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# REGI News

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*Newsletter from the European Parliament Committee on Regional Development*

*VII Legislature N. 18 - 21 February 2011*



**Meeting on  
Monday 28 February 2011  
15.00 - 18.30**

**Room JAN 6 Q 2**

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**Date of next meeting:**

**Monday 21 March 2011**  
**15.00 - 18.30**  
**Tuesday 22 March 2011**  
**9.00 - 12.30**  
**Brussels**

*Comments and subscriptions at*  
[\*regi-secretariat@europarl.europa.eu\*](mailto: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 28 February 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. State of play and future synergies for increased effectiveness between ERDF and other Structural Funds (Point 4 of the draft agenda)**

The Rapporteur, Mr. Stavrakakis, will present his draft report to the Committee, calling for the strengthening of the coordination of EU funds and programmes, just as the Parliament has consistently insisted in several of its resolutions, in order to avoid conflicting policies, contradictory public actions and duplication of resources, which have consequences both for regional effectiveness of public policies and for their national impact.

As far as the ESF is concerned, the experience has clearly demonstrated that the ERDF funding of economic actions can be more effective if closely coordinated and integrated with the actions undertaken by the first fund, given that enhancement of the European added value of both structural funds is linked to the progress in achieving synergies between economic and social intervention.

In the field of synergies between instruments and policies, the separation of the EAFRD from the general framework of Structural Funds should be carefully assessed, and the coordination with the 7th Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities, and the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme should be further reinforced, as Parliament has already insisted in the past.

Important elements for coordination are already in place, but these can be further enhanced for the benefit of greater synergies. The EU Cohesion Policy instruments (ERDF, ESF and CF) are part of a common framework which stretches from the Strategic Guidelines down to payments and reporting. However, coordination should go beyond and above the Cohesion Policy instruments *stricto sensu*.

Synergies and coordination do not imply one size-fits-all solutions. Instead they call for

close strategic coordination between instruments, policies and actors in order to produce carefully designed interventions and programmes which take into account the territorial specificities and comparative advantages or special features of each region in an integrated place-based approach.

In conclusion, Mr. Stavrakakis believes that the present moment, which is complex due to the consequences of the financial and economic crisis, constitutes the right framework and opportunity in view of the upcoming negotiations on the future MFF to achieve greater synergies between EU funds and programmes by putting in place an even more far-reaching coordination mechanism. This will have to include taking the current Strategic Guidelines on a new level of strategic planning by establishing a single Strategic Framework and complementing the general framework for EU Cohesion Policy instruments with additional links to other EU related programmes.

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>
Rapporteur: Georgios Stavrakakis (S&D)	Consideration of working document: 01/12/10
Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho	Consideration of draft report: 28/02/11
Procedure: 2010/2160(INI)	Adoption REGI: 21-22/03/11 (tbc)
	Plenary: 05/2011 (tbc)

## **2. Exchange of views with Mr László Andor, Commissioner on Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, on the European Social Fund and the Future Cohesion Policy (Point 5 of the draft agenda)**

Commissioner Andor is responsible for the management of the ESF. REGI having a horizontal competence on all the Structural Funds, the committee is interested to hear first hand from the Commissioner which is the horizon for this important Fund in the period post 2013 but also how the Fund is coping with the increasing unemployment in Europe. After the presentation there will be an exchange of views with the Members.

## **3. Europe, the World's n° 1 Tourist destination – A new political framework for tourism in Europe (Point 6 of the draft agenda)**

The REGI Committee held a first exchange of views on this file on its meeting of 27 January 2011, where the draft opinion was presented. The draftsman called for an integrated approach and efficient coordination of Community, national, regional and local policies. He also highlighted the importance of sustainable forms of tourism for local economies. He considered it necessary to counterbalance the effects of seasonal tourism by diversifying tourism. In addition he drew the attention to the necessity of a 'European label' and to the importance of the quality of employment, labour force mobility and combating of undeclared work.

89 amendments were tabled to this opinion and a set of compromise amendments are under negotiation and may be put forward before the vote on 28 February.

Amendments concern inter alia necessary measures to avoid tourist concentration in popular areas, Europe's cultural heritage and regional and linguistic diversity as a comparative advantage in the global tourism marketplace, the setting-up of a European hotel classification system and the strategy for sustainable coastal and marine tourism.

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>
Rapporteur: Salvatore Caronna (S&D)	Consideration of draft opinion: 27/01/2011
Responsible administrator: Monika Makay	Planned deadline for Ams: 03/02/2011
Procedure: 2010/2206(INI)	Planned adoption REGI: 28/02/2011 (tbc)
Lead Committee: TRAN; Rapporteur: C. Fidanza	Planned adoption TRAN: March 2011 (tbc)
	Planned plenary:

#### **4. Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) (Point 7 of the draft agenda)**

The REGI Committee held a first exchange of views on its meeting of 26-27 January 2011, where the draft opinion was presented. It contains 6 paragraphs and mainly insists on the importance to support these industries that contribute directly to competitiveness and employment creation in all the regions of the EU.

The Rapporteur (Mr Oldrich Vlasak) has also pointed out that the existing Structural Funds and the post-2013 cohesion policy, that includes financial engineering to help SMEs and promote PPPs through EIB and EIF, play a key role to help release the full potential of the cultural and creative industries.

Mr Vlasak has tabled amendments 7 together with its colleague Rapporteur in the Lead Committee CULT (Ms Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid), supporting successful initiatives that bring immediate results for this sector and the regions implied: European Capital of Culture, Town Twinings and the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in CCIs.

In total, 53 amendments were tabled to this opinion, showing the strategic importance of this sector within the whole EU.

