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# REPORT

on achieving real territorial, social and economic cohesion within the EU – a  
sine qua non for global competitiveness?  
(2009/2233(INI))

Committee on Regional Development

Rapporteur: Petru Constantin Luhan

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

**on achieving real territorial, social and economic cohesion within the EU – a sine qua non for global competitiveness?  
(2009/2233(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community (2007/C 306/01), and in particular Title I and Title XVIII thereof,
- ***having regard to the conclusions of the European Council of 25 and 26 March 2010,***
- having regard to the Commission communication to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘Global Europe: Competing in the World – A Contribution to the EU’s Growth and Jobs Strategy’ (COM(2006)0567),
- having regard to the OECD Annual Report 2009,
- having regard to *Successful partnerships: a guide*, OECD LEED Forum for Partnerships and Local Governance, 2006,
- having regard to the Global Competitiveness Report 2009-2010, World Economic Forum Geneva, Switzerland, 2009,
- having regard to ‘An agenda for a reformed cohesion policy – A place-based approach to meeting European Union challenges and expectations’, independent report prepared at the request of Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy, by Fabrizio Barca, April 2009,
- having regard to the Council of European Municipalities and Regions’ policy paper on the ‘Future of EU Cohesion Policy’, Brussels, December 2009,
- having regard to the Assembly of European Regions (AER) resolution on regional policy post-2013, adopted by the AER General Assembly on 8 November 2007 in Udine, Italy,
- having regard to the Commission communication to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the results of the negotiations concerning cohesion policy strategies and programmes for the programming period 2007-2013 (COM(2008)0301),
- having regard to its resolution of 24 March 2009 on implementation of the Structural Funds Regulation 2007-2013: the results of the negotiations on the national cohesion strategies and the operational programmes <sup>1</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P6\_TA(2009)0165.

- having regard to its resolution of 24 March 2009 on best practices in the field of regional policy and obstacles to the use of the structural funds <sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 21 October 2008 on governance and partnership at national and regional levels and a basis for projects in the sphere of regional policy <sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 24 March 2009 on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion and the state of the debate on the future reform of cohesion policy<sup>3</sup>,

**- having regard to its resolution of 16 June 2010 on EU 2020<sup>4</sup>,**

- having regard to the fourth report on Economic and Social Cohesion (COM(2007)0273),
- having regard to the Commission’s 20th annual report on implementation of the structural funds (2008) (COM(2009)0617),
- having regard to the Commission communication to Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘Mobilising private and public investment for recovery and long-term structural change: developing Public Private Partnerships’ (COM(2009)0615),
- **having regard to paragraph 37 of its resolution** of 14 February 2006 on State aid reform 2005-2009<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Development (A7-0309/2010),

**A. *whereas promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States, is one of the European Union’s objectives, as stipulated in Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union,***

**B. *whereas the Union can be globally competitive only insofar as internal policies bolster its capacity to respond to global challenges **by running a sustainable, low-carbon economy which safeguards biodiversity** – periods of recession having illustrated how less-developed regions have a lesser capacity for recuperation,***

**C. *whereas competitiveness and cohesion are neither contradictory nor incompatible but have elements of complementarity,***

**D. *whereas, even though significant progress has been made in terms of convergence within the Union, a trend can be observed towards worsening territorial disparities between EU regions, for instance in terms of accessibility, in particular for the structurally disadvantaged regions, but also at an intra-regional level and within EU***

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P6\_TA(2009)0156.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P6\_TA(2008)0492.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P6\_TA(2009)0163.

<sup>4</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2010)0223.

<sup>5</sup> OJ C290 E, 29.11.2006, p.97.

