendment was tabled to this draft opinion in view of entitle the Parliament to being kept duly informed of the monitoring process in the framework of the application of the said regulation.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Danuta Maria Hübner (PPE)	Consideration of draft opinion: 22/03/11
Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho	Deadline for amendments: 24/03/2011
Procedure: 2010/0374(COD)	Adoption REGI: 12/04/2011
Lead committee: ECON - Sharon Bowles (ALDE)	Adoption in lead committee: TBC

8. European Urban Agenda and its Future in Cohesion Policy (Point 11 of the draft agenda)

The urban dimension of Cohesion Policy, the role of cities in regional development and the role of local authorities in the management of funds is an important theme of the discussions on the future of Cohesion Policy.

In his draft report, the Rapporteur gives an overview on the latest developments of the European Urban Agenda, also outlining and evaluating its key processes, analyses the needs of urban areas, stresses a two fold focus in urban areas: basic infrastructure and smart investments in infrastructure and services based on technological advancements. The Rapporteur calls for obligatory involvement of political leaders of key urban areas and associations of local and regional authorities into all stages of Cohesion Policy decision-making, advocates for the integrated strategic planning principles, calls for more flexible cross-financing rules between ERDF and ESF.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Oldřich Vlasák	Exchange of views with "Mini-Hearing": 27/09/2010
Responsible administrator: Diana Haase	Consideration of working document: 27/10/2010
Procedure: 2010/2158 (INI)	Consideration of draft report: 12/04/2011
	Planned deadline for Ams:
	Planned adoption REGI: 25/05/2011 -tbc)
	Plenary: June II 2011 (tbc)

9. Amendment of Decision 2004/162/EC as regards the products that may benefit from exemption from or a reduction in dock dues (Point 12 of the draft agenda)

The rapporteur proposes no amendments to this proposal which concerns certain exemptions or reductions in dock dues in the French overseas territories.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Elie Hoarau	Consideration of draft report 12/04/2011
Responsible administrator Christian Chopin	Deadline for amendments: tbc
Procedure: 2010/0359(CNS)	Adoption REGI 26/05/2011 (tbc)

10. Specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union (Point 13 of the draft agenda)

The draftsman has presented a very detailed opinion to this legislative proposal, and has tabled 48 amendments to the Commission's proposals. Among his principle amendments is a proposal to modify the legal basis by including Article 349 of the TFEU which would strengthen the position of the REGI committee on any future legislation in this area. Under present rules such an amendment should be tabled by the lead committee so will have to see a) if it is adopted by REGI and b) if it is followed by AGRI. The rapporteur underlines the need for impact studies to be undertaken out by the Commission each time that international trade agreements challenge agricultural activities governed by the POSEI. He also points to the need to encourage the development of an indigenous agriculture and the reduction of imports.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Elie Hoarau	Consideration of draft report 12/04/2011
Responsible administrator Christian Chopin	Deadline for amendments: tbc
Procedure: 2010/0256(COD)	Adoption REGI 26/05/2011 (tbc)
Lead committee AGRI - Gabriel Mato(PPE)	Adoption main committee : 20/06/2011 (tbc)

11. Exchange of views with Mr Tamás Fellegi, Minister of National Development acting as President-in-Office of the Council, on the Council's debate on the European Commission Fifth Cohesion Report (Point 15 of the draft agenda)

Mr Fellegi will inform Members on the mid-term achievements of the Hungarian presidency, and will present to Members the Council conclusions on the Fifth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion, adopted by the General Affairs Council 21 February 2011.

12. The EC 5th Cohesion Report and the Strategy for the post-2013 Cohesion Policy (Point 16 of the draft agenda)

The draft report is elaborated mainly on the basis of two following documents: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the regions and the European Investment Bank entitled: Conclusions of the fifth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion: the future of cohesion policy and the main document Investing in Europe's future: Fifth report on economic, social and territorial cohesion.

