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*Plenary sitting*

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**A8-0266/2018**

18.7.2018

# **REPORT**

on boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions  
(2018/2054(INI))

Committee on Regional Development

Rapporteur: Krzysztof Hetman

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions (2018/2054(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and Articles 4, 162, 174 to 178 and 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to Directive 2011/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2011 on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare<sup>4</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 September 2017 entitled 'Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions' (COM(2017)0534),
- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 20 September 2017 accompanying the Commission communication entitled 'Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions' (SWD(2017)0307),
- having regard to its resolution of 13 March 2018 on lagging regions in the EU<sup>5</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2018 on strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU: the 7th report of the European Commission<sup>6</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 June 2017 on building blocks for a post-2020 EU cohesion policy<sup>7</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 June 2017 on increasing engagement of partners

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 259.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 210, 31.7.2006, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 88, 4.4.2011, p. 45.

<sup>5</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2018)0067.

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2018)0105.

<sup>7</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2017)0254.

- and visibility in the performance of European Structural and Investment Funds<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2017 on the right funding mix for Europe's regions: balancing financial instruments and grants in EU cohesion policy<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2017 on investing in jobs and growth – maximising the contribution of European Structural and Investment Funds: an evaluation of the report under Article 16(3) of the CPR<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 8 February 2017 on Missing transport links in border regions<sup>4</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2016 on Cohesion Policy and Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3)<sup>5</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 13 September 2016 on European Territorial Cooperation – best practices and innovative measures<sup>6</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 10 May 2016 on new territorial development tools in cohesion policy 2014-2020: Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)<sup>7</sup>,
  - having regard to the conclusions and recommendations of the High Level Group monitoring simplification for beneficiaries of ESI Funds,
  - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Development and the opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education (A8-0266/2018),
- A. whereas the EU and its immediate neighbours in the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) count 40 internal land borders and EU internal border regions, and these regions cover 40 % of the Union's territory, account for 30 % of the EU's population and produce almost one third of EU GDP;
- B. whereas border regions, especially those with lower population density, tend to face worse conditions for social and economic development and generally perform less well economically than other regions within the Member States, and their full economic potential is untapped;
- C. whereas physical and/or geographical barriers also contribute to restricting economic, social and territorial cohesion between border regions, both within and outside the EU, particularly in the case of mountain regions;

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2017)0245.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2017)0222.

<sup>3</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2017)0053.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 207, 30.6.2017, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0320.

<sup>6</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0321.

<sup>7</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2016)0211.

- D. whereas, in spite of the efforts already undertaken, obstacles – consisting of mainly administrative, linguistic and legal barriers – still persist and hamper growth, economic and social development and cohesion between and within the border regions;
  - E. whereas it was estimated by the Commission in 2017 that the removal of only 20 % of the existing obstacles in the border regions would bring about an increase in their GDP of 2 %, or around EUR 91 billion, which would translate into approximately one million new jobs; whereas territorial cooperation, including cross-border cooperation, has been widely acknowledged to bring genuine and visible added value, in particular to citizens of the EU living along internal borders;
  - F. whereas the total number of cross-border workers and students active in another EU country is approximately 2 million, of which 1.3 million are workers, representing 0.6 % of all employees across the EU-28;
  - G. whereas in the current multiannual financial framework (MFF), 95 % of Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) and Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) funds go to the core corridors of the TEN-T, while small projects on the comprehensive network and interventions linking up with the TEN-T network, although essential to solving specific problems and to the development of cross-border connections and economies, are often not eligible for co-financing or for national financing;
  - H. whereas the Commission also intends to present its stance on the internal maritime border regions;
  - I. whereas multiple challenges faced by the external border regions of the EU, including the outermost regions, rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition and regions in the Union which suffer from remoteness, insularity or other severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps as per Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), would also merit a stance being adopted by the Commission;
1. Welcomes the Commission communication entitled ‘Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions’ which, as the result of two years of research and dialogue, provides a valuable insight into the challenges and obstacles faced by the internal EU border regions; underlines, in this context, the importance of using and publicising good practices and success stories, as this Commission communication does, and urges a follow-up with similar analysis regarding external EU border regions;

### ***Targeting the persistent obstacles***

2. Points out that access to public services, in line with their development, is crucial for the 150 million-strong population of internal cross-border areas, and is frequently hampered by numerous legal and administrative, including linguistic, barriers; calls, therefore, on the Commission and the Member States to maximise their efforts and step up cooperation to remove these barriers and to promote and establish the use of e-government, especially when related to health services, transport, construction of vital physical infrastructure, education, culture, sport, communications, labour mobility, the environment, as well as regulation, cross-border commerce and business development;