*territories, which could lead to spatial segregation, widen the differences between levels of prosperity in EU regions and impair the EU's global competitiveness,*

- E. whereas in its Annual Report 2009 the OECD made a recommendation for long-term growth that focused on the importance of taxation, investment in infrastructure, education and the workforce, and the regulation of production markets, hence emphasising their role,
- F. whereas the World Economic Forum, in its Global Competitiveness Report 2009 as in other reports, pointed to the decisive role of infrastructure as the second of the 12 pillars on which global competitiveness is assessed, and specified that quality infrastructure is key to reducing the effect of distance, attracting foreign investment and ensuring that economic development is possible,
- G. *whereas competitiveness can ultimately be achieved only if economic growth is genuinely sustainable throughout the EU,*
- H. *whereas the report of the Independent Expert Group on R&D and Innovation, appointed following the Hampton Court Summit and chaired by Esko Aho, entitled 'Creating an Innovative Europe' identifies the key areas – e-health, pharmaceuticals, transport and logistics, environment, digital content, energy and security – where a market for innovation can work and public policy can have a significant role,*
- I. whereas, in order for the EU 2020 targets to be achieved, it is necessary that *the starting position of* disparity in levels of development and in limitations be acknowledged, and that objectives be set which tally with the real situation and the needs identified in consultation with all the actors involved at the various levels of government,
- J. whereas the European Council of March 2010 acknowledged the importance of promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion *inter alia through* the development of infrastructure, to help ensure the success of the EU 2020 strategy in circumstances where this new strategy will be addressing blockages in economic development,
- K. *whereas cohesion policy has proved to be an effective instrument for responding flexibly to the socio-economic challenges arising from the financial crisis,*
- L. *whereas, in addition to good infrastructure, the main prerequisites for competitiveness are the promotion of research, innovation and technological development and the provision of correspondingly high-quality training for people in the regions,*
- M. whereas regions will play a crucial role in *limiting the impact of the crisis* on the public and they should therefore embrace the partnership principle and develop suitable instruments for ex-ante assessment of the territorial impact of different policy types, with a view to facing major challenges such as adjusting to globalisation, demographic changes *and the consequent depopulation of the regions*, climate change, energy-related issues *and the protection of biodiversity*, as well as new challenges arising from the crisis,
- N. whereas, as the outcome of the discussions on cohesion-policy strategies and programmes for the programming period 2007-2013 has shown, programme quality and stakeholder involvement have increased at every level of government, thereby *representing a step*

*forward* towards achieving the Lisbon objectives of economic competitiveness and employment,

- O. whereas the reform of cohesion policy needs to enhance that policy through better correlation and better coordination and synergy among European policies, without subordinating any one policy to another, on the basis of the Union's needs and objectives in terms of sustainable development,
- P. whereas ***the involvement of local and regional actors in cohesion policy is reflected in their regional and local strategies to*** advance economic development and social inclusion,
- Q. whereas the economic competitiveness of regions that are lagging behind is being bolstered by the development of ***their capacities***, including the development of infrastructure of all types, enabling access to education, research and innovation,
- R. ***whereas, while some elements of the architecture of these instruments, such as a common time frame and alignment with the Lisbon agenda, allow for synergies, there remain differences, such as different legal bases, thematic versus territorial focus, and shared versus centralised management,***

#### Cohesion policy as a sine qua non for global economic competitiveness

(Ex AM 25( Or. ES) + ex AM 26( Or. EN) + ex AM 27( Or. ES) of FdR  
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1. ***Highlights the achievements of the EU cohesion policy and the*** fact that its implementation is indispensable for the success of the EU 2020 strategy as an instrument for ***eliminating the disparities between regions***, making them more competitive, ***facilitating the launch of*** structural reforms and enhancing the regions' ability to adapt to the global economic climate;
2. ***Appreciates that, for the period 2007-2013, all the Member States have devoted a significant amount of their total financial allocations to R&D, innovation and development of a knowledge-based economy, resulting in 246 National or Regional Operational Programmes, with around EUR 86 billion allocated to research and innovation, of which EUR 50 billion has already been allocated for core R&D and innovation activities; stresses that, since research and innovation are essential for the improvement of EU competitiveness in the face of global challenges, investments in these fields must continue and regular results-based assessments of progress must be conducted; recommends, therefore, with a view to the next programming period, that the Member States and the Commission allocate sufficient resources from the structural funds for research and innovation, in particular sustainable innovation, and strengthen research capacities; stresses the need to promote and apply successful models in the knowledge triangle to ensure the sustainable development of regional research and strategic frameworks for innovation, in collaboration with enterprises, research centres, universities and public authorities; highlights the potential of knowledge-intensive regional innovative clusters in mobilising regional competitiveness and*** calls for better coordination of the structural funds and the Seventh Framework Programme for research

and technological development;