The Rapporteur advocates for a higher emphasis on the European added value of cohesion policy interventions, is in favour of maintaining the current structure of three objectives, with a strengthening of both Objective 2 and Objective 3.

The Rapporteur advocates for the key role, cities play in regional development, but rejects setting of quotas for any type of areas, such as urban areas, functional areas, or setting of quotas for programmes with regard to the proportion allocated to ESF/ERDF. Mr Pieper stresses that further to the EU2020 objectives, cohesion policy should also support basic infrastructure and conventional energy sources. Furthermore, GDP should remain as the core indicator of eligibility. The Rapporteur calls for a common strategic framework of ESF, ERDF, EAFRD and EFF and for more flexible cross financing rules between ERDF and ESF.

Mr Pieper welcomes the proposed development and partnership contracts, but calls for further clarification of responsibility and accountability of different levels of governance. The ideas of thematic concentration and conditionalities are also welcome in the draft report with a call for sufficient flexibility.

The Rapporteur calls for a co-financing rate to be set at maximum 75%, advocates for the n+2 rule to be maintained, exceptions abolished, apart from the first year of the programming period.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: Markus Pieper	Exchange of views: 27/01/2011
Responsible administrator: Diana Haase	Hearing: 22/03/2011
Procedure: 2011/2035(INI)	Consideration of draft report: 12/04/2010
	Adoption REGI: 26/05/2011 (tbc)
	Plenary: June II 2011 (tbc)

13. Gender Mainstreaming in the EU Cohesion Policy (Point 17 of the draft agenda)

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that aims at integrating gender equality in the policy- and decision-making process as a regular factor to be taken account of. In the Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-2015, the Commission undertakes to “support the promotion of gender equality in the implementation of all aspects and flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy, especially as regards definition and implementation of relevant national measures, through technical support as well as through the Structural Funds and other major funding programmes such as the 7th Framework Programme for Research. In the context of the Employment Guidelines and the evaluation of national employment

policies, [the Commission] will monitor closely the national policies adopted to improve gender equality in the labour market and boost the social inclusion of women".

In view of informing Members on the state-of-play concerning this strategy in the field of Cohesion Policy and on the gaps and challenges for gender equality in this policy field, the Chair is organising a debate to which the following experts were invited:

- Britt-Marie Söderberg Torstensson – Winnet Sweden/Europe - Winnet 8 Responsible for Communication and dissemination,
- Ewa Ruminska-Zimny – Warsaw School of Economics, former Head of the UN Programme on Gender and Economy, UNECE,
- Anne-Charlott Callerstig – European Community of Practice on Gender Mainstreaming

With the participation of Mikel Landabaso, Head of the Unit "Thematic coordination, innovation", DG REGIO, European Commission.

The speakers are invited to present to the Members of the Committee on Regional Development their views and practical experience on gender equality and gender mainstreaming issues, focusing on regional development and EU cohesion policy in particular, as well as their substantial recommendations for the future review of the legislative and financial framework of cohesion policy.

For this purpose, speakers are expected to identify areas where challenges and gaps in terms of gender mainstreaming are mostly detected and to specify the priorities in terms of gender mainstreaming and gender equality, in keeping with a prospective focus in their presentations. Good practices examples can be presented.

They should namely identify the areas of bigger concern as well as the priorities (e.g., innovation, labour market, SME) which would require more attention in the upcoming legislative review, and propose specific and operational measures in that respect, due account being taken to their link with economic, social and territorial cohesion objectives.

Mr. Landabaso, DG REGIO, will be asked to take the floor and to comment on the presentations of the above speakers and, keeping a prospective approach to the future cohesion policy, should clarify Members on the meaning of gender mainstreaming, whether there is a gender mainstreaming strategy in cohesion policy and how this is applied, by referring to the type of measures that are required under such strategy, the relevant legislation in cohesion policy and by clarifying whether there are gender-sensitive guidelines at the level of project-design and management and presenting the benefits and the effectiveness of the strategy, if any. Details should also be provided on the Commission's planned measures as far as assessment, progress monitoring and accountability are concerned and an overview on the measures that the Commission plans to put forward for the next programming period should be given to the Committee.



