

REGI News

Newsletter from the European Parliament Committee on Regional Development

VII Legislature N. 2 - 26 August 2009



Dear Members,
Dear Readers,

The new committee on regional development was successfully constituted on 20 July at 16.15.

The Committee Bureau was elected by acclamation.

This September meeting marks the beginning of ordinary works of the committee.

An exchange of views with the Commissioner responsible for regional and cohesion policy is programmed for the first day of meeting.

The coordinators will meet at the end of the meeting in order to assess the Commissioner intervention.

The aim of this Newsletter is to provide you with accurate and detailed information on the incoming REGI meeting, on every point



NEXT MEETING in Brussels

Hearing with Commissioner-designate for Regional policy

Priorities of the Swedish Presidency

2 September
15.00 - 18.30

3 September
9.00 - 12.30

Room
ASP 3 G 3

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Useful Internet links

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

[OEIL - The Legislative Observatory](#)

[Regional Policy Info regio](#)

[EUR-Lex](#)

[Committee of the Regions](#)

LAST MEETING (Brussels)

Monday 20 July 2009

**Constitutive Meeting
16.15-17.45**

**Ordinary Meeting
17.45 - 18.30**

in the draft agenda.

Part II of the weekly bulletin will be devoted to reviewing the main points of the previous committee meeting.

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[REGI MEMBERS](#)

Comments and subscriptions at

reginews@europarl.europa.eu

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Part III is open to contributions from Members, political groups' advisers, assistants and other stakeholders. Conferences, seminars, and other events may also be announced be the subject of short reviews. The same goes for articles, press and book reviews.

Please send us your contribution.

The editorial deadline for those who want to contribute to PART III of the publication is eight days before the REGI meeting.

While keeping the old structure of the REGINEWS we have tried to improve it, with a new lay out simplifying on line consultation and by adding more useful links.

We remain of course ready to help you with any other information and for receiving suggestions on how we can improve this publication.

Miguel Tell Cremades
Secretary of the Committee

PART I

Here you will find the topics which will be discussed at the next REGI Committee meeting on 2 and 3 September 2009

The following items will be discussed as foreseen in the [draft agenda](#).

1. Approval of minutes of meetings of 20 July 2009

The minutes will be considered adopted at the end of the meeting if no objections are raised.

2. Adoption of draft calendar of REGI meetings for 2010

The proposal for the REGI committee will be distributed to Members and comprises, as it is customary, 11 meetings, one per month except for August.

The document will be available on www.europarl.europa.eu after the adoption by the committee.

3. Chairwoman's announcements: Decisions taken by the political coordinators during the meeting of 20 July 2009

I. Allocation system of points to the political groups and to reports/opinions

After a debate the coordinators agreed that the present system of allocation of points, based on the D'Hondt system, be maintained until the method is discussed and eventually reviewed in a future coordinators' meeting. Groups were asked to send their proposals for any modification to the system to the Secretariat.

II. Allocation of reports

2.1. Legislative consultation procedure.

Proposition de décision du Conseil autorisant le Portugal à appliquer une réduction du taux d'accise dans la région autonome de Madère, au rhum et aux liqueurs qui y sont produits et consommés, ainsi que dans la région autonome des Açores, aux liqueurs et eaux-de-vie qui y sont produites et consommées. (COM(2009)0259 final - 2009/0075 (CNS)) -

After discussion the report on this decision was **allocated to the GUE group.**

2.2. Legislative Assent Procedure

EC Proposal amending the General regulation of Structural

The coordinators agreed that the report on this proposal **was allocated to the SD Group**

2.3. Co-decision procedure

EC Proposal amending the ERDF

The coordinators agreed that the report on this proposal should be **allocated to the EPP group.**

III. Allocation of opinions

3.1. The 2010 budget opinion

The coordinators agreed that the Chair should be the draftsman for this opinion.

3. 2. Opinion on the mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund

Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on the mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund (COM(2009)0308 - 2009/2048(BUD)).

On a proposal by the Chair, the coordinators agreed that a letter should be sent to the committee on Budgets approving the assistance proposed.

3. 3. Legislative Opinion

Proposal for a Council decision on the European Year of Volunteering (2011) - (COM(2009)0254 - 2009/0072(CNS)) .