3. ***Stresses that enhancing the concentration of cohesion-policy resources can ensure that this policy makes a significant contribution to fostering competitiveness, innovation and employment in the EU;***
4. Stresses the key role played by both the public sector, ***at all levels of government, and the private sector in*** the implementation of cohesion policy, in rebuilding confidence and solidarity in times of recession and thereafter by ***guaranteeing equal opportunities in terms of access to*** public investment, especially in infrastructure, ***new technologies and human capital***, and by ensuring sustainable development;
5. ***Underlines the fact that the economic competitiveness of the EU regions is closely linked to the existence of adequate levels of employment, educated and skilled workforces, social security and access to public services; notes, in this regard, that the support for social cohesion provided by the cohesion policy increases the importance of this policy in terms of overall regional competitiveness on a global scale;***
6. Takes the view that, in accordance with the spirit of the Treaties, a cohesion policy which aims at reducing disparities in levels of development and prepares the regions to meet long-term and short-term challenges (globalisation, demographic change, ***the depopulation of rural areas***, climate change ***and biodiversity protection***), by taking into account their specific strengths and weaknesses, has proved to be essential to the process of European integration;
7. Points out that, ***by increasing*** the synergies ***between*** research, development and innovation and cohesion policies, the EU 2020 ***strategy*** challenges ***can be better met***; stresses that cohesion policy ***must play a significant role in*** the implementation of ***the EU 2020 strategy, since it stimulates structural change across Europe and supports key investment priorities at all levels, local, regional, national and cross-border***, ensuring social, economic and territorial cohesion; ***points out, however, that, while the priorities of the cohesion policy should be aligned with the EU 2020 objectives***, it must remain an independent policy capable of accommodating ***regional specificities and of supporting the weaker and neediest regions so that they overcome their socio-economic difficulties and natural handicaps and reduce disparities; takes the view that ensuring the continuity of cohesion-policy guidelines already in operation will safeguard the regional dimension of RDI and generate jobs in innovative sectors;***

#### **Territorial cohesion – a reflection of the local-level impact of EU policies**

8. Endorses the views expressed in the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion ***concerning competitiveness, which ‘depends on building links with other territories to ensure that common assets are used in a coordinated and sustainable way’ in order to release the potential inherent in the EU’s territorial diversity; stresses, in that connection, that the smooth and coordinated operation of transport services, sufficient access to telecommunications and the pooling, where appropriate, of energy, healthcare, research, education, environmental protection and infrastructure are basic conditions for further boosting competitiveness; calls on the Commission to bring forward concrete proposals for the definition and consistent implementation of the objective of territorial***

cohesion;