PART II

Here you will find information on the issues discussed in the last REGI meetings held on 21-22 March 2011

1. Absorption of Structural and Cohesion Funds: lessons learnt for the future Cohesion Policy of the EU (Point 4 of the draft agenda)

In the exchange of views the Rapporteur presented his working document, which briefly describes the purpose and scope of the report. The Rapporteur gave a general overview of the situation, the reasons behind absorption problems, such as problems for two overlapping periods, the set up of new programmes went slowly, the problems of the new rules and the lack of legal clarity. He stressed the conflict between audit requirements and implementation, and the way to reconcile the depth of audits and the error rate with the principle of proportionality.

In the following exchange of views Members welcome this report as very important before discussing the financial framework. One member was wondering if a decentralized or centralized administrative organization was influencing the rate of absorption. Another member reminded that this situation was mainly due to the existence of too many rules and bureaucracy from National governments. Nicholas Martyn, from the European Commission declared that the EC shared a lot of common ground with the content of the working document, regarding the issue of administrative capacity and the risk regarding the two overlapping periods aggravated by crisis. He announced that a deeper analysis from the EC will be available by the end of April.

2. Financial rules applicable to the annual budget of the Union (Point 5 of the draft agenda)

This Regulation lays down the rules applicable to the establishment and implementation of the general budget of the European Communities. Certain adjustments to the current text (**Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002**) became necessary after the coming into force of the TFEU (Lisbon Treaty). Through both its committee on budgetary control and the committee on regional development, Parliament has repeatedly called for measures to improve the quality of financial control exercised by Member States over structural fund expenditure.

The Chair first gave the floor to Mr Nicholas Martyn, Deputy Director General on Development, Coordination and Communication of Cohesion Policy in DG REGIO, European

Commission, for his presentation. He presented the three main proposed changes: suppression of the Certifying Authority, a New accreditation system, an Annual Management Declaration (AMD) and an Annual Clearance of Account (ACA). He pointed out the main advantages in terms of increasing responsibilities, increased harmonization and transparency. But he also recognized the risks of changing to a new system and the administrative burden it can provoke.

The rapporteur, Mr Olbrycht, declared that, in spite of a shared view to simplify the system, there was still no mutual understanding between the EC, the EP and Member States (MS). He wondered what the acceptable risk of error really meaning was, and was wondering that if the system is now getting better, what would be the reason to change it again. He also pointed out that Cohesion Policy system is different from the Common Agricultural one, so that it won't be so easy for Cohesion Policy to adopt the same system as the CAP one.

In the exchange of views that followed many Members addressed questions about the role of the EC in the new system proposed, the role granted to the Regional Authorities and the weighting of procedures according to the stakes of the projects. N.Martyn made the general answer that the EC main objective was to introduce a more risk-based approach.

The Chair concluded by proposing to work more closely with the leading BUDG committee and with the EC and the MS.

3. European broadband – Investing in digitally driven growth (Point 6 of the draft agenda)

The main objective of this Communication is to assist further the actions of national and local authorities regarding the Digital Agenda for Europe, a flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 strategy that restated the objective endorsed by the European Council to bring basic broadband to all Europeans by 2013. By 2020, all Europeans should have access to internet of above 30 Megabits per second (Mbps) and 50% or more of European households have subscriptions above 100Mbps.

The Rapporteur, Mrs Verheyen, presented her draft opinion to the Committee, pointing out three core points: First, broadband access has to be considered as a universal service, like any other service of general interest; second the need to increase the resources available in the EU programmes and EIB loans to achieve it; third the necessity to simplify State aid rules in order to make them more investment-friendly.