3. Underlines that the problems and challenges faced by the border regions are common to some extent, but also vary from region to region, or between Member States, and depend on the particular legal, administrative, economic and geographic specificities of a given region, which makes an individual approach to each of these regions a necessity; acknowledges the shared development potential of cross-border regions in general; encourages tailor-made, integrated and place-based approaches, such as Community-Led Local Development (CLLD);
4. Underlines that the differing legal and institutional frameworks of the Member States can lead to legal uncertainty in the border regions, which results in an increase in the time needed and the cost of implementing projects, and constitutes an additional obstacle for citizens, institutions and enterprises in the border regions, frequently hindering good initiatives; stresses, therefore, that greater complementarity, better coordination and communication, interoperability and willingness to tackle barriers between the Member States, or at least at border region level, are desirable;
5. Recognises the special situation of cross-border workers, who are most seriously affected by the challenges present in the border regions, including, in particular, the recognition of diplomas and other qualifications obtained after retraining, healthcare, transport and access to information on job vacancies, social security and taxation systems; calls, in this context, on the Member States to step up their efforts to overcome these obstacles and allow for greater powers, funds and sufficient flexibility for regional and local authorities in border regions to better coordinate neighbouring national legal and administrative systems in order to improve the quality of life of cross-border workers; underlines in this context the importance of the dissemination and use of best practices all over the EU; stresses that these problems are even more complex for cross-border workers to and from non-EU countries;
6. Points to the challenges related to business activities carried out in the border regions, in particular when related to the adoption and implementation of labour and commercial law, taxation, public procurement or social security systems; calls on the Member States and the regions to better align or harmonise the relevant legal provisions with the challenges posed by cross-border areas, and promote complementarity and achieve convergence in regulatory frameworks, in order to allow for more legal coherence and flexibility in the implementation of national legislation, as well as to improve the dissemination of information on cross-border issues, e.g. by creating one-stop-shops to enable workers and companies to honour their obligations and to realise their rights to the full extent, as demanded by the legislative system of the Member State where they provide their services; calls for the better use of existing solutions and the guaranteeing of funding for existing cooperation structures;
7. Expresses disappointment that the Commission's communication did not include a specific assessment of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including extra support which can be provided to them; believes that SMEs face particular challenges when it comes to cross-border interaction which includes, but is not limited to, those related to language, administrative capacity, cultural differences and legal divergence; stresses that meeting this challenge is particularly important as SMEs employ 67 % of

workers in the EU's non-financial business sectors and generate 57 % of value added<sup>1</sup>;

8. Points out that in cross-border regions, especially those with lower population density, transport, particularly with regard to cross-border public transport services, is still insufficiently developed and coordinated, partly because of missing or disused links, which hampers cross-border mobility and prospects for economic development; stresses, furthermore, that cross-border transport infrastructure is also particularly adversely affected by complex regulatory and administrative arrangements; underlines the existing potential for developing sustainable transportation, primarily based on public transport, and in this regard awaits the forthcoming Commission study on missing railway links along internal EU borders; underlines that any such study or future recommendations should be inter alia based on information and experience from local, regional and national authorities and take account of any proposals for cross-border cooperation and, where this is already in place, for better cross-border connections and calls on cross-border regional authorities to propose ways of bridging existing gaps in transport networks; recalls that some existing railway infrastructure is falling into disuse due to a lack of support; emphasises the benefits that further development of waterways can deliver for local and regional economies; calls for a CEF axis, with an adequate budget, to be dedicated to filling the missing links in sustainable transport infrastructure in border regions; stresses the need to tackle transport bottlenecks, which hamper economic activities such as transport, tourism and citizens' travel;
9. Takes note that the attractiveness of cross-border areas for living and investment depends heavily on quality of life, the availability of public and commercial services for citizens and businesses and the quality of transportation –conditions which can be met and maintained only through close co-operation between national, regional and local authorities as well as businesses on both sides of the border;
10. Regrets the fact that different and complex procedures of prior authorisation for healthcare services and the methods of payment and reimbursement used, administrative burdens for patients in dealing with cross-border consultations with specialists, incompatibilities in the use of technology and in the sharing of patients' data as well as a lack of unified accessible information not only limit accessibility from both sides of the border and therefore hamper the full use of healthcare facilities, but also impede emergency and rescue services in carrying out their cross-border interventions;
11. Emphasises the role EU border regions can play concerning the environment and its preservation, as environmental pollution and natural disasters are often cross-border issues; supports, in this context, cross-border projects on environmental protection for EU external border regions, as these regions often face environmental challenges caused by different environmental standards and legal regulation in the EU's neighbouring countries; calls also for better cooperation and coordination on internal water management to prevent natural disasters such as floods;
12. Calls on the Commission urgently to address the problems arising from the existence of physical and geographical barriers between border regions;

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<sup>1</sup> Annual Report on European SMEs 2016/2017, p.6.