9. Takes the view that the Member States must support a place-based approach to framing and implementing cohesion policy; acknowledges that the role of the regions varies between Member States depending on their political and administrative structure; requests that the principle *of subsidiarity*, in its strengthened and widened concept as defined in the TFEU, should be duly applied and that improvement should be sought, over the current programming period, by promoting the principle of decentralisation *down to local-authority level, with a view to improving the absorption of funds*; considers it to be counterproductive, in this context, that regions administer *on average* only 30.5% of the overall budget allocated to cohesion policy, with the remainder being administered by central governments; *considers, therefore, that in future the partnership principle must be significantly strengthened*;
10. *Takes the view that border territories, in particular, highlight the problems that the EU faces in connection with the challenges of opening up borders, completing the internal market and globalisation; emphasises that the competitiveness of such territories may be undermined by the need to cope with competing fiscal and welfare systems, complex administrative arrangements and migratory flows between regions and states; stresses the importance of developing the tools needed for cross-border cooperation and multi-level governance and calls on the Commission to encourage exchanges of information and best practice*;
11. *Points out that territorial cohesion has a horizontal, multi-sectoral character and that Union policies must therefore contribute to its achievement; reiterates that this concept is not confined to the effects of regional policy but also implies coordination with other Union policies which target sustainable development and offer tangible results at regional level, with a view to developing and fully using the specific forms of regional potential and increasing their impact on the ground, boosting regions' competitiveness and attractiveness and achieving territorial cohesion; is of the opinion that 'concentration, cooperation and connection' are the key coordinates of territorial cohesion with a view to more balanced territorial development in the EU*;
12. *Stresses that multi-level governance entails the devolution of responsibility for programmes, allowing for better exploitation of the potential of territorial cooperation, and that, therefore, in order for the Union to be able to pursue common objectives, using coherent and result-oriented measures while establishing specific regional and local priorities, the principles of multi-level governance should be implemented*;
13. Welcomes the results of the URBAN and LEADER initiatives and highlights the need to use this past experience and the associated examples of best practice in providing the framework for *integrated*, balanced rural-urban development, *in accordance with the necessities of each region*; calls on the Commission to examine and propose working methodologies that promote urban-rural partnerships, *combat the depopulation of rural areas* and, at the same time, stimulate sustainable urban development, since *nearly 80% of the EU population lives in urban areas*; points out that *both urban and rural areas play a dynamic role in regional economic development* and stresses the need, with a view to *the next programming period, for investment in urban as well as sub-urban projects* and

for better coordination with rural development programmes;

### **Maximizing the impact of cohesion policy to increase economic competitiveness**

14. Views partnership as a key principle in the determination of cohesion-policy content, with the ‘bottom-up’ approach enhancing administrative capacities and the quality of the programming process; believes that all levels of government need to play a cohesive, complementary and productive role in boosting the economic competitiveness of the EU; calls on the *Commission to give a clearer definition of the partnership principle in order to ensure that real partnerships with regional and local authorities are set up and to facilitate exchanges of best practice between regions*;
15. *Points out that co-financing is a principle fundamental to the sound management of cohesion policy; calls for its continued application despite the restrictions on public spending which the economic crisis has brought about*;
16. *Highlights the need to promote entrepreneurship and support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), recognising the key role they have played in fostering economic competitiveness and creating jobs; stresses the need to review and consolidate the role of the EU instruments that support European competitiveness with a view to rationalising administrative procedures, facilitating access to funding, especially for SMEs, introducing innovative incentive mechanisms based on achieving objectives linked to intelligent, sustainable and integrative growth, and promoting closer cooperation with the European Investment Bank and other financial institutions; appreciates, in this context, the added value offered by financial engineering instruments and encourages their use, as well as that of revolving funds and global grants, on the widest possible scale, with a view to achieving positive synergies and maximising results; calls, too, for simplified access to risk capital and micro-finance*;
17. Emphasises, moreover, *that the efficient implementation of cohesion policy depends strongly on how it is conceived and that it is, therefore, crucial to involve local and regional authorities at an early stage in shaping and implementing future cohesion policy; highlights, likewise, the need to develop horizontal and vertical partnerships between public authorities at all levels with a view to achieving the most efficient governance possible at a number of levels*; recalls that multi-level governance is one of the key principles of cohesion policy and that it is fundamental to ensuring the quality of the decision-making process; stresses too, in this context, the importance of the partnership that regional authorities have with the Committee of the Regions;
18. *Welcomes the amendment to Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 simplifying the procedures for utilisation of the structural funds and the Cohesion Fund and invites the Commission to continue simplifying such procedures to ensure their flexibility and reduce the administrative burden on funding beneficiaries, so that the authorities can address major challenges in a timely manner and with the appropriate resources*; takes the view that public-private partnerships can provide genuine support by supplementing the efforts made at local and regional level, and calls on the Commission to bring forward concrete proposals for the consolidation of public-private partnerships within the framework of cohesion policy;