Most of the members shared the Rapporteur's view on the need to develop broadband access such as a universal service and the technologies it requires, but added other issues such as competition rules in this market, accessibility, and a fair access tariff and developing technologies for electro sensitive citizens.

4. Energy infrastructure priorities for 2020 and beyond (Point 7 of the draft agenda)

Given the important role cohesion policy can play in energy infrastructure, the Chair informed, that upon request of REGI and ENVI, the lead committee has accepted to postpone, to allow for REGI to adopt an opinion the 12th of April.

The rapporteur, Mr Zeller has presented his draft opinion around the Communication of the

Commission, entitled "Energy infrastructure priorities for 2020 and beyond - A blueprint for an integrated European energy network" (COM (2010)677). This communication outlines ideas to provide the EU with a vision of what is needed for making the EU's networks efficient. It puts forward the method of strategic planning to map out necessary infrastructures, decide upon which are of European interest, and provide a toolbox to ensure their timely implementation, including how to speed up authorisation, improve cost allocation and target finance to leverage investment.

The rapporteur outlined that to meet these ambitious goals on climate change implying EU energy policy (20-20-20 agreement), the EU needs the strong involvement of regional and local authorities to implement and develop the necessary energy infrastructure priorities.

In the exchange of views that followed, many Members insisted on the importance of the Regional and Local Authorities, namely towns and cities, not only for reducing energy consumption but also to generate local energy, to develop energy efficiency in housing and to collaborate more with National Authorities. The importance of macro regions to set up energy joint cross-border projects was also pointed out.

The Rapporteur concluded by welcoming these new additional ideas, waiting for amendments to complement its opinion.

5. The CAP towards 2020: Meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future (Point 8 of the draft agenda)

In his opinion the Rapporteur stated his conviction that Europe needs a strong vibrant CAP which will boost development and competitiveness in the global market. He pointed out that more attention should be paid to small holdings which he says should be helped to diversify. Lastly he expressed the view that the disparities which subsist between Member States, and regions justify the maintenance of the present system of funding for rural development that must be more closely linked with Cohesion Policy.

In the short exchange of views that followed, some Members stated that the Territorial cohesion criteria should apply for the CAP, focusing on equality, equity and effectiveness. Others called for a better link between environment and rural development, that has to be sustainable

6. European system of national and regional accounts in the European Union (Point 11 of the draft agenda)

The Chair, Ms Hübner, as Rapporteur, presented her draft opinion on the proposal for a regulation in order to revise ESA 95, aiming at bringing national accounts in the European Union in line with the new economic environment, the advances in methodological research and the needs of users.

The rapporteur insisted on the fact that the ESA is seen as an essential tool for major administrative purposes (e.g. own resources, excessive deficit procedure, structural funds) and for the analysis of the coordination and convergence of Member States' economic policies, providing EU institutions, governments and economic and social operators with a set of harmonised and reliable statistics on which to base their decisions.

She pointed out that COFOG 2-digit reporting of data has not been made compulsory in the draft regulation, which constitutes a significant shortcoming in the ability of the Commission and stakeholders in general to analyse the patterns of public expenditure and its functional breakdown.

She added that there was no progress in the possible collection of public expenditure data at NUTS II level despite the cooperation and negotiation with Eurostat throughout the last four years, which will weaken the ability of the Commission and other stakeholders to undertake a comprehensive and reliable analysis of national policies and, in particular, the patterns and trends of public expenditure and public investment at regional level.

The Members expressed their shared view with the Rapporteur's ones, pointing out the concern for the growing public debts at local level.

7. Parliament's position on the 2012 Draft Budget (Point 10 of the draft agenda)

The Chair drew the attention of Members to two key outcomes to provide to the BUDG lead committee:

- An opinion on the BUDG resolution on the mandate for the trilogue on the 2012 draft budget;
- Proposals for a preliminary list of pilot projects and preparatory actions to present to the Commission, to be transmitted to BUDG by the end of May 2011.