### *Enhancing cooperation and trust*

13. Considers that mutual trust, political will and a flexible approach among multi-level stakeholders, from local to national level, including civil society, are vital to overcoming the abovementioned persistent obstacles; believes that the value of cohesion policy for border regions is based on the goal of boosting jobs and growth and that this action must be initiated at Union, Member State, regional and local level; calls, therefore, for better coordination and dialogue, more effective exchange of information and the further exchange of best practices among authorities, particularly at local and regional level; urges the Commission and the Member States to enhance such cooperation and provide funding for cooperation structures in order to ensure adequate functional and financial autonomy of respective local and regional authorities;
14. Underlines the importance of education and culture, and, in particular, the opportunities to step up efforts to promote multilingualism and intercultural dialogue in border regions; emphasises the potential of schools and local mass media in these endeavours and encourages Member States, regions and municipalities along internal borders to introduce the teaching of neighbouring countries' languages into their curricula from preschool; stresses, moreover, the importance of promoting a multilingual approach at all administrative levels;
15. Urges the Member States to facilitate and encourage the mutual recognition and better understanding of certificates, diplomas and vocational and professional qualifications between neighbouring regions; encourages, therefore the inclusion of specific skills in the curriculum with the objective of increasing cross-border employment opportunities, including validation and recognition of skills;
16. Encourages various measures aimed at combating all forms of discrimination in border regions and at breaking down barriers for vulnerable people in finding employment and becoming integrated into society; supports, in this regard, the promotion and development of social enterprises in border regions as a source of job creation, in particular for vulnerable groups such as young unemployed people and people with disabilities;
17. Welcomes the eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020<sup>1</sup> as a tool to achieve an efficient and inclusive public administration, and recognises the particular value of this plan for simplification measures in the border regions; notes that interoperability of existing e-government systems is needed at the national, regional and local administrative levels; is concerned, however, by the patchy implementation of the plan in some Member States; is also concerned about the often inadequate interoperability of authorities' electronic systems and the low level of online services available for foreign entrepreneurs to start doing business in another country; calls, therefore, for Member States to take measures to facilitate access, including linguistic tools, to their digital services for potential users from neighbouring areas, calls on the authorities in cross-border regions to set up electronic portals for the development of cross-border business initiatives; urges Member State, regional and local authorities to step up their efforts on

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<sup>1</sup> Commission communication of 19 April 2016 entitled 'EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020 – Accelerating the digital transformation of government' (COM(2016)0179).

- e-government projects that will positively impact the life and work of border citizens;
18. Notes that some internal and external border regions face serious migration challenges that often go beyond the capacity of the border regions and encourages the appropriate use of Interreg programmes, as well as the exchange of good practices between local and regional authorities in the border areas, in the framework of the integration of refugees under international protection; underlines the need for support and coordination at European level, as well as the need for national governments to support local and regional authorities in addressing these challenges;
  19. Urges the Commission to present its insights on coping with challenges that the internal maritime as well as external border regions are facing; calls for additional support for cross-border projects between EU external border regions and the border regions of neighbouring countries, in particular regions of those third countries that are involved in the EU integration process; reiterates, in this context, that the features of and the challenges faced by all border regions are common to some extent, while requiring a differentiated, tailor-made approach; stresses the need to give special attention and adequate support to the outermost regions along the external borders of the EU;
  20. Stresses that future cohesion policy should take adequate consideration of and provide support to the EU regions most impacted by the consequences of the UK's exit from the European Union, in particular those that will, as a result, find themselves situated on EU (sea or land) borders;
  21. Calls on the Member States to improve the complementarity of their health services in border regions and ensure genuine cooperation in the cross-border provision of emergency services such as healthcare, policing and fire service interventions, in order to ensure that patients' rights are respected, as provided for in the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive, as well as increasing the availability and quality of services; calls on the Member States, regions and municipalities to conclude bilateral or multilateral framework agreements on cross-border healthcare cooperation and, in this context, draws attention to so-called ZOAST areas (Zones Organisées d'Accès aux Soins Transfrontaliers) where residents of border territories can receive healthcare on both sides of the border in designated healthcare institutions without any administrative or financial barriers and which have become benchmarks for cross-border healthcare cooperation across Europe;
  22. Calls on the Commission to explore the possibilities of enhancing cooperation and overcoming barriers to regional development at the external borders with neighbouring regions, in particular, with regions of those countries preparing for EU accession;
  23. Emphasises the importance of small-scale and cross-border projects in bringing people together and in that way generating new potential for local development;
  24. Underlines the importance of learning from and further using the potential of success stories from some border regions;
  25. Underlines the importance of sport as a tool for facilitating the integration of communities living in border regions and calls on the Member States and the European Commission to allocate appropriate economic resources to territorial cooperation

programmes to finance local sport infrastructure;