The coordinators agreed that the opinion on this Council Decision should **be allocated to the Green Group.**

IV. Pending issues from the VI legislature and priorities for the VII legislature

The Committee has to inform the Conference of Presidents by September about the proposals which are deemed to have lapsed or wish to be withdrawn by the EC.

The following procedure was agreed:

- before the 1st of September the coordinators will inform the Secretariat of points which they consider should be included/deleted in the letter.
- the coordinators will examine the draft letter at the meeting of 2 September (with the modifications put forward by the coordinators) and it will be debated at the REGI meeting on 3 September. If it is possible the letter will be adopted during the meeting.
- if it is not adopted at the REGI meeting, the coordinators will take a decision through written procedure until the end of September (following President Buzec the deadline is 9 September).

V Hearing of the new Commissioner

The exchange of views with Commissioner designated Mr Pawel Samecki will follow the **lighter appointment procedure** agreed by the Conference of Presidents on 9 July.

- an exchange of views lasting 1:30h will be held during the REGI committee meeting of 2 September. During the exchange of views the Coordinators will be the first to question the candidate after which the debate will be opened to the floor.
- the exchange of views will be followed by an evaluation by the coordinators that will be summarised in a letter by the committee chair to the President.

4. 2010 budget: Section III - Commission

Judging the European Commission as being the only institution possessing an overview of budgetary needs for the coming year, the Committee has proposed the re-establishment of the preliminary draft budget with any amounts Council has reduced in its draft budget.

Public spending in 2010 will be crucial to the European Economic recovery plan and in this context the use of Structural funds will be central to the Union's strategy. With this in view overall payments have been significantly increased most of which will be interim payments made in accordance with the modified legislation and aimed at accelerating investment and stimulating economic activity.

At this early stage of the legislature, and in the interest of ensuring sound financial management, before proposing any new pilot projects, the Committee should be informed in as much detail as possible, of the actions taken to implement the projects financed under the 2009 budget.

Lastly at a time when European Economic recovery is still at an embryonic stage and is highly dependent on large scale government spending and despite the mechanistic manner in which Cohesion policy allocations are managed it appears somewhat paradoxical that ERDF commitments for the Regional competitiveness and employment objective are reduced by Euro 372.536.823 compared with 2009.

The Committee discussed on this opinion in its meeting in July. Within the foreseen deadline, 16 amendments have been tabled.

The Committee will vote on the text on 2 September and transmit immediately its position to the BUDG Committee (vote on 3 September) in view to have the report adopted by the end of the year.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Draftsperson: Committee Chair	Consideration of draft opinion: 21/07/2009
Lead Committee: BUDG	Planned deadline for Ams: 10/08/2009
Responsible administrator: Christian Chopin	Planned adoption REGI: 02/09/2009
Procedure n. 2009/2002(BUD)	Planned adoption in BUDG: 03/09/2009
	Planned adoption in plenary: by 31/12/2009

5. European Year of Volunteering (2011)

The purpose of the proposal presented by the Commission is to designate the year 2011 to be the "**European Year of Volunteering**". The European Year shall encourage and support — through the exchange of experience and good practices — the efforts of the Member States, local and regional authorities as well as civil society to create the conditions conducive to volunteering in the European Union.

The objectives of the European year outlined in the proposal are the following:

- working towards an enabling environment for volunteering in the EU,
- empowering volunteer organisations and improving the quality of volunteering,
- rewarding and recognising volunteering activities,
- raising awareness of the value and importance of volunteering.

This legislative opinion is subject to the consultation procedure with CULT being the lead committee. The rapporteur as well as the timetable of the lead committee (CULT) will be confirmed in September. CULT will adopt the report (earliest) in January 2009.

The exchange of views in REGI was planned for September, but was requested to be put on the agenda of the next committee meeting in October 2009. (To be decided upon at the beginning of the REGI meeting in September, during the adoption of the agenda of the meeting.)