The Rapporteur proposed five compromise amendments in order to maintain the coherence of the opinion, and came to a global agreement from all political groups on the key issues that REGI committee wishes to address :

- CCIs as an essential sector to achieve territorial cohesion and a key asset of territorial cooperation;
- Importance of ICTs and broadband connections;
- Successful initiatives to further support (Twinings, etc);
- CCIs contributing to smart growth within EU 2020 strategy, and respecting cultural diversity of Europe;
- CCIs importance in the post 2013 future Cohesion Policy;

The remaining Amendments envisage either to precise these key messages or to emphasise the role of Regional and Local Authorities to promote CCIs.

Discrepancies may only appear in the level of cooperation necessary to help this sector at the EU level.

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>
Rapporteur: Oldřich Vlasák (ECR)	Consideration of draft opinion: 26/01/2011
Responsible administrator: Franck Ricaud	Deadline for tabling Ams: 03/02/2011

Procedure: 2010/2156(INI)	Adoption in REGI: 28/02/2011
Main committee: CULT; Rapporteur: Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid (PPE)	Adoption in CULT: 03/03/2011 (tbc)
	Plenary: 04/2011 (tbc)

## **5. A Single Market for Enterprises and Growth (Point 8 of the draft agenda)**

The REGI Committee held a first exchange of views on this file on its meeting of 26 January 2011, where the draft opinion was presented. The drafts person welcomed the Commission's proposals, especially the planned assessment of the "Small Business Act", the reinforcement of the "Think Small First" principle, the proposed creation of a European Foundation Statute and the idea of single market forum. She underlined that regional policy implementation is key for the success of Europe 2020 strategy and the single market deepening. She called for a more user-friendly regional policy but also for stricter rules against "fund-shopping". She stressed that services are a unique source of development for the single market. In addition she asked for the creation of a European Association Statute.

67 amendments were tabled to this opinion and a set of compromise amendments are under negotiation and may be put forward before the vote on 28 February.

Amendments highlight that European Union policies on the single market and regional development are highly complementary. Other amendments concern inter alia the importance of an adequately funded regional policy, the smart specialisation of regions, the role of the Trans-European Networks and the still incomplete single market for patents.

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>
Rapporteur: Sophie Auconie (PPE)	Consideration of draft opinion: 26/01/2011
Responsible administrator: Monika Makay	Planned deadline for Ams: 03/02/2011
Procedure: 2010/2277(INI)	Planned adoption REGI: 28/02/2011 (tbc)
Lead Committee: IMCO; Rapporteur: C.S.Busoi	Planned adoption IMCO: 16 March 2011 (tbc)
	Planned plenary: April 2011 (tbc)

## **6. Mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund - Floods in 2010 in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Romania (Point 9 of the draft agenda)**

In order to avoid undue delay in approving this measure which the Committee on Budgets intends to adopt as soon as possible, the Committee on Regional Development has no objection to the mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund to provide the sum of EUR 182 388 893 to the countries concerned as proposed by European Commission and in accordance with the rules laid down in the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 and in the Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002.

No amendments have been tabled and the opinion will be adopted on 28/02/2011 as planned.

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>
Rapporteur: Danuta Hübner	Consideration of draft opinion: 14/02/2011

Responsible Administrator: Christian Chopin	Deadline for amendments: 16/02/2011
Procedure: 2011/2021(BUD)	Adoption REGI: 28/02/2011
Lead committee BUDG - Rapporteur Reimer Böge	Adoption in lead committee : 03/03/2011 (tbc)

### **7. Exchange of views with Mr Dirk Ahner, European Commission Director-General on the Cohesion Policy's contribution to the success of the EU 2020 Strategy (Point 10 of the draft agenda)**

The EU Regional and Cohesion Policy is at heart of the Strategy EU2020. After several months after the strategy has been launched and the debate held by Parliament on 20 May 2010, based on the REGI report on the contribution of the Cohesion policy to the achievement of the Lisbon and the EU 2020 strategies, the committee is willing to listening from the EC where we are with the implementation of the actions and initiatives aiming at achieving the objectives of the EU strategy and more particularly how the Flagships initiatives adopted by the EC are or will contribute to its success.

### **8. Innovation Union: Transforming Europe for a post-crisis world (Point 11 of the draft agenda)**

Innovation Union is one of the seven flagships announced in the Europe 2020 Strategy. It aims to improve conditions and access to finance for research and innovation, to ensure that innovative ideas can be turned into products and services that create growth and jobs. The Commission Communication addresses the challenges and opportunities facing Europe in key areas where urgent and sustained efforts are required. It sets out the key European, national and regional initiatives needed to create the Innovation Union by 2020.

The drafts person will present her draft opinion in which she stresses that innovation can be addressed most effectively at the regional level and the most dynamic technology industries are located in the proximity of the most innovative universities. She takes the view that non-technological innovation efforts need to be strengthened. Furthermore she underlines the need to detect sleeping innovators and to strengthen the links between EU budget instruments and EIB funding. She welcomes the proposal to launch European Innovation Partnerships and notes that the partnerships and the regional policy instruments addressing these challenges should be better aligned.

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>
Rapporteur: Danuta Hübner	Consideration of draft opinion: 28/02/2011
Responsible administrator: Monika Makay	Planned deadline for Ams: 03/03/2011 (tbc)
Procedure: 2010/2245(INI)	Planned adoption REGI: 21-22/03/2011 (tbc)
Lead Committee: ITRE; Rapporteur: Judith A. Merkies	Planned adoption ITRE: 12 April 2011 (tbc)
	Planned plenary: May 2011 (tbc)

### **9. Programme to support the further development of an integrated maritime policy (Point 12 of the draft agenda)**

The Commission presented the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Programme to support the further development of an Integrated

Maritime Policy (COM(2010)0494) with a Staff working document where an *ex-ante* evaluation is carried out for establishing the said Programme. This ex-ante evaluation gives an overview of the proposed financing Programme, paying particular attention to the political context, the problem definition, the Programme's core objectives, the added value of Community financial involvement and the main policy alternatives to be assessed, and concludes that the appropriate solution is a modest EU financial contribution to fund the Programme for the period 2011-2013.