The Chair gave the floor to Ms Francesca Balzani, Rapporteur on the Budget 2012 in the BUDG Committee.

She explained that she has initiated a process of direct consultations with the specialised committees. This intends to substitute a more "informal" process to the traditional procedure of the guidelines resolution, and her visit to REGI committee aimed at defining the lines along which this year's procedure will be established. She also presented the calendar for the entire procedure

The REGI specialised Rapporteur, Mr Surján, acknowledges that the issue is now more difficult than in the past few years, given that there are increasing differences of opinion between the Council and the European Parliament. Moreover, some Member States have declared their unwillingness to exceed a certain level, therefore reducing the Commission's room for manoeuvre and, in fact, rendering the negotiations impossible.

The Rapporteur insists that Cohesion policy should not fall victim of savings in the Budget and that it is important to emphasise that expenditure in the framework of Cohesion policy does contribute to solving the crisis.

Furthermore, the Rapporteur considers that 2012 will constitute an opportunity to increase the capacity to absorb the funds by Member States, as both the number of programmes and the demands from Member States are increasing.

Mr. Surján warns nevertheless that if the volume of Cohesion policy is not above a certain level, any money that will be spent will in fact be wasted and the expected results will not be reached.

In the debate that followed, Members agreed on the issue of a low absorption rate, and the majority expressed their wish that REGI tables an opinion to BUDG on the mandate for the trilogue. They also complained about the impossibility to vote on the EU Solidarity Fund credit on floods due to the low level of reserve provided in the budget by the Member States.

Other members also recalled the need for simplification and for a change in the rules, because of the complexity and the inadequacy of the 2005 regulation, which is maybe no longer adapted to the new economic needs of the business sector.

8. Votes

- **State of play and future synergies for increased effectiveness between ERDF and other Structural Funds (Point 12 of the draft agenda) 2010/2160(INI)**
Rapporteur: Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)
The report was adopted by 43 votes in favour, 1 against and 0 abstentions.
- **Report 2010 on the implementation of the Cohesion Policy programmes for 2007-2013 (Point 13 of the draft agenda) (2010/2139(INI))**
Rapporteur: Miroslav Mikolášik (PPE)
The report was adopted by 40 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions.
- **Objective 3: A challenge for territorial cooperation - the future agenda for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation (Point 14 of the draft agenda) (2010/2155(INI))**
Rapporteur: Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid (PPE)
The report was adopted by 45 votes in favour, 1 against and 0 abstentions.
- **Amendment of Council Regulation (EC) n° 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) (Point 16 of the draft agenda) (2010/0266(COD))**
Draftsperson: Iosif Matula (PPE)
The opinion was adopted by 41 votes in favour, 3 against and 2 abstentions.
- **Programme to support the further development of an integrated maritime policy (Point 17 of the draft agenda) (2010/0257(COD))**
Draftsperson: Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)
The opinion was adopted by 43 votes in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention.
- **Innovation Union: Transforming Europe for a post-crisis world (Point 18 of the draft agenda) (2010/2245(INI))**
Draftsperson: Danuta Maria Hübner (PPE)
The opinion was adopted by 41 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions.
- **2009 discharge: EU General Budget, section III - Commission (Point 15 of the draft agenda) (2010/2142(DEC))**
Draftsperson: Jens Geier (S&D)
The opinion was adopted by 43 votes in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions.

9. Hearing on the Future Cohesion Policy (Point 19 of the draft agenda)

The Committee on Regional Development held a Public Hearing entitled "Future Cohesion Policy". The Chair announced that this public hearing was organised in the context of the Committee's work on the INI report **The EC 5th Cohesion Report and the Strategy for the post-2013 Cohesion Policy**, led by Rapporteur Markus Pieper.