The draft opinion will then be considered in November with a view to vote at the REGI meeting in December.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Draftsperson: Karima Delli	Exchange of views: 05/10/2009 (tbc)
Lead Committee: CULT	Consideration of draft opinion: 3-4/11/2009
Responsible administrator: Diana Haase	Planned deadline for Ams: ../11/2009 (tbc)
Procedure n.: 2009/0072(CNS)	Planned adoption REGI: 2-3/12/2009 (tbc)
	Planned adoption in plenary: ../../2010 (tbc)

6. Exchange of views with Commissioner-Designate for Regional Policy, Mr Pawel Samecki

Following the resignation of Commissioner Hübner, the Polish government designated **Mr Pawel Samecki** for appointment as Member of the Commission.

With a view to the replacement of the two Commissioners who have resigned, and in line with the procedure established by the Conference of Presidents on 9 July, the Commissioner designated will appear before the REGI committee for an exchange of views based on his answers to the general questionnaire submitted to him by the MEPs.

The evaluation carried out on the basis of this debate will be reported by a letter of the committee chair to the EP President.

The vote of approval of Mr. Samecki will take place during the EP September part-session.

7. Exchange of views with Ms Maud Olofsson, Minister for Enterprise and Energy acting as President-in-Office of Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

At the beginning of a new Council Presidency, as is customary, a representative of the country holding the Presidency is invited to take the floor in front of the REGI Committee to explain the priorities in the field of the cohesion policy for the next semester.

Ms Olofsson, Minister for Enterprise and Energy and Deputy Prime Minister and president in office of the Council, will explain in detail the priorities of the Swedish Presidency for the regional policy:

- future and simplification of cohesion policy as well as on territorial cohesion,
- urban development,
- Baltic Sea Strategy.

After Ms Olofsson's intervention, a debate with the participation of the REGI Members will follow.

8. Debate on pending issues from the VI Legislature and eventually priorities for the VII term

The Parliament's internal Rules of Procedures Rules establish that at the end of a parliamentary term each EP committee identifies the proposals which it wishes to be withdrawn by the European Commission or on which it would like to be consulted again.

The debate at the REGI meeting is likely to concentrate on the EP' wish to unblock the dossier on the modification of the European Union Solidarity Fund, which has been kept on hold by the Council since 2006.

At the end of the VI legislature, the Commission committed in front of the REGI Committee to reactivate this dossier in the Council through a reflection paper.

In the framework of this debate on the unfinished business of the VI legislature, the Committee on Regional Development will identify as well a list of potential legislation, planned initiatives and political and legislative priorities, representing its priority for the current legislature. The main issue at stake concerns the simplification of the rules relating to Structural Funds application in the framework of the modification proposals adopted by the Commission on last 22 July.

Furthermore, the negotiations of the legislative package after 2013 are likely to start already in the first half of the current legislature and would be conducted on the basis of the co-decision procedure, should the Treaty of Lisbon be in force.

9. Exchanges of views, with the presence of Dirk Ahner, European Commission Director-General of Regional Policy on:

- **The proposal for a Council Regulation (EC) amending Regulation (EC) n° 1083/2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund concerning certain provisions relating to financial management**

On 22 July 2009 the European Commission adopted a new proposal aimed at simplifying management rules for the Structural Funds General Regulation.

This adoption is part of a process the EC started in 2007 with the simplification of rules for revenue-generating projects and which has been sped up lately in order to help Member States to face the economic crisis.

In December 2008 a series of proposals aimed at incentivising investments in the field of social housing and energy efficiency for all Member States was approved by the Parliament.

Now a new modification package is being submitted to the Committee on Regional Development on the basis of the suggestions made by the Working group on simplification set up by the Commission with the participation of stakeholders from the Member States.

The main innovations proposed by the modifications to the General Regulation are the following:

- for projects financed by the ESF in 2009 and 2010 Member States may request that 100% of the public costs are covered by Community funds with the commitment to provide subsequent national cofinancing by the end of the current programming period;
- a single category for "major projects" (including environmental projects) is established at €50 million;
- rules for revenue-generating projects are further simplified with regards to the duration of the monitoring on the revenue itself;
- spending in sectors linked to energy efficiency and use of renewable energies in housing is encouraged;
- flexibility in the application of the n+2 rule for major projects is increased: the period relevant for

decommitment will start from the date in which the project application is submitted to the Commission (and not from the Commission's decision on it as it is now).

According to the EC Treaty the assent procedure applies for modifications to the General Regulation.