The draft opinion is based upon the fundamental idea that coastal regions are fundamental for economic growth in the European Union and its Member States, considering that there is a need to consolidate the development and the implementation of the Integrated Maritime Policy

The draftswoman supports the Commission's proposal and takes the view that the amount allocated is sufficient for the objectives being pursued in the last three years of the current multiannual financial framework.

The amendments proposed by the draftswoman intend to ensure a degree of regional balance in the allocation of the funds available and, in general, to fine-tune some of the proposed regulation's objectives in order to bring them into line with those of the Integrated Maritime Policy as such, by clarifying the content of some of the actions eligible for funding and shore up the Commission's responsibility in relation to the territorial impact assessment, and the general supervision and control of the programme's implementation.

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>
Rapporteur: Rosa Estaràs Ferragut (PPE)	Consideration of draft opinion: 28/02/2011
Responsible administrator: Carla Carvalho	Planned deadline for Ams: 03/03/2011 (tbc)
Procedure: 2010/0257(COD)	Planned adoption REGI: 22/03/2011 (tbc)
Lead Committee: TRAN; Rapporteur: Georgios Koumoutsakos	Planned adoption TRAN: 12/04/2011 (tbc)
	Planned plenary: June 2011 (tbc)

## **10. The future for social services of general interest (Point 13 of the draft agenda)**

The Report in the EMPL Committee emerges in the context of the Council conclusions of 8 December 2010, entitled "Social Services of General Interest: at the heart of the European Social Model" (Council document 17566/10), where the Council calls upon the Social Protection Committee to work further on the issue in order to prepare for the next Forum on social services of general interest. The Council also invites the Member States and the Commission to clearly identify European policies and measures having an indirect but significant impact on social services of general interest.

Furthermore, the Commission is asked to further clarify the application of EU rules to social services of general interest, in order to enhance their legal certainty, and to outline its views on how to identify a social service as an economic or non-economic service of general interest.

On the basis of the relevant provisions of the Treaties the draftsman deems that social services of general interest are essential for the accomplishment of the EU2020 Strategy goals.



Emphasising the principle of subsidiarity, Mr. Alves considers that regional and local authorities have a pivotal role to play in the provision of such services, calling for the adequate funding to be provided to them for the appropriate accomplishment of these tasks.

Finally, urging the Commission to ensure the establishment of a clear and legally certain legislative framework, the draftsman defends the establishment of a voluntary European Quality Framework for Social Services.

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

### **11. Amendment of Council Regulation (EC) N° 1698/2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) (Point 14 of the draft agenda)**

In his opinion the draftsman gives strong support to the Commission's proposal. He nevertheless tables three amendments underlining the duty of regional and local administrations to manage the delicate balance between the needs of economic development and the environment with particular regard to Natura 2000. Mr Matula also stresses the importance of training farmers to use broadband. All levels of governance are called on to encourage farmers to make broadband accessible and to set up training facilities.

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>
Rapporteur: Iosif Matula (PPE)	Consideration of draft opinion: 28/02/2011
Responsible Administrator Christian Chopin	Deadline for amendments: 02/03/2011 (tbc)
Procedure: 2010/0266(COD)	Adoption REGI: 22/03/2011 (tbc)
Lead committee AGRI - Paola De Castro ( S&D)	Adoption in lead committee : 12/04/2011 (tbc)
	Plenary: May 2011 (tbc)



## **PART II**

*Here you will find information on the issues discussed in the last REGI meetings held on 26-27 January 2011 and 14 February 2011*

### **26-27 January Meeting**

#### **1. Report 2010 on the implementation of the Cohesion Policy Programmes for 2007-2013 – Miroslav Mikolášik**

The draftsman presented to the Committee his draft report, by firstly observing that, with the publication of the Communication from the Commission, entitled "Cohesion Policy: Strategic Report 2010 on the implementation of the programmes 2007-2013", light was shed on what were the Member States' spending priorities, bringing attention to the areas where more efforts are needed and also showing how the Commission handles the implementation and strategic reporting, while presenting at the same time some insights on the future of cohesion policy:

As far as the implementation of the programmes is concerned, the reported financial volume of the programmes selected is 93,4 billion EUR, representing more than 27% of available resources in the period. The average progress by the Member States appear to be reasonable against the backdrop of a serious economic and social deterioration in 2008 and 2009. However, progress varies greatly across Member States and across themes, some Member States lagging largely behind the 27% average.

The draftsman emphasises that the data shown lead to conclude that more efforts are needed in certain areas, especially in order to strengthen the performance, to avoid excessive delays, to ensure higher financial discipline and to increase synergies with other EU policies. Moreover, the project selection process needs to be accelerated in areas like the rail sector, energy, environment, digital economy, social inclusion, governance capacity building, among others.

Implementation is a continuous and dynamic process that, according to the draftsman, can be improved by identifying the shortcomings, the best practices and thus improving efficiencies.

Regarding the strategic reporting, the draftsman highlights some good practices that contribute to enhance the quality of reporting and to increase the ownership within Member

States. In this context, reference is made to core indicators, to reporting on outputs and results, to synergies between national and EU policies, to the need of organising public debates and consultations with stakeholders, as well as to the submission of the reports to national parliaments and their publication in governmental websites.

The draftsman concludes that the Strategic report, which intervenes at the implementation's mid-term juncture, should constitute an incentive to the improvement of the current implementation and should increase policy learning in order to increase the cohesion policy's impact and contribute to the debate on future architecture of cohesion policy.