The main aim of the hearing was to discuss with experts :

- the proposed common strategic framework and development investment partnership contracts (Professor Jacek Szlachta, Head of Strategy and Planning Division, Warsaw School of Economics)
- the new system of conditionality (Mr Jussi Yli-Lahti, Director of Regional Development, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, Finland)
- the role of Member States and regions in the design and implementation of a reformed cohesion policy (Dr Angelika Poth-Mögele, Director of Policy, Council of European Municipalities and Regions and Mrs Eleni Marianou, Secretary General, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions)

Mr Mögele also expressed scepticism around macroeconomic conditionality, insisting on the fact that real multi-level governance must be developed in a partnership approach.

Ms Marianou also raised three issues concerning conditionality, partnership and strategic issues such as EU 2020 facing the challenge to be balanced with a bottom-up approach.

In the exchange of views that followed, some Members expressed their concern on the link between EU 2020 already begun and the Future cohesion policy in 2014, their wish to know more about the content expected of the partnership contracts, and the 5th Cohesion Rapporteur Mr Pieper asked more questions regarding conditionality. The additional issue of monofund or multifund approach was discussed, as well as the Territorial cohesion principle being ahead of EU 2020.

N.Martyn, representing the EC concluded that he took due note on the concerns raised on partnership contracts, on aligning eligibility rules between funds and the importance territorial dimension and thematic concentration to increase effectiveness.

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 events since the last meeting:

31 March	Budapest, HU	Hungarian Presidency of the EU in association with the European Commission	High Level Meeting on the Future of Cohesion Policy + Press Conference
1st April	Sofia, BU	Invitation by Polish Ambassador	"Polish experience in absorption of European funds in the context Future of Cohesion Policy"
2 April	Coppet, Switzerland	Le Cercle de l'Europe de Coppet	"L'Europe des Communes: Quelle place pour les Communes dans la construction de l'Europe"

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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:

18 April	Szczecin, PL	The President of the City of Szczecin	European Territorial Cooperation in the future cohesion policy 2014-2020
8 May	Innsbruck	European Prize for Regional and Local Politics	Ms Huebner will receive the Emperor-Maximilian-Prize 2011 for "outstanding achievements in the regional policy"

19 May	Gdansk, PL	EC in partnership with Polish Government, the Pomerania Region and the City of Gdansk	2011 European Maritime Day Conference Maritime Policy: Putting People First <u>"What lessons from the Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region?"</u>
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Visit to Bulgaria of Ms. Danuta Hübner,
Chairperson of the Committee on Regional Development
1st April 2011

Ms. Hübner had a meeting with the Minister of EU Funds Management, Mr. Tomislav Donchev, as well as with the Chairwoman of the EU Affairs Committee in the Bulgarian Parliament. Afterwards there was a working lunch for Ms. Hübner, attended by Bulgarian MEP Andrey Kovatchev, MPs. It was done at the EP's office in Sofia, organised by its Director Violeta Stanicic.

The centrepiece of her visit was a round table discussion at the Council of Ministers on the topic of sharing experience in the use of EU funds, in whose organisation we took an active part. The round table was very well attended, with over 100 people participating, including representatives from all Bulgarian line ministries dealing with the EU funding, associations of local authorities and municipalities from all over the country, many NGOs and media. There were interesting presentations, followed by a lively Q&A session. In all her meetings Ms. Hubner's main message was that Bulgaria has no time to lose and needs to increase further its efforts to efficiently utilize EU funds and speed up all related procedures, while keeping a good level of control. She was also confident that Bulgaria and other member-states with GNP below the EU average will receive significant structural funds envelopes in the next financial perspectives.

There was a short press conference after the round table and Sofia EPIO also organised a number of exclusive interviews for Ms. Hubner. The event was very well publicised, raised significant media interest and resulted in lots of positive media coverage.

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

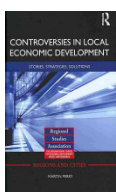
Library News

Publications



Territorial development, cohesion and spatial planning: knowledge and policy development in an enlarged EU / Neil Adams, Giancarlo Cotella, Richard Nunes. London: Routledge, 2011. 457p.