Due to the fact that the proposal was adopted during the summer break where no committee meeting is foreseen, a first exchange of views without document is scheduled at the REGI Committee on next 3 September.

The recommendation for approval/rejection will then be presented by the rapporteur and debated with REGI Members in the October meeting aiming at a vote in Committee in November.

Given the urgency of the issue in order to ensure a quick entry into force of the measures, the EP plenary should vote on the text in its meeting in December at the latest.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: to be appointed	Exchange of views: 3 September 2009
Responsible administrator: Elisa Daffarra	Consideration of draft report: 5/6 October 2009
Procedure n.	Planned deadline for Ams: mid October 2009
	Planned adoption REGI: 3/4 November 2009
	Planned adoption in plenary: by December 2009

- **The proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) n° 1080/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund as regards the eligibility of energy efficiency and renewable energy investments in housing**

This proposal follows the European Parliament and Council repeated requests for the EU to take measures to combat social inclusion, including the particular situation of Roma.

This proposal aims to permit the ERDF financial support for housing interventions in favour of marginalised communities living in the Member States that acceded to the European Union on or after 1 May 2004. In the new Member States, the great majority of these communities live in rural areas and in shelters (in rural as well as in urban areas) and they cannot benefit from the ERDF support, as the current legislation do not permit housing interventions outside the urban areas or the replacement of existing shelters by houses in favour of marginalised communities living in new Member States.

PROCEDURE	TIMETABLE
Rapporteur: to be appointed	Consideration of draft report: 5/6 October 2009
Responsible administrator: Agnieszka Kunat	Planned deadline for Ams: mid October 2009
Procedure n.	Planned adoption REGI: 3/4 November 2009
	Planned adoption in plenary: by December 2009

10. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on **Monday 5 October 2009** from 15.00 to 18.30 and on **Tuesday 6 October 2009** from 9.00 to 12.30 in Brussels.

PART II

Here you will find information on the issues discussed in the last REGI meetings held on 20 July 2009

CONSTITUTIVE MEETING

The constitutive meeting of the committee on Regional Development took place without incident.

The following were elected by acclamation.

As Chair:

Ms Danuta Hübner

As Vice-Chairpersons:

Mr. Georgios STAVRAKIS, 1st Vice-Chair

Mr Markus PIEPER, 2nd Vice-Chair,

Ms Filiz HYUSMENOVA, 3rd Vice-Chair

Mr TREMOPOULOS, 4rd Vice-Chair

ORDINARY MEETING

1. Distribution of minutes of the meeting of 16 April 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 April 2009 in Brussels, last meeting of the VII EP legislature, were distributed for information purposes to Committee Members.

2. Confirmation of meetings calendar 2009

The calendar of REGI meetings for the remaining months of 2009 was adopted by unanimity by the Committee.

You can find [here](#) the calendar for REGI meetings of 2009.

3. 2010 budget: Section III - Commission

In view of the tight deadlines imposed by the 2010 Budget procedure, the committee opened a deadline for amendments until the 10th of August for the opinion on the 2010 budget and proceeded to discuss it.

During the discussion Members agreed on the importance the committee has traditionally attached to restoring the amounts put forward by the European Commission in the PDB and called for detailed information concerning the implementation of the pilot projects introduced in the 2009 budget.

They agreed that it was necessary to have more information before proposing any new pilot projects.

The meeting has been followed by a meeting of the coordinators.

PART III - Other News

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

OPEN DAYS 2009

Opening Session, 5 October, 15:00-17:00

European Parliament, Hemicycle
Global Crisis, Regional Responses?

On 5-8 October 2009, the Committee of the Regions and the European Commission Directorate-General for Regional Policy will organise for the seventh consecutive year the "Open Days - European Week of Regions and Cities", the annual meeting of regional development actors from across the European Union.

The importance of this event is growing over the years and last year the Open Days 2008 gathered 216 regions and almost 7,400 local, regional, national and European decision-makers and experts in the field of regional development.

During the last four years, the Committee on Regional Development has hosted the closing session of the Open Days and has played a significant part in this event.