The guest speaker, Mr. Johannes Roszbacher, Director at ÖROK (Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning at the Federal Chancellery) made a presentation, entitled "Strategic Reporting 2009: Austrian Approach & Experience".

The speaker made a brief presentation of the regional structure of Austria as well as of the funding breakdown across the country, objectives and programmes. He went on presenting the main findings, namely that by November 2009 there was a level of 22% of implementation, that was focusing on innovation and SMEs, as this proved to be necessary due to the fact that research intensive projects suffered cuts as a result of the crisis.

As far as the challenges are concerned, the speaker highlighted the need for more simplification, more strategic focus, for boosting the programmes' visibility, noting that this is not easy with so little money, for increasing links between different policy areas, in particular the between the social and the regional funding instruments.

Among the lessons learnt, from the Austrian perspective, Mr. Roszbacher emphasised the need for more transparency and comparability, for core indicators that give a better picture of the situation at the EU level. He noted that the Commission's conclusion in the report that regional disparities have been addressed should be read carefully, since not everything is measurable and comparable. A combination of core indicators and rather more qualitative and descriptive criteria to read the numbers are needed in this respect.

As for the future, the speaker underlined that realistic time planning is crucial as regards the reporting, stating that the focus should be either on the quantity or on the quality of the reporting. He furthermore emphasised the importance of coordination rather than the integration of policies, as this latter requires a more top-down structure.

In the debate that followed, Members highlighted several points, noting in particular the gap between the performance of the Member States. Regarding the data and their readability, Members insist on the crucial importance of transparency and comparability, pointing out to the need of core indicators and, in this respect, of focusing more on results, while simplifying and reducing red-tape at the level of reporting, since the administrative and financial costs of reporting should be directed to other priorities at the implementation level. The issue of the coordination and synergies between policies was also particularly considered in the debate, and Members consistently call for further promoting cross-cutting sectoral coordination of policies and avoiding overlaps, noting that sector specific objectives should not impinge on the overall approach.

## **2. A Single Market for Enterprises and Growth – Sophie Auconie**

The draftswoman made a brief presentation of her draft opinion, by starting to welcome the Commission's initiative, since this offers an opportunity to reinforce the single market

through regional policy and to draw the mutually reinforcing relationship between the single market and cohesion policy. Indeed, the development of infrastructure has and still constitutes an essential contribution of regional policy to the single market. Moreover, social and territorial cohesion support the modernisation of the internal market and businesses, which in turn, is of the essence to regional policy. However, the still existing visible and invisible borders in the single market have to be eliminated through territorial cooperation.

Ms. Auconie advances a number of proposed solutions, namely the development of innovative financing instruments, supplementary to regional policy, referring explicitly to project bonds; a more determined action in the transpositions of directives in the Member States and the strengthening of territorial cooperation.

In the debate, Members touched upon several issues and emphasised in particular the need to ensure a flexible and simplified allocation of public funding. Territorial cooperation was one of the most debated issues and it was recalled that the Treaty gives now an enhanced role to local and regional authorities and this has to be taken into account in order to strengthen cooperation and the importance of regions and municipalities to the single market. There was also some criticism about the lack of political direction in the single market act and the lack of impact assessment of measures by the Commission. Although the single market is recognised as having contributed to wealth in some regions, others have not benefited as much and inequalities should be addressed, as the single market cannot be relied upon entirely for this purpose. In this respect, attention must be paid so that competition does not widen the gaps even more and that imbalances between Member States do not increase. The guarantees of consumers and the need to invest in training facilities in order to gear regional policy to increase competitiveness were also some of the issues referred to.

### **3. Europe, the World's N° 1 tourist destination - A new political framework for tourism in Europe – Salvatore Caronna**

Mr. Caronna made a presentation of his draft opinion and considered, in first place, that the Commission's paper is in the right direction as it consolidates the image of Europe and its values throughout the world. The tourism sector has a great potential for economic growth and indeed represents 5% of GNI in Europe with a growing trend. The draftsman advocates a better integration at overarching European level and emphasises the decisive role of regions and local authorities. These latter must be in a position to be more proactive with full participation in defining a new tourism policy. Competitiveness and sustainability are to be ensured so that economic growth can be duly fostered. In general, Europe should be able to retain its lead position in the tourism sector in a framework of growing competition at tourism level from other countries, like Russia, China and India. For this purpose, the draftsman puts forward some solutions, namely an increased coordination and exchange of best practices between Member States, and further measures to increase the quality of the offer and of the services provided, as well as of the human resources, in a reference to education and training.

Members recognise the great economic potential of tourism, but underline some aspects to be addressed, such as the sustainability of natural resources, like water and the balance between tourism and the quality of environment, asking for measures to reduce the pressure in certain areas. Moreover, the need to increase the quality and to enhance diversification of the touristic offer, namely in order to fight seasonality, are particularly important issues. References were made to the need of reinforcing training and the quality of human resources as well as to the role of SMEs in the sector of tourism and to their difficulties of access to

finance, in order to boost competitiveness. Infrastructure investments in order to enhance connectivity on the one hand and to reconvert neglected areas on the other were also some of the points made by the Members.

#### **4. Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries – Oldřich Vlasák**

In the presentation of his draft opinion, the draftsman explained that it was his aim to examine the results of the allocation of funds to culture and creative industries and to evaluate their actual contribution. In prospective terms, the draftsman believes that private capital investments and public-private-partnerships should be promoted and supported, in order to ensure that investment is sustainable in the long term and not a simple absorption exercise. The draftsman objects to the need of rigid regulation, defending on the contrary the application of the open method of coordination with the effective involvement of local and regional authorities.