### ***Exploiting EU tools for better coherence***

26. Underlines the very important and positive role of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes, and in particular cross-border cooperation programmes, in the economic and social development and cohesion of border regions including maritime and external border regions; welcomes the fact that in the Commission's MFF proposal for 2021-2027, ETC is preserved as an important objective, with a more distinct role within cohesion policy post-2020, calls for a significantly increased budget, particularly for the cross-border component; underlines the perceptible European added value of ETC and calls on the Council to adopt the appropriations proposed in this regard; underlines at the same time the need to simplify the programmes, ensure better coherence of ETC with the overall goals of the EU and give the programmes the flexibility to better address local and regional challenges, reducing the administrative burdens for beneficiaries and facilitating more investment in sustainable infrastructure projects through cross-border cooperation programmes; calls on authorities in cross-border regions to make more intensive use of the support provided through these programmes;
27. Calls on the Commission to regularly deliver a report to the European Parliament on a list of obstacles that have been removed in the field of cross-border cooperation; encourages the Commission to enhance the use of existing innovative tools which contribute to the ongoing modernisation and deepening of cross-border cooperation, such as Border Focal Point, reinforced SOLVIT, as well as the Single Digital Gateway, aimed at organising expertise and advice on cross-border regional aspects, and to further develop new ones; calls on the Commission and Member States to make public administrations digital by default insofar as possible, to ensure end-to-end digital public services for citizens and businesses in border regions;
28. Underlines the importance of the Commission collecting information on cross-border interaction for a better and more informed decision-making process in cooperation with the Member States, regions and municipalities, and of supporting and financing pilot projects, programmes, studies, analysis and territorial research;
29. Calls for better use to be made of the potential of the EU macro-regional strategies in addressing challenges related to the border regions;
30. Believes that cohesion policy should be more geared towards investment in people as border regions' economies can be boosted by an effective mix of investments in innovation, human capital, good governance and institutional capacity;
31. Regrets that the potential of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation is not being fully exploited, which could be due partly to regional and local authorities' reservations, and partly to their fear of a transfer of competences and an ongoing lack of awareness of their respective competences; calls for any other possible causes of this situation to be swiftly identified and addressed; calls on the Commission to propose measures to overcome the obstacles to the effective application of this instrument; recalls that the primary role of the Commission in ETC programmes should be to facilitate cooperation between Member States;

32. Urges consideration to be given to the experiences of the numerous Euroregions that exist and are operating across internal and external border regions of the EU in order to further the opportunities for economic and social development and the quality of life of citizens living in border regions; calls for assessment of the work of Euroregions in the area of regional cooperation and their relationship to the initiatives and work of EU border regions, in order to coordinate and optimise the results of their work in this area;
33. Underlines that the Territorial Impact Assessment contributes to a better understanding of the spatial impact of policies; calls on the Commission to consider giving Territorial Impact Assessment a stronger role when EU legislative initiatives are proposed;
34. Strongly believes that a European cross-border convention (ECBC), which would allow, in the case of a territorially circumscribed cross-border infrastructure or service (e.g. a hospital or tramline), the application of the national normative framework and/or the standards of just one of the two or several countries concerned, would further reduce cross-border obstacles; welcomes in this context the recently published proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context (COM(2018)0373);
35. Awaits the prospective proposal for a regulation from the Commission on a cross-border cooperation management tool, in order to assess its usefulness for the regions in question;
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36. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, Council, national and regional parliaments of the Member States, the CoR and the EESC.

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Internal border regions of the European Union represent as much as 40% of its territory and are home to 150 million of Europeans. They also generate a quarter of Europe's GDP. Despite these facts, the border regions are facing persistent obstacles, which hamper their growth and development and, as a result, they perform worse economically than regions situated deeper within the Member States.

In order to find an explanation for this situation, as well as to propose solutions, the European Commission has undertaken the Cross-Border Review 2015-2017, which consisted of a study of legal and administrative barriers, extensive on-line public consultations and a series of workshops with stakeholders. The effect of this review is the Communication on Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions, which points to the ten the most frequent obstacles for the development of the border regions and proposes solutions to solve these problems.