The book examines some of the evolving challenges faced by EU regional policy in light of enlargement and to assess some of the approaches and trends in terms of territorial development policy and practice that are emerging out of this process. Focusing on the experiences on Central and Eastern Europe, the different chapters reflect on the diversity of approaches to spatial planning and the politics of policy formation and multi-level governance operations - from local to trans-national agendas. (Available in the Library - make a reservation [here](#))



Controversies in local economic development: stories, strategies, solutions / Martin Perry. New York: Routledge, 2010. 257 p.

This book is an introductory guide to some of the major ideas and policy tools that have influenced academic debate and development practice. Taking the view that economic processes are mechanisms that promote desired outcomes only in particular contexts, the book asks questions of both academic debates and the prescriptions of policy experts. (Available in the Library - make a reservation [here](#))



The Europeanization of Cities: Policies, Urban Change & Urban Networks / Edited by Alexander Hamedinger and Alexander Wolffhardt. Amsterdam: Techne Press, 2010. 248 p.

The book sheds light on the complex interplay between cities and the European Union, both how cities engage with the EU and how the EU engages with cities. In particular, the book considers how EU policies and programs are acting as a driving force for urban change, and what motivates cities to be present on the EU stage. Furthermore, it addresses the role of cities in the process of European integration, for example, social policy. (Available in the Library - make a reservation [here](#))



Journal of European Public Policy / Routledge, 8 issues per year

Journal of European Public policy provides analytical, theoretical and methodological articles in the field of European public policy. Focusing on the dynamics of public policy in Europe, the journal encourages a wide range of social science approaches, both qualitative and quantitative.

Selected articles from vol. 18, issue 1:

Europeanization and multi-level governance in south-east Europe: the domestic impact of EU cohesion policy and pre-accession aid / authors: Ian Bache, George Andreou, Gorica Atanasova and Danijel Tomsic, pp. 122-141 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)

Library Briefings



[An introduction to EU regional policy](#) / Christopher Needham, 28 March 2011

With 35% (€348 billion) of the EU budget for the current 2007-2013 programmes, regional policy (RP) is a significant part of EU activities. RP has three overall objectives: convergence, competitiveness/employment and territorial cooperation. Convergence is by far the largest objective with 82% of the total budget. It aims to stimulate growth and employment in poorer EU regions (mainly new Member State - MS) for them to become wealthier and "converge" to average EU wealth levels.

Library Summary



[Is your building energy efficient?](#) / by Ivana KATSAROVA published on 31 March 2011

Improved energy efficiency means lower CO2 emissions, a positive effect on the fight against climate change, lower energy bills for households and companies, reduced dependency on gas and oil imported from abroad and a boost for the labour market.

Latest analysis



[OECD Economic Surveys: United Kingdom 2011](#) / OECD, 2011

Economic growth will be subdued this year and next in the United Kingdom, but the government must continue its difficult fiscal consolidation and structural reform programmes to return the economy to a sustainable path, according to the OECD's latest UK Economic Survey.



[The Mediterranean and Black Sea basins](#) / Eurostat, Statistics in focus, no 14, 23 March 2011, 16 p

This publication aims at presenting data in the framework of the EU Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), using the sea basin approach. This approach takes into account the activities and sectors developed in each EU basin and in the coastal regions which border these sea areas.



[EUROCITIES opinion on the EU budget review](#), 15 March 2011, 6 p

In EUROCITIES opinion, the new budget must be results-driven, based on smarter spending to ensure a critical mass as well as stronger, quicker impact, with results visible for as many citizens as possible. It also highlights that the added value of EU funding should be the promotion of an integrated approach, strengthening multi-level governance, supporting innovative approaches and ensuring solidarity. EUROCITIES' position has been put together by its EU budget task force, which gathers representatives from all EUROCITIES forums as well as members of the EUROCITIES executive committee.