Further to this draft opinion, the draftsman intends to submit a number of amendments so that the opinion may take on board a reference to the Innovation Union and to the importance of digital and communication technologies for the development of the cultural sector. Moreover, he wishes to emphasise the importance of the European capitals of culture initiative, which also contribute to revitalising the cities and constitute themselves examples of good practices. Finally, he intends to insist on the partnerships of municipalities (twinings) and believes that these are very important in terms of cultural cooperation, and the Commission should be called upon to join efforts with local authorities in view of promoting these initiatives.

Members in general welcome the fact that the green paper sees culture and creative industries as a tool for regional development, highlighting the size of the sector in terms of GDP, its importance to the creation of jobs, as well as its spin-off effect in tourism. Although pivotal, the availability of financial instruments for the support to culture and creative industries, who suffer from serious financing difficulties and impaired access to financing, public funding should not create "eternal recipients" and these, once on the market, should indeed be able to get on their own. In this respect, Members also believe that private funding should be strengthened and the EIB and the EIF should play a role here. The importance of infrastructure and the need of making high-speed broad-band available across all Europe given that culture and creative industries are location-free were also some of the issues emphasised in the debate.

#### **5. 2009 discharge: EU general budget, Section III - Commission – Jens Geier**

This point was postponed until 14 February 2011.

#### **6. Exchange of views with Tamás Fellegi, Minister of National Development acting as President-in-Office of the Council, on the work programme of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union**

The Presidency-in-Office of the EU, represented by Mr. Fellegi, submitted to the Committee on Regional Development the programme for the next six months in the field of regional and Cohesion policy.

Mr. Fellegi highlighted that the main objective of the Presidency is that by the end of the

as well as on the relationship of this policy with other policies, and is aiming at preparing everything so that the June Council may summarise all main messages that were gathered during the term. The presidency is seeking to put the debate on Cohesion policy on the General Affairs Council meeting of 21 February. In May an informal ministers' meeting will be organised in Hungary. In this procedure, the Presidency undertakes to regularly inform the REGI Members on the updated state-of-play. Furthermore, the Presidency wants to attach high political priority to this debate and is committed to affirm the place of Cohesion policy within the Council.

As regards the policy, Mr. Fellegi welcomed the Fifth Cohesion Report and its conclusions, while stating that further work on them to obtain genuine shared positions among Member States.

On the basis of the preliminary feedback, the Presidency considers that the sustainable modernisation of Cohesion policy is in the interest of every Member States, while advocating a moderate change focusing on efficiency and effectiveness on the basis of assessed facts.

The EU2020 Strategy objectives have to be taken into account and infrastructures are a necessary precondition for competitiveness. The need for a more efficient use of scarce resources was emphasised, while observing that Cohesion policy will have to be well-funded and directed to the whole of the regions and to assisting the less favoured ones. The elimination of unnecessary red-tape was also underlined, as well as the need for more transparency and simplification. A prudent management of funds and facilitating of implementation would lead to the reduction of irregularities.

Among the strategic priorities, the Presidency particularly highlights the adherence to the EU2020 Strategy's goals, the link between the cohesion instruments and the national reform programmes, a result oriented approach and an incentive scheme, the integrated approach and the coordination among funds, as well as the role of the ESF within the Cohesion policy. The first of those priorities, targets have to be defined and the demands of the national, regional and local levels have to be heard. Cohesion policy is one of the most important but not the only means for implementing the EU2020 Strategy.

Beyond competitiveness, the presidency attaches importance to solidarity and is convinced of the role of Cohesion policy in involving the regions in the shaping of the European Union, emphasising the pivotal nature of the bottom-up approach and of a place-based strategy. In this respect, the thematic approach should not jeopardise the integrated approach, which is of the essence for the Presidency.

New positive incentives will have to be introduced and as regards conditionality the applicable principle should be that of equal treatment of Member States. Incentives should also apply in other policy areas as well. Sanctions should be used with circumspection and with a careful assessment of potential consequences.

Mr. Fellegi clearly stated the ESF cannot be removed from the framework of Cohesion policy. Less developed regions problems can only be solved if the ESF remains within Cohesion policy and a possible extension of the eligibility terms under this fund should be considered.

One of the highlighted priorities was the review of the Territorial Agenda, deemed to be of key importance to spatial planning, focusing more on governance and the improvement of monitoring, as well as on keeping track of its implementation. Aiming at the agenda's implementation and at the strengthening of its relationship with Cohesion policy, the Presidency intends to emphasise the role of territorial cohesion in this context and pledges to

territorial implications of measures and policies.

In the debate that followed, Members raised very varied questions on several issues, namely: the specific ideas on the multiannual financial framework and on the future budget, and in this regard, whether cohesion policy will be split into different sectors or not; the involvement of regional and local authorities; what are the specific ideas on the simplification reforms; what is the response foreseen by the Presidency to the recurring criticisms of the Court of Auditors as regards errors and irregularities; the difficulties of shared management; simplification and transparency; climate change and energy efficiency; the possible use of indicators and criteria other than GDP; the role of macro-regional cooperation in Cohesion policy; the consideration of territorial aspects of Cohesion policy; the approach to the regions that are at the border of the EU, namely those on the eastern borders; the visibility of Cohesion policy and the need of improvement in this area; the consideration of the environmental crisis; conditionality and sanctions; the improvements in terms of governance and the active involvement of regional authorities; the redistribution of funding between the three objectives; the length of the programming period and the foreseen calendar for the presentation of the legislative proposals in relation with the multiannual financial framework.

## **7. Exchange of views with Mr Johannes Hahn, Commissioner on Regional Policy**

According to what had been decided in the meeting of 9 December 2010, Commissioner Hahn returned to the January ordinary meeting in order to continue the political dialogue.