The rapporteur welcomes the document presented by the Commission as a valuable and thorough analysis of the existing obstacles, and he appreciates the solutions proposed. He strongly believes that the most powerful tool to overcome the burdens for the development of border regions is the mutual trust and political will of all the authorities responsible. Local and regional authorities should therefore be granted more trust from the Commission and national governments. Their efficient cooperation on the border regions requires more flexibility and undertaking special arrangements as the legal systems of the Member States involved are often not complementary. This is true even in regards to the EU law, as the transposition of the directives can vary in different Member States. Therefore, he believes the territorial impact assessment should be made obligatory for all the new EU legislation.

The rapporteur underlines, that pressing issues such as access to public services, legal uncertainty for border workers and employees or insufficient transport network require more focused and intensive measures undertaken primary at member state, but also at the EU level. Workers need to have their qualifications recognised and they must be well informed about their social security coverage. The barriers for cross-border businesses must also be removed, as currently the companies operating across the borders spend approximately 60% more than the ones operating domestically. The cooperation between the internal border regions and their development and cohesion could be further increased by reducing the complexity of the administrative procedures that the border citizens and businesses have to face in their everyday life. It is therefore vital to increase the efforts for further simplification.

The rapporteur highly values the positive impact of European Territorial Cooperation programmes in removing the barriers at the borders, however he sees that there is still a significant area for improvement. Therefore, he strongly supports preserving ETC and increasing its budget in the next programming period. At the same time, he points out that funding and investments are important, but not sufficient for the improvement of the situation, and therefore he finds that the instruments such as European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation should be enhanced. Moreover, the development of new instruments, such as new cross-border cooperation management tool, should be considered.

The rapporteur welcomes the creation of the Border Focal Point within the Commission,

which will offer the advice to national and regional authorities to tackle legal and administrative border obstacles. He underlines an important role of the Commission in reducing cross-border obstacles by proposing legislation or funding mechanisms or by supporting Member States in creating better arrangements and deepening their cooperation to break down the barriers in the border regions.

The rapporteur notes, that the Communication of the Commission refers only to the EU internal border regions. The rapporteur supports the logic of the Commission to focus only on these regions, as they are facing common challenges. However, he finds it vital to prepare a similar review for the external and maritime border regions in order to come up with the efficient solutions for the challenges and obstacles these regions are facing.

25.6.2018

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON CULTURE AND EDUCATION**

for the Committee on Regional Development

on boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions  
(2018/2054(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Theodoros Zagorakis

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Recognises the challenges faced by border regions and stresses that socio-economic disparities, including cultural and language differences, between different border regions can hinder integration, restrict interaction and scale down opportunities for people and businesses on both sides of the border;
2. Emphasises that the EU has contributed positively to the development of border regions and that future funding programmes should continue in the most effective and efficient manner, focusing on areas of particular high European added value and ensuring that solving border difficulties is at the heart of cross-border cooperation programmes;
3. Stipulates that cohesion policy should continue to support vulnerable and marginalised people, addressing growing inequalities and building solidarity through investments in education, training and culture, by paying particular attention to cross-border cooperation programmes focused on the existing cultural, territorial and administrative obstacles and future challenges in those regions;
4. Emphasises that EU borders comprise both land and maritime borders that must be taken into account; encourages the Commission, therefore, to look at the challenges faced by maritime border regions in order to allow a holistic analysis of the obstacles faced by all border regions, as well as of potential cooperation and growth for all those regions;