19. Stresses the importance, *in the interests of eliminating disparities*, of continuing to provide support *primarily* for projects aimed at regions that are lagging behind, so that the impact expected in this programming period can be maintained and will be in line with initial estimates; notes that *improving accessibility and infrastructural facilities will help to make those regions which lag behind in the internal market more competitive, and will thus contribute to the external competitiveness of the EU as a whole*; takes the view that withdrawing this support would reduce the impact of the positive initial results;
20. *Stresses that, although cohesion policy traditionally focuses on the least prosperous regions, it concerns all European regions, regardless of their level of development; emphasises, therefore, the need to encourage the objective of regional competitiveness and employment*; reiterates that a strong and well financed cohesion policy, *with a budget at least equivalent to the current one in both absolute and relative terms, is a precondition for delivering the objectives of the EU 2020 strategy, in order both to secure an intelligent, sustainable and integrative economy, making the EU globally competitive, and to ensure that all regions develop harmoniously, achieving the objective of social, economic and territorial cohesion*;
21. Takes the view that *GDP* must remain *the principal criterion for determining the eligibility of regions for cohesion-policy assistance*, while *other* measurable *indicators* might be added if proven to be relevant, leaving room for national authorities to apply, at the appropriate level of decision making, other indicators which take into account the specific attributes of regions and cities;
22. Stresses the importance of taking into account, in the allocation of funds, the specific *characteristics* of, for example, *coastal, mountainous* outermost *regions*, regions *suffering from depopulation, or remote border* regions and *towns*; *encourages the regions to put forward initiatives for exploiting their regional specificity*; calls on the Commission to *adapt the various* financial instruments *so as to create* added value in the short and medium term, while also taking into consideration the effects of the economic and financial crisis;
23. *Invites the Commission to study ways in which new techniques in financial engineering can improve the effectiveness and impact of the cohesion policy, with a view to obtaining the best possible results in the projects chosen*;
24. *Emphasises the positive effects of gender equality on the EU's economic growth and social cohesion and, therefore, on its competitiveness*;

#### Cohesion policy as a key policy for the post-2013 period

25. Emphasises the decisive role *which* regional development and territorial cohesion *throughout Europe play, by virtue of their European added value*, in enhancing the economic competitiveness of the EU and meeting the EU 2020 targets, with the place-based approach being one of the main ways of achieving economic balance;
26. *Stresses the need for an integrated approach to the application of the structural funds as an important means of helping regions to achieve sustainable growth, employment and prosperity*;

27. ***Stresses the need to keep transitional arrangements in place to consolidate and improve the current level of development, which could fall if financing is significantly reduced once a given objective is met; points out that this would ensure equal treatment for regions in similar situations, which would in turn lead to the efficient organisation of programmes;***
28. Reminds the Commission and the Member States that the expectations of the European public are based on people's needs, and especially on the desire for access to adequate infrastructure and quality public services, which must be provided equitably and at prices affordable by all European citizens regardless of where they live and work; ***insists that the right to equal opportunities must be respected and stresses the need for disabled access to all infrastructure and projects financed under the structural funds;***
29. ***Stresses that, in order to consolidate knowledge and innovation as motors of future economic growth and European competitiveness, it is necessary to improve the quality of education, build on the results of research, promote innovation and the transfer of knowledge Union-wide, exploit ICTs to the maximum, ensure that innovative ideas are reflected in new products and services which generate growth and quality jobs and contribute to meeting the challenges of social change in Europe and the world, encourage entrepreneurship, prioritise user needs and market opportunities, and guarantee accessible and adequate funding on the basis of a key role for the structural funds;***
30. Highlights the fact that economic, social and territorial cohesion provides an opportunity to harness the full potential of research, development and innovation and to ensure that the European public have better living standards and greater confidence in the EU; selective ***and combined*** investment in research, development and innovation must take into account regional and urban capacities and potential and help to develop ***key areas such as e-health, pharmaceuticals, transport and logistics, environment, digital content, energy and security***, by means of institutional development and capacity-building programmes;
31. ***Takes the view that some of the funding allocated to research, development and innovation under the cohesion policy should be used to attain and maintain the role of world leader in sectors where Europe already has a competitive advantage and in those where it has a fresh opportunity to become a world leader;***
32. ***Takes the view that, in order to consolidate the internal market, specific measures are needed to stimulate competition at European level, without however creating an imbalance among Member States; believes that in this way a comfortable level of stability and economic prosperity can be achieved at European level;***
33. ***Recommends that the Member States and the Commission pay greater attention to supporting major projects covering two or more operational programmes with a major impact at European level, which will generate added value, create high-quality jobs and safeguard the sustainable development of the regions;***
34. ***Takes the view that the cohesion policy should continue promoting measures that will generate the greatest possible number of jobs, making it possible to harness local human resources and ensure their ongoing development so as to guarantee high***