Members have put a great array of questions to Commissioner Hahn, notably:

The mainstreaming of regional policy, the performance reserve and the criteria for its deployment, simplification, the number of regulations that will be proposed and the applicable planning, the involvement of regions in national planning and in the setting up of flagships and initiatives, territorial cooperation and its level of funding in the future, the rural issue and the need for greater coordination of agriculture policy and rural development with cohesion policy, the implementation of INTERREG, the status of thin-populated areas, mountainous areas and islands in the framework of cohesion policy, creative and cultural industries, the co-financing scheme, as well as conditionality.

Commissioner Hahn presented the following views:

Regional policy will link in to the other policy sectors and discussions were already opened with other services, such as energy and climate change, for example. The Commissioner's intention is that in 2012 informal discussions will be held and that as from 2013 formal talks will take place with the Member States, with the aim of acting as promptly as possible to ensure that the investment and development contracts and partnership contracts are concluded as swiftly as possible. For that purpose, a clear understanding of what is happening in the various Member States and their regions is needed.

Targets and objectives have to relate to the EU-2020 Strategy and only a few priorities should be selected, in order to ensure that the money is focused in its use. The various regions and the Member States should come up with the appropriate proposals as to which priorities should be selected and these should be quantifiable, in order to build a clear basis for the assessment of the outcome of the targets and objectives.

As regards simplification, the Commissioner recognises the problem and calls on the stakeholders and Member States and regions to reduce their share of the red tape and bureaucracy.

There are different reasons sighted as to why there is delay in implementing projects, and in a few Member States there are primarily financial reasons sighted but more frequently there are shortcomings in terms of the national legislation and national administrative capacity can be a problem sometimes.

As for the performance reserve, it is difficult to foresee how it will work out, but the idea is to allocate 2% to those regions who are running above the agreed targets.

Regarding the number of regulations, the Commissioner declared that it should be possible to bring together the ERDF, the ESF, the Cohesion Fund and cover all of those in a general regulation. Only for those areas which are a real expression of the specific nature of regional funds, should there be specific regulations. In the area of territorial cooperation, the EGTC regulation should be reviewed in August. There will therefore be a maximum of six regulations. The Commissioner believes that the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund can be put under a single regulation, for reasons of visibility and simplicity.

The aim of the negotiation process is to contribute to a tighter integration of regional and local representation and associations in the whole programming and its definition, in spite of the different traditions in Member States. However, constitutional traditions are very different and it is difficult to involve all the authorities in the same way. Efforts will nonetheless be developed in that direction.

The Commissioner affirms that not everything is actually coordinated, but there is a strategic framework which covers agriculture, fisheries, structural policy and also the ESF and the four Commissioners involved in these areas have made the commitment to develop a common strategic framework, with the aim of avoiding overlapping of funding and any funding of the same projects from different sources.

According to the Commissioner, the level of take-up of the funds will be as high as in the past programming period. The issue of indicators is being worked upon and the standards should be similar to ensure that the results are comparable. Special regulations in the area of INTERREG can be expected.

The Commissioner referred that there are indeed concerns about the future funding of infrastructure, making reference to bonds for large infrastructure projects, which would actually give a guarantee of revenue.

The Commissioner emphasises that projects will have to be carefully assessed and new additional financing models will have to be developed for programmes, in order to make sure that the money is properly used to serve the needs of citizens and is visible. The choice of individual projects that are financed is decided by the regions according to their needs and to what they have identified as their priorities. In any case, projects should be implemented more rapidly so that we can actually measure after 7 years into the programmes and actually see what has been invested and what have the results been.

On co-financing, the Commissioner thinks that we should go below 50% because it is very important to send out a clear signal that at least half of a project or regional financing would be from Europe. In terms of creating incentives for certain instruments this would be an area



where we would have a lower level of co-financing.

Regarding the length of the programming period, the Commissioner thinks that seven years is the minimum for an appropriate period and that it would simplify matters if we would say seven and not 5+5 because otherwise we will end up with big discussions what the plus actually represents.

As far as indicators are concerned, Mr. Hahn observed that GDP is for the moment the yardstick, although nobody is totally happy about that and the Commission will be looking for other additional benchmarks to allow to better judge regions, and this is not just a purely academic question.

As for conditionality, this has to be of application to regional funds, but in such a way as it is agreed with regions.

Territorial cooperation should be boosted, including macro-regions, but, in this case, with no special funding. The purpose of macro-regions is to ensure that there is coordinated cooperation and that should lead to the situation whereby the available money can be better used.

The idea for urban regions is not to create a new fund but rather to operate within existing funds, by identifying certain budget lines, certain percentages of the overall budget. It is for the Member States to determine how they identify such structures because there are some Member States where urban areas over 100.000 are deemed to be large urban areas, but there are other Member States where major urban areas have more than 1.000.000 inhabitants. In any case, this cannot be to the detriment of rural areas.

## **8. Report on the visit of REGI delegation to Romania**

This point was postponed.

## **9. Votes**

### **European Year for Active Ageing (2012)**

Rapporteur for the opinion: Lambert Van Nistelrooij (PPE)

The draft opinion (2010/0242(COD)) was adopted with 39 votes in favour, 1 against and no abstentions.

### **Policy challenges and budgetary resources for a sustainable European Union after 2013**

Rapporteur for the opinion: Constanze Angela Krehl (S&D)

The draft opinion (2010/2211(INI)) was adopted with 40 votes in favour, 1 against and 1 abstention.

### **The EU strategy on Roma inclusion**

Rapporteur for the opinion: Andrey Kovatchev (PPE)

The draft opinion (2010/2276(INI)) was adopted with 37 votes in favour, 1 against and 4 abstentions.

## **10. The EU 5th Cohesion Report and the Strategy for the post-2013 Cohesion policy – Markus Pieper**

Regarding this file, following a request of the EMPL committee it has been agreed to follow the associated committee procedure, in conformity with Rule 50 of the Rules of Procedure.