5. Highlights the importance of cross-border cooperation programmes, including macro-regional and interregional programmes in funding educational, cultural, creative, sporting, artistic and other activities whose European added value brings citizens closer together, creates cross-border synergies, fosters mutual trust and understanding, and helps address different forms of prejudice and stereotypes in border regions; stresses, in this regard, the potential of the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), in line with the Smart Specialisation Strategies and the large number of INTERREG projects devoted to culture and heritage, which proves that there is a strong desire among border regions to invest in joint traditional cultural assets as well as in developing modern creative projects, creative industries and heritage projects; reiterates its view that EU financial support is crucial for these initiatives and should therefore be further strengthened in the next MFF, in particular through support from the ESIF funds; calls on the Commission to identify and foster synergies between local priorities and existing EU strategies and objectives, and to develop the full potential of border regions;
6. Points out the complexities of the current framework for cross-border cooperation programmes, as well as the structural difficulties and administrative burdens that potential beneficiaries encounter during the preparation of such projects; welcomes, in this regard, the simplification measures put forward for the post-2020 period, and considers them as an important step in terms of simplifying and improving the implementation and accessibility of cross-border cooperation programmes;
7. Recalls the importance of culture and cultural heritage in relation to the economic prosperity of cities and regions and, therefore, calls on the Member States to adopt all necessary measures to effectively safeguard and promote their tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and to use in this regard all the available tools of cohesion policy;
8. Calls for a new information strategy on cross-border and regional cooperation in order to get closer to the inhabitants of border regions, increase their awareness of the opportunities that the EU cross-border programmes bring, and thus contribute to changing attitudes in the direction of greater open-mindedness on regional and cross-border matters;
9. Emphasises the importance of sport for the economic and social development of cross-border regions, as demonstrated by the numerous territorial cooperation projects that have used sport as a tool for social and cultural integration;
10. Encourages young people to act, participate and be involved in all aspects of developing regional and cross-border society; supports cross-border ideas and activities in the field of youth, such as creating platforms for the exchange of ideas and good practice, raising awareness and exchanging information on cross-border cooperation, and spreading information through social and other media in order to improve participation and opportunities for young people in cross-border projects;
11. Stresses the lack of information about EU-funded opportunities on cross-border cooperation programmes in the EU border regions; calls on the Member States to improve the dissemination of information on cross-border issues, e.g. by creating ‘one-stop shops’;
12. Stresses the need for a more substantial financial commitment to the promotion of cross-border sports activities and in particular for the construction of small-scale

infrastructures for grassroots sports;

13. Calls on the Commission to consider culture and education as a horizontal priority for the next generation of programmes in the framework of cohesion policy;
14. Strongly supports the role of cross-border projects and programmes in improving youth education, employability, inclusion and participation of young people in society by tackling social problems that young people face in border regions, such as unemployment and radicalisation; calls for more systematic cooperation across border regions with a view to improving opportunities for young people in employment, education, training, culture, sport and other social policy areas;
15. Underlines the fact that language barriers are still an important obstacle to cross-border cooperation, especially in border areas without a long-standing tradition of cooperation; notes that language is an important factor enhancing trust and helping to mitigate socio-cultural difficulties; believes that a more targeted use of ESI funds, as well as increased funding for language technologies, can improve communication and thus support the systematic promotion of multilingualism and European language diversity in education and training in border regions, from early childhood education onwards, also through the organisation of sporting and cultural events;
16. Believes that cross-border cooperation between education and training institutions should be reinforced by facilitating cross-border school visits and extracurricular activities for children from a very young age in order to provide children with a unique opportunity going beyond the classroom, to have direct contact with and first-hand experience of the diversity of cultures, languages and history of their neighbours;
17. Notes that some border areas share a common language that is not an official EU language; believes that increased levels of funding for teaching and promoting lesser-used cross-border languages would strengthen cooperation, increase mobility across borders and enrich the cultural diversity and heritage of those areas;
18. Reiterates that bringing together key players from the research community, business, higher education, public authorities and civil society is essential; calls on the Member States to facilitate cross-border partnerships between education and training institutions and between them and enterprises in border regions in order to promote the mobility of students, teachers, trainers and administrative staff, as well as of doctoral candidates and researchers, including Vocational Education and Training (VET); underlines that the use of multilingualism within such cross-border partnerships can help to prepare graduates to enter the employment market on both sides of the border; is of the opinion that importance should also be given to Regional Minority Languages (RMLs), which are always at risk of endangerment if strong linguistic policies are not put in place; believes that European-level funding should continue for the preservation and support of regional minority languages;
19. Calls on the Commission to facilitate cross-border initiatives and different types of exchanges and intercultural and educational activities aimed at increasing citizens' awareness of legislative and administrative requirements in border regions, as well as improving cooperation between local administrations and cultural and educational institutions;