*productivity;*

35. *Maintains that the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion is a necessary condition but that it is not sufficient to guarantee economic competitiveness at world level, which requires significant investments in key areas such as energy, the environment, infrastructure, education, research and development, creative industries and services, logistics and transport;*

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36. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

An improved quality of life through the creation of secure and better-quality jobs and ensuring access to infrastructure of all types – be this transport, social or educational or relating to research, development and innovation – has been the main reason for the public supporting the process of European integration.

Cohesion policy can ensure the cohesive development of the EU through its specific objectives and instruments, hence satisfying the economic and social needs of the European public. At the same time, the EU Member States, including those of eastern and south-east Europe, are being directly confronted with the effects of globalisation.

The manner in which each Member State harnesses the opportunities provided by belonging to the single European market depends on its maturity and level of development, which differ from one country to the next. It follows that each Member State is responsible for pinpointing the most effective measures for enabling its economy to function within this global system.

This report, entitled *Achieving real territorial, social and economic cohesion within the EU – a sine qua non for global competitiveness?* is intended to spur debate among the Members of the European Parliament on the interdependence and complementary nature of the measures adopted at European and national level to fulfil the objectives of EU policies, including that of increasing global economic competitiveness. The report seeks to provide a framework highlighting the integrating role of cohesion policy and the contribution it makes to increasing the EU's global competitiveness.

### Rapporteur's approach

The global and European context has pushed the regions to the fore owing to the challenges that confront them, be these in the field of climate change, ageing of the population, social migration or energy, or the challenges arising from the economic and financial crisis, whose impact is being felt at local level.

Your rapporteur takes the view that cohesion policy is the EU's key policy for enabling the regions to face these challenges as best as possible and hence to help increase the EU's global economic competitiveness, by:

- ensuring common living standards for all EU citizens; and
- supporting development by harnessing local and regional specificities, thereby generating added value and economic productivity.

Cohesion policy has made a major contribution to meeting the Lisbon Strategy objectives, but to consolidate the results obtained and their expected impact, your rapporteur considers that continued investment needs to be made in infrastructure of all types, as a basis for increasing economic competitiveness.

## **Infrastructure – a fundamental factor in increasing global competitiveness**

Infrastructure is one of the main pillars assessed internationally to ascertain levels of economic competitiveness; it makes it possible to cancel out the effect of distances and ensure the mobility of investment and of the workforce.

The EU 2020 objective of a competitive, connected and greener economy can be achieved by modernising and interconnecting infrastructure and supporting investment plans and development projects that are in tune with the specific characteristics of each region. That approach can be viably implemented by using innovative methods and instruments.

Your rapporteur considers it essential to achieve territorial cohesion, since it is at a territorial level that one can see the extent to which:

- programming of the regional development process was in keeping with the needs and specific potential of an area;
- the partners involved enjoy sufficient institutional capacities to ensure the best possible rate of absorption of EU funding;
- the support provided by the EU is long-term support that builds on the results obtained through the implementation of EU-funded projects and ensures sustainability.

Disparities in levels of decentralisation and multi-layered systems of government create situations that are most clearly visible at local and regional level, and ensuring that measures funded publicly – at European or national level – are complementary while avoiding any overlapping of financing are genuine challenges that need to be addressed at local level.

There is a need to ensure horizontal and vertical coordination between different levels of government, and between fields of activity and types of intervention. Ensuring common standards in the development achieved via economic, social and territorial cohesion, particularly in border regions, calls for:

- high-quality programming based on involvement of the stakeholders from all the relevant levels and sectors;
- utilisation of relevant and uniform statistics and indicators at both the programming and implementation stages;
- implementation of a monitoring system specifically scaled to enable a whole range of indicators and impacts to be observed and analysed;
- dissemination of the results of evaluations to all levels of government and regional sectors of activity.

In view of the fact that the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund are the main financial instruments in support of achieving the development objectives set at regional level, it would be desirable to maximise the added value they generate by:

- bolstering the efforts made by the local and regional authorities to develop administrative capacity, as there is a proven need for planning expertise and quality. The Member States and the Commission must guarantee quality technical assistance and the process of implementing economic, social and territorial cohesion must be enhanced at local and regional level;
- simplifying the procedures for the allocation of structural and cohesion funding;

- developing the framework needed for public-private partnerships to be a viable and realistic option for regions.

There are many Member States in which, despite public-private partnerships being considered an alternative, there is no sufficiently clear legal framework and know-how at the regional level to enable such an approach. It is necessary, for example, for the EIB to provide the requisite technical assistance to the authorities so that they can form such partnerships.

All the points have to be taken into consideration, so that in the next programming period, under the overarching framework of the EU 2020 objectives, the regions can make their own contributions to sustainable development and ensure that common living standards are met.

After 2013, cohesion policy has to become a mainstay policy, in view of its decisive role in reducing the disparities in development between European regions. It is true that the onset of the economic and financial crisis may trigger certain changes, but with maturity and flexibility it will be possible to satisfy the very differing needs of the regions. This is one reason why your rapporteur considers that a tripartite agreement/commitment is needed between the Commission, Member States and the regions which clearly sets out the roles each is to play in seeking to achieve the objectives set.

Support for research, development and innovation, and the development of education and the skills needed to ensure an inclusive job market will be followed up by regional-level policies and measures. Ensuring a common level of development and access to basic infrastructure and quality services increases the ability to withstand major challenges. Global economic competitiveness is bolstered by this ability to respond to globalisation.

The take-up of the European and national financial resources available for projects involving research, development and innovation is not uniform, meaning there is a need to increase administrative capacity at the regional level so that fresh solutions can be pinpointed to current problems.

Your rapporteur takes the view that once the objective has been met of ensuring a similar quality of life by enabling access to infrastructure and quality services, the regions can concentrate on measures aimed at developing local economic potential, with an important stage being the development of local research, development and innovation policies and the appropriate regional infrastructure.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	28.10.2010
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 38 -: 5 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	François Alfonsi, Luís Paulo Alves, Sophie Auconie, Catherine Bearder, Jean-Paul Bisset, Victor Boştinaru, Zuzana Brzobohatá, John Bufton, Alain Cadec, Salvatore Caronna, Ricardo Cortés Lastra, Francesco De Angelis, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Elie Hoarau, Danuta Maria Hübner, Filiz Hakaeva Hyusmenova, Seán Kelly, Evgeni Kirilov, Constanze Angela Krehl, Petru Constantin Luhan, Riikka Manner, Iosif Matula, Erminia Mazzoni, Miroslav Mikolášik, Jan Olbrycht, Wojciech Michał Olejniczak, Markus Pieper, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Monika Smolková, Csanád Szegedi, Nuno Teixeira, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Oldřich Vlasák, Hermann Winkler, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Karima Delli, Jens Geier, Ivars Godmanis, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, James Nicholson, Elisabeth Schroedter, László Surján, Patrice Tirolien
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote</b>	Andrea Češková