The draftsman presented his working document by highlighting the main ideas, concentrating both on the Cohesion Report itself and on the Commission Communication on the conclusions of the said report. Mr. Pieper selected and made reference to a number of points of the working document and he firstly observed that it is necessary to focus more on results, for which purpose comparable indicators are needed. Even though he considers that not all cohesion requirements are covered by the EU2020 Strategy, the draftsman considers nevertheless that the proposals contained in this strategy are convincing.

The draftsman is convinced of the need of linking in the Member States to the delivery of objectives, by involving them in checking resources and in their allocation. For that purpose, he calls for a proposal on implementation which could be acceptable by both the Parliament and the Member States. In this respect, the Commission should be more specific as regards concepts like the European Added Value, on indicators, on conditionality, as well as on the development of partnerships, as all these appear to be up to now very theoretical. As far as these partnerships are concerned, Mr. Pieper reveals his concerns about involving only the Member States, observing that regions should be bound into the dialogue process. Indeed, the division between Member States and regions is critical to the whole of Cohesion policy.

As regards the EU2020 Strategy, the draftsman considers it to be an intersection and Cohesion policy should not be exclusively attached to one objective or the other, as there is Cohesion policy in all the objectives. He questions whether it is possible to rely on the current model of Cohesion policy and, moreover, states that “green” is not enough. Linking in infrastructure and TENs is also crucial, and it is not possible to see these only from the ecological point of view, while there is a need to support poor regions. The draftsman warns that enlargement is also an issue to be looked at as there are important consequences to Cohesion policy stemming from enlargements.

In the debate that followed, Members expressed their views on a number of issues they deem crucial, such as the coordination between the several tiers of government. Indeed the role of local authorities is deemed of extreme importance as those play a decisive role and Cohesion policy should ensure that they are duly involved in defining priorities in the establishment of development programmes.

Members believe that coordination between policies at all levels, including at Member States level, is essential. The EU2020 goals have to go hand in hand with Cohesion policy and this policy has to focus on disadvantaged areas of Europe. Among the priorities referred to there is the improvement of research infrastructures and the investment on innovation, while infrastructure in general is still seen as an important need that should obtain enough funding.

The elimination of the Cohesion Fund and its merging with the ERDF was also put forward, while insisting on the need to clearly identify those funds that should be permanent and those which should remain temporary.

Other issues such as the dependence on macro-economic developments, the financing for intermediate assistance, the length of the programming period, the European neighbourhood

policy and its impacts on Cohesion policy, the notion of European Added Value, as well as the intervention rates and the need to ensure that these are kept as high as possible, were also touched upon.

### 14 February Meeting

#### **1. Objective 3: A challenge for territorial cooperation – the future agenda for cross border, transnational and interregional cooperation – Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid**

On the 14th February REGI Committee, the Rapporteur (Ms Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid) presented its draft report on European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), the Objective 3 of Cohesion Policy, in which she calls for concrete decisions to be taken on five key issues :

- Strengthening the Objective 3 (such as a stable architecture, raising as a minimum 5% of Cohesion policy budget assigned to objective 3, or revising the 150 km limit rule for coastal and maritime regions within cross-border cooperation),
- Integrating European territorial Cooperation to the mainstream (such as the implementation of multi-regional cross-border operational programmes),
- Adopting a territorial approach for the other Community policies,
- Encouraging the establishment of European Groupings for Territorial Cooperation (EGCT) (such as clarifying their status under national legal systems)
- Simplifying the implementation of ETC (such as an increase in acceptable error rate to 5% and in the technical assistance rate to 8%).

In the debate which followed Members deplored the lack of funds allocated to interregional cooperation and many expressed their support to raise them by 5% of the cohesion policy budget, but stressed that there was no need to create new administrative structures, especially for the macro regions. They went on to query the feasibility of lowering the co-financing rate or again the "revolutionary" idea that funds for territorial cooperation should be allocated at EU level on a programme-by-programme basis. Questions were also raised concerning the granting of global grants to EGTCs to enable them to manage structural fund appropriations. It was necessary to facilitate the establishment of EGTCs and where necessary clarify their status.

European Territorial Cooperation is one of 3 objectives of the EU Cohesion Policy (alongside "Convergence" and "Competitiveness"). This Objective plays a crucial role in the "ever closer union" by reducing barriers between territories and regions to enable them to face together common challenges. Objective 3 targets all the EU's regions, with a funding of 8.5 billion Euros, and its potential in bringing together people represents a truly European added value.

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>
Rapporteur: Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid (PPE)	Consideration of working document: 30/11/2010 Consideration of draft report: 14/02/2011
Responsible Administrator : Franck Ricaud	Deadline for amendments: 21/02/2011
Procedure: 2010/2155(INI)	Adoption REGI: 22/03/2011 Plenary: May 2011

## **2. Demographic change and its consequences for the future of Cohesion Policy of the EU – Kerstin Westphal**

Dealing with demographic change in the Member States of the EU is a core priority, says Ms Westphal in her working document. Most Member States are undergoing a demographic mutation brought about by a decline in the birth rate, and an increase in life expectancy. However, this is only part of the problem. Internal migratory flows from poorer Member States or regions to richer ones add to the complexity of the problem leaving some regions with a high density of older people or alternately a high concentration of younger citizens. A clear division in favour of dynamic economic centres such as London or Munich which benefit from an influx of young well educated workers whilst rural areas and towns in East Germany for example have seen their populations age and decline in recent years. The rapporteur points out that demographic change represents a challenge to many regions but that these very same regions should seize the opportunities for new innovative activities that such change can create. Immigration flows from outside the Union are also important factors in the demographic landscape and the rapporteur considers that management of legal immigration should be coordinated at EU level.