20. Urges the Member States to facilitate and encourage the mutual recognition and better understanding of certificates, diplomas and vocational and professional qualifications between neighbouring regions; encourages, therefore, the inclusion of specific skills in the curriculum with the objective of increasing cross-border employment opportunities, including validation and recognition of skills;
21. Encourages the pooling of joint public services and efforts in neighbouring border regions with a view to developing a series of targeted interventions to support low-skilled or low-qualified adults in border regions and to help them improve their literacy, numeracy and digital skills by acquiring a broader set of competences and higher qualifications;
22. Encourages cross-border cooperation and programmes for dual vocational training among different border regions; is of the opinion that better cross-border cooperation and investment in skills in border regions will help to close the existing skills gap, reduce poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, and tackle skill shortages and the brain drain in those peripheral areas;
23. Believes that multiculturalism is particularly relevant for border regions; strongly encourages cross-border cultural cooperation within and between border regions by enhancing collaboration between creative people and cultural actors, such as artists and representatives of cultural organisations, administrations and networks in specific cross-border and trans-European projects;
24. Reiterates that the mobility of artists and culture professionals has become invaluable in the promotion of Europe's cultural and social progress and the development of the regional, national and European cultural heritage; is of the opinion that a strong cross-border cooperation in the area of cultural and creative industries (CCIs), focusing especially on micro-enterprises and SMEs (also via clustering of enterprises), NGOs and small associations, can help create socio-economic value, sustainable jobs and growth, in particular for young people, as well as fostering cultural and linguistic diversity and innovation; is also of the opinion that this cooperation will help to build bridges between citizens, increase mutual understanding, address common challenges, reinforce cultural diplomacy and forge a European identity, through joint initiatives on projects related to tangible and intangible cultural heritage and heritage-related projects for instance by means of joint childcare facilities, accessible multilingual education, or partnerships between educational institutions; stresses the importance of CCIs in promoting and preserving cultural diversity, strengthening social cohesion, playing a key role in reindustrialising Europe, and triggering innovation spillovers in many other sectors;
25. Believes that the development of cross-border cultural cooperation makes an essential contribution to the sustainable development of cross-border territories, impacting the economy, social cohesion and the environment; calls on the Commission, together with Member States, to devise a common strategic approach for development and support of Cultural and Creative Industries, bridging CCIs with society and the economy in order to promote smart, sustainable growth in EU border regions;
26. Highlights the excessive barriers existing for cultural and creative industries as regards accessing financing, owing to their nature and size (CCIs are predominantly micro-

businesses and SMEs), as well as the difficulties arising due to the often poorer economic performance of some border regions; reiterates its view that it is of utmost importance to develop cultural, creative and entrepreneurial skills in order to overcome these structural deficiencies;

27. Underlines that regions have a proven capacity to develop cross-border cooperation in the CCI sector, and notes the positive effects of smart specialisation; calls on the Commission and the Member States to maintain and strengthen the existing policies in this field, and to make effective use of the funding available under EU programmes and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs);
28. Believes that cohesion policy can contribute positively to the creation of new ideas and possibilities for cooperation between museums, orchestras and cross-border radio and TV projects in border regions by addressing the legal and financial difficulties which artists have with their common cross-border projects;
29. Strongly supports cross-border cultural projects and cooperation between European Capitals of Culture and border regions throughout Europe, in order to establish a chain of cultural ‘welding points’ and generate a new dimension of European cultural networks where new practices of cultural diversity are being developed and integrated in the realisation of concrete European projects;
30. Regrets that cultural and leisure activities often fail to attract people from different border regions in neighbouring countries, despite the fact that people living in those areas share similar interests and are in close proximity to one another; supports the EU regional portals created in several border regions to provide people with access to information about cultural and leisure activities, and encourages the promotion of similar portals across all border regions;
31. Strongly believes that border regions, thanks to the existence of long-established contacts between cultural institutions, CCIs and stakeholders across borders, can create favourable conditions for artistic and cultural mobility, and can therefore be vital for thematic tourism and help promote Europe as a competitive and sustainable destination, increasing Europe’s attractiveness internationally, and can also actively revitalise the process of European integration by promoting contacts between Europe’s citizens and stimulating a common sense of belonging; calls on the Commission to integrate a cultural dimension into the cross-border development initiatives, for both historic heritage assets and contemporary creativity; calls, therefore, on the Member States to increase their efforts and investments in order to develop a sustainable long-term cultural tourism policy;
32. Recalls that education and cultural exchanges across borders promote intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, particularly in post-conflict border regions; highlights in this context the risks posed by Brexit for people-to-people exchanges and mobility of students, learners, artists and cultural operators between the border regions of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland;
33. Encourages various measures aimed at combating all forms of discrimination in border regions and at breaking down barriers for vulnerable people in finding employment and becoming integrated into society; supports, in this regard, the promotion and

development of social enterprises in border regions as a source of job creation, in particular for vulnerable groups such as young unemployed people and people with disabilities;