In 2009 the Committee on Regional Development will host the OPEN DAYS Opening Session which will take place on Monday 5 October, 15:00-17:00, in the EP's Hemicycle. It will coincide with the CoR Plenary Session and the EP's REGI Committee meeting.

In addition to the CoR and the REGI members, up to 700 representatives of OPEN DAYS partners could be accommodated in the Hemicycle. Following a welcome and formal opening by the organisers, the session will consist of two keynote speeches by President **José Manuel Barroso** (tbc) and **Maud Olofsson**, Deputy Prime Minister representing the Swedish Presidency, followed by a panel debate on the theme "Global crisis, regional responses?" involving the Commissioner for Regional Policy, the Chair of the REGI Committee and other regional and local representatives.

Indicative Programme

15:00-15:10 Opening of the session and Welcome Addresses by

Danuta Hübner, Chair of the Committee on Regional Development
Luc Van den Brande, President of the Committee of the Regions

15:10-15:40 Keynote speeches:

José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission
Maud Olofsson, Minister for Enterprise and Energy, Deputy Prime Minister, representing the Swedish Presidency

Library News

Publications



Regional studies / Regional Studies Association

Regional Studies is an international journal in theoretical development, empirical analysis and policy debate in the multi- and inter-disciplinary field of regional studies. It contains: high-quality research, critical surveys, policy debates and special thematic issues.

Selected articles from vol. 43, no. 5, June 2009:

Relative Sources of European Regional Productivity Convergence: A Bootstrap Frontier

Approach / by Kerstin Enflo and Per Hjertstrand, p. 643-660 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)
✚ **Business Productivity and Area Productivity in Rural England** / by Don Webber, Nigel Curry and Anthony Plumridge, p. 661 - 676 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)

Selected articles from vol. 43, no. 7, August 2009:

✚ **How 'Provincial' Is Your Region? Openness and Regional Performance in Europe** / Alfonso Gambardella, Myriam Mariani, Salvatore Torrasi, p. 935 - 948 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)



European urban and regional studies / Harlow, Essex, England \$b Longman Group, Vol. 16, no. 3, 2009

European Urban and Regional Studies focuses on urban and regional development in Europe. It offers a European coverage and explores 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:

✚ **Migration: Cities, Regions and Uneven Development** / Diane Perrons, p. 219-224 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)

✚ **Migrants, Economic Mobility and Socio-Economic Change in Rural Areas** / by Lois Labrianidis and Theodosios Sykas, p. 237- 256 ([full text](#) - click on IP authentication)

Information files

EP Library prepares thematic files on specific topics related to the EP activity which contains links to selected documents of European institutions, as well as to other documents from stakeholders concerning that topic.



The European Union Solidarity Fund / EP Library, last update July 2009

To enable itself to respond in a rapid, efficient and flexible manner to urgent situations, the Community has established a Solidarity Fund. This will intervene mainly in cases of major natural disasters with serious repercussions on living conditions, the natural environment or the economy in one or more regions of a Member State or a country applying for accession. (Available on the Library website - see the [information file](#))

Library briefings



L'organisation territoriale des États membres /

EP Library, March 2009 (Available on the Library website - see the [briefing](#))

The briefing analyses the very heterogeneous territorial architecture within the European Union, trying to identify some common trends.



A general overview of Structural Funds: with a section focusing on Italy / EP Library, March 2009 (Available on the Library website - see the [briefing](#))

Some details on its history, necessity and objectives are followed by information on the two recent funds for the period 2000-13. The "regions" aspect is covered followed by criticism of the SFs. Lastly specific information is given on Italy.

Latest analysis

Working towards a New Europe: The role and achievements of Europe's regional policy, 2004-2009 / DG Regional Policy, European Commission

This overview of the past five years describes the main challenges since 2004 where regional policy has been a key part of the response at European level. The report sets out these achievements and policy

innovations, as well as describing the steps which have been taken over these past years to prepare the groundwork for the future policy. (Available on the Library website - see [latest analyses](#)).



European Regional and Urban Statistics: Reference guide / Eurostat, June 2009

This [Reference Guide](#) is designed to serve as a vademecum, explaining the background of European regional and urban statistics, including the regional classification (NUTS). In particular, all recent improvements made in the data collection are explained in detail. The way the data are stored is comprehensively described.