The rapporteur expresses the view that the structural funds need to be revised in such a way as to incite people to stay in a region. They must be able to find employment, benefit from decent infrastructure and housing and other cultural and practical advantages such as an efficient health service and childcare facilities.

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>
Rapporteur: Kerstin Westphal (S&D)	Consideration of working document: 14/01/2011
Responsible Administrator Christian Chopin	Consideration of draft report: 12/04/2011
Procedure: REGI/7/03650; 2010/2157(INI)	Adoption REGI: 26/05/2011
	Plenary: July 2011

## **3. 2009 discharge: EU General budget, Section III – Commission**

In his opinion on the 2009 discharge, Mr Geier notes that despite the decrease in the error rate Cohesion fund spending still suffers from the highest of all EU payments. He points out that many of these errors concern the infringement of public procurement rules and recommends the continuation of the simplification programme that the European Commission is undertaking. On the question of shared management he points out that Member States have an obligation to provide sufficient information in their Annual Activity Reports to permit the Commission to have reasonable assurance on the legality and regularity of payments. The rapporteur goes on to call for a common set of rules and standards among Member States authorities involved in auditing and controlling cross-border programmes.

<b>PROCEDURE</b>	<b>TIMETABLE</b>
Rapporteur: Jens Geier (S&D)	Consideration of an opinion: 14/01/2011
Responsible Administrator Christian Chopin	Deadline for amendments: 22/02/2011
Procedure: REGI/7/05152; 2011/2021(BUD)	Adoption REGI: 22/03/2011
Lead committee BUDG; Rapporteur: Jorgo Chatzimarkakis	Vote in lead committee: 28/03/2011

#### **4. Mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund - Floods in 2010 in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Romania**

In order to avoid undue delay in approving this measure which the Committee on Budgets intends to adopt as soon as possible, the Committee on Regional Development has no objection to the mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund to provide the sum of EUR 182 388 893 to the countries concerned as proposed by European Commission and in accordance with the rules laid down in the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 and in the Council Regulation (EC) No 2012/2002.

<b><i>PROCEDURE</i></b>	<b><i>TIMETABLE</i></b>
Rapporteur: Danuta Hübner	Consideration of draft opinion: 14/01/2011
Responsible Administrator: Christian Chopin	Deadline for amendments: 22/02/2011
Procedure: REGI/7/05152; 2011/2021(BUD)	Adoption REGI: 28/02/2011
Lead committee BUDG; Rapporteur: Reimer Böge	Adoption in lead committee : 03/03/2011

## **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:

<b>31 January</b>	<b>Brussels, BE</b>	<b>European Commission</b>	<b>Cohesion Forum</b>  <b>Session: Raising the effectiveness of EU Cohesion Policy</b>
<b>7 February</b>	<b>Warsaw, PL</b>	<b>Polish Ministry of Regional Development and International Committee on vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea (VaSAB)</b>	<b>Integrated Approach to Spatial Development of Europe</b>  <b>Topic: "Origin and the essence of the concept of Territorial Cohesion"</b>
<b>9 February 8-9 am</b>	<b>Brussels</b>	<b>Mr. Loic Driebeek, President of SHV Gas asked to organise a breakfast for MEP to promote an initiative FREE: Future of Rural Energy in Europe.</b>	<b>"The importance of rural energy and its impact on regional development".</b>
<b>10 February</b>	<b>Brussels</b>	<b>SURE Committee</b>	<b>Discussion during SURE Committee meeting on "Why we need Cohesion Policy?"</b>

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

## Library News

## Library News

### Publications



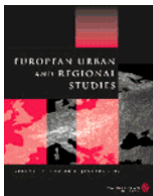
#### **European Planning Studies**, monthly

European Planning Studies focus upon specific spatial development problems, as well as emerging explanations of new urban, regional, national or supranational developmental tendencies.

Selected articles from vol. 19, issue 3, March 2011:

**The Lisbonization of EU Cohesion Policy: A Successful Case of Experimentalist Governance?** / Carlos Mendez, pp. 519-537 ([abstract](#); for the full text please contact the [Library](#) )

**Facilitating Institutional Reform in England: Reconciling City-regions and Community Planning for Efficiency Gains?** / Simon Pemberton and Greg Lloyd pp 501 – 517 ([abstract](#); for the full text please contact the [Library](#) )



#### **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 1, 2011:

**Justice, efficiency and economic geography: should places help one another to develop?** / by Michael Storper, pp. 3-21 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)

**The North/South divide in Italy and England: Discursive construction of regional inequality** / Sara González, pp 62-76 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)

**Towards global convergence: Emerging economies, the rise of China and western sunset?** / Michael Dunford and Godfrey Yeung, pp. 22-46 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)

### Library Briefings



[EU strategy for the Atlantic region](#) / Guillaume Ragonnaud, February 2011

The Council has invited the Commission to present an EU strategy for the Atlantic region by June 2011, in the framework of the EU's integrated maritime policy. This briefing presents in 2 pages the context, the specific challenges for the region and the European Parliament's view on this issue. It is also available in [French](#) language.

## Latest analysis



[De nouvelles ambitions pour la politique européenne de cohésion après 2013: rapport d'information](#) / La commission des affaires européennes, Sénat, France, no 266, janvier 2011, 58 p.

La Commission des affaires européennes du Sénat (France) vient de publier son rapport d'information sur l'avenir de la politique de cohésion après 2013.

Le Sénat souhaite contribuer au débat qui s'ouvre: sa commission des affaires européennes estime qu'il est nécessaire et possible de se donner les moyens d'une politique de cohésion au bénéfice de toutes les régions européennes, malgré l'état budgétaire européen et national. Elle propose ensuite trois grands principes qui lui paraissent devoir être soutenus par les autorités françaises dans l'élaboration de la future politique de cohésion: équité, efficacité et simplicité.