34. Strongly believes that media and communications have the potential to strengthen EU border regions through the creative sector and that digital platforms have the ability to promote inclusion and protect the cultural diversity of these border regions; also believes that cinema and television, and also creative documentaries and other forms of digital content, are platforms which can be used to support the heritage and unique traits of EU border regions;
35. Strongly encourages Member States and regional authorities to improve the dissemination of information on cross-border cultural and educational activities and issues, and to strengthen the exchange of best practices in those areas through the creation of a designated portal and website;
36. Underlines the need to address the specific challenges related to artistic and cultural mobility, in areas such as social security, taxation (avoiding double taxation of artists and cultural professionals), provision of information on mobility opportunities (mobility grants, residency programmes, etc);
37. Underlines that sports tourism is an increasingly important sector of the European economy; calls, therefore, for the allocation of financial resources to the construction of sports infrastructures with a view to promoting tourism through sport;
38. Notes that cross-border cooperation, as a major EU policy objective, has helped mitigate the adverse effects of internal borders and can lead to improvements in cross-border achievements in education and culture;
39. Supports apprenticeships measures and multi-stakeholder platforms in border regions aimed at improving the quality, supply and image of apprenticeships and promoting border mobility among young apprentices; is of the opinion that bringing together relevant stakeholders to create cross-border opportunities for apprenticeships, traineeships or internships will enhance competition, education, skills and the labour markets in those regions, and in particular encourages creating internship opportunities in regional and local institutions involved in cross-border and international cooperation;
40. Notes the serious migration challenges that some border regions face; to that end, encourages the effective use of the funding available for EU cross-border programmes, as well as the exchange of good practices between local and regional authorities in border areas, within the framework of the integration of refugees under international protection; underlines the need for national governments to support local and regional authorities in addressing these challenges;
41. Calls on Member States and regional authorities to collaborate in the identification and removal of any legal or administrative barriers that inhibit cross-border educational or cultural activities, inter alia through the harmonisation of the relevant regulatory frameworks.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	19.6.2018
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 24 -: 0 0: 1
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Dominique Bilde, Andrea Bocskor, Silvia Costa, Angel Dzhambazki, Jill Evans, María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Petra Kammerevert, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Curzio Maltese, Rupert Matthews, Stefano Maullu, Luigi Morgano, Momchil Nekov, Michaela Šojdrová, Yana Toom, Julie Ward, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver, Krystyna Łybacka
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Marlene Mizzi, Liliana Rodrigues, Algirdas Saudargas, Remo Sernagiotto, Francis Zammit Dimech

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

24	+
ALDE	María Teresa Giménez Barbat, Yana Toom
ECR	Angel Dzhabazki, Rupert Matthews, Remo Sernagiotto
GUE/NGL	Curzio Maltese
PPE	Andrea Bocskor, Svetoslav Hristov Malinov, Stefano Maullu, Algirdas Saudargas, Michaela Šojdrová, Bogdan Brunon Wenta, Francis Zammit Dimech, Bogdan Andrzej Zdrojewski, Milan Zver
S&D	Silvia Costa, Petra Kammerevert, Krystyna Lybacka, Marlene Mizzi, Luigi Morgano, Momchil Nekov, Liliana Rodrigues, Julie Ward
VERTS/ALE	Jill Evans

0	-

1	0
ENF	Dominique Bilde

**Key to symbols:**

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

<b>Date adopted</b>	10.7.2018
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 32 -: 1 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Pascal Arimont, Franc Bogovič, Victor Boștinaru, Mercedes Bresso, Steeve Briois, Rosa D'Amato, Aleksander Gabelic, Iratxe García Pérez, Michela Giuffrida, Krzysztof Hetman, Marc Joulaud, Constanze Krehl, Sławomir Kłosowski, Louis-Joseph Manscour, Iskra Mihaylova, Andrey Novakov, Younous Omarjee, Mirosław Piotrowski, Stanislav Polčák, Terry Reintke, Liliana Rodrigues, Fernando Ruas, Monika Smolková, Maria Spyrali, Ruža Tomašić, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Monika Vana, Matthijs van Miltenburg, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Derek Vaughan, Kerstin Westphal
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Ivana Maletić, Dimitrios Papadimoulis

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

32	+
ALDE	Iskra Mihaylova, Matthijs van Miltenburg
ECR	Sławomir Kłosowski, Mirosław Piotrowski, Ruža Tomašić
EFDD	Rosa D'Amato
GUE/NGL	Younous Omarjee, Dimitrios Papadimoulis
PPE	Pascal Arimont, Franc Bogovič, Krzysztof Hetman, Marc Joulaud, Ivana Maletić, Andrey Novakov, Stanislav Polčák, Fernando Ruas, Maria Spyraki, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Lambert van Nistelrooij
S&D	Victor Boștinaru, Mercedes Bresso, Aleksander Gabelic, Iratxe García Pérez, Michela Giuffrida, Constanze Krehl, Louis-Joseph Manscour, Liliana Rodrigues, Monika Smolková, Derek Vaughan, Kerstin Westphal
VERTS/ALE	Terry Reintke, Monika Vana

1	-
ENF	Steve Briois

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention