

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

2004/0163(AVC)

22.4.2005

OPINION

of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

for the Committee on Regional Development

on the proposal for a Council regulation laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund
(COM(2004)0492 – 2004/0163(AVC))

Draftsperson: Jacek Protasiewicz

PA_Leg

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs asks the Committee on Regional Development, in order to facilitate a positive outcome of the procedure, to present an interim report on the Commission proposal to Parliament containing recommendations for modification of the proposal, included in this opinion.

New challenges for the Union

On 10 February 2004 the European Commission presented its Communication on the new financial framework for the period after 2007. On 18 February 2004, the Third Cohesion Report was approved. Draft regulations to govern the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund for the period 2007-2013 were published by the European Commission on 14 July 2004.

In the context of an enlarged European Union which has set itself the objective of becoming the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, these draft regulations have the potential to influence the effectiveness of programmes and strategies which Member States follow in pursuit of this objective

The enlarged Union will have to address three major challenges:

- 1) a significant widening of disparities across the enlarged Union; disparities between the richest and poorest regions of the Union have doubled, while the EU average per capita income decreased by 12.5%;
- 2) an acceleration of economic and social restructuring, both as a result of globalisation and of the development of the knowledge-based economy and society;
- 3) the rapid ageing of the Union's population; the contraction in the labour force will have important implications in terms of employment and growth potential.

The Union needs to tackle the above mentioned challenges. To this end, the Lisbon agenda for sustainable development, full employment, greater productivity, strengthened social cohesion and environmental protection, provides the policy framework.

Remarks on the Framework Regulation on the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (hereinafter: the Committee) has discussed the draft framework regulation on the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, with a particular focus on the European Social Fund and other matters related to its competences.

The Committee welcomes the strengthened strategic approach to cohesion policy in the draft Regulation and acknowledges the stated desire of the European Commission to simplify the procedures concerning the Funds. However, our Committee is concerned that these new procedures may increase bureaucracy and that there may be a risk of duplication as far as the draft ESF implementing regulation is concerned.

The Committee considers that more simplification should be achieved. The draft framework regulation should not be too prescriptive or unnecessarily detailed; thus there should be an appropriate balance between the framework regulation and the implementing regulations. In particular, the framework regulation should take full account of the nature and size of ESF activities. The Committee stresses that different rules may be appropriate for ESF operations compared with ERDF operations.

The Committee considers that the ESF should ensure support to Member States policies aiming to achieve full employment, improve productivity and quality of work and promote social inclusion and the reduction of regional employment disparities and thereby the European Social Model.

The Committee recalls the role that the ESF plays in promoting social inclusion by helping to integrate disadvantaged people into the labour market. Our Committee believes that social inclusion activities funded by the ESF improve employment opportunities.

Finally, concerning the coordinating committee referred to in Article 104 of the draft framework regulation, the Committee requests the European Commission to ensure appropriate coordination with the ESF Committee.

CONCLUSIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following proposals in its motion for a resolution:

1. Takes the view that this proposal has been drafted as part of the cohesion legislative package. The package consists of a Regulation on the European Social Fund, a Regulation on the Cohesion Fund and a Regulation on the European Regional Development Fund. It defines the objectives to which the Structural Funds are to contribute, the criteria for Member States and regions to be eligible under those Funds, the financial resources available and the criteria for their allocation;
2. Considers in the light of the above mentioned and of the direct relevance of this framework Regulation for the ESF, that the procedure chosen by the Commission (AVC) unduly limits the Parliament's role;
3. Draws particular attention to the fact that all EU policies must contribute to the objective of economic and social cohesion and that international trade policy is also committed to this objective and must not be regarded as an exception; calls for trade policy to be designed to avoid producing shock effects on regions and draws particular attention to the fact that the relocation of undertakings or production units represents a serious danger for regional development (COM(2004) 0492, recital 48);
4. Calls for efforts, both in rural and urban areas, to build on the success achieved, particularly as regards employment, by promoting cultural development, improving the quality of the physical and cultural environment and the qualitative and cultural aspects of the conditions in which people live, and developing tourism, and calls for the importance of these factors in enhancing the attractive power of regions to continue to be taken into account (Article 3(3));
5. Rejects any weakening of the partnership principle and calls for a list of the relevant bodies, which should also include any recognised non-governmental organisations which have a representative role in the field of non-discrimination pursuant to Article 13 of the EC Treaty; calls, in addition, for the partners to be fully informed, for their opinion to form part of the evaluation document and for training measures to be made available to them under technical assistance in good time to enable them to carry out their tasks (Articles 10, 43 and 44);
6. Calls on the Commission to fully incorporate in Article 14 Parliament's resolution of 3 July 2003 on gender budgeting¹, and in particular points 8, 14 and 20 thereof;
7. Stresses that the European Structural Funds, the Cohesion Fund and also the funds allocated to rural development must be deployed in a manner that is consistent with

¹ OJ C 74E, 24.3.2004, p. 746.

achieving the objectives of the national strategic reference framework, and consequently that the objectives of rural development must be incorporated into that reference framework; calls for the national reference framework to incorporate the results of forums on independent regional development involving, or organised by, local employment pacts, and calls for them to be provided with funds under the technical assistance budget before the reference framework is drawn up (Articles 21, 43 and 44);

8. Calls for the deployment of all employment funding to be substantiated on the basis of the national reform plans or regional sub-plans agreed at the European Council of 22 and 23 March 2005 in Brussels;
9. Regards the requirement for annual examination as excessively bureaucratic and, in view of the decisions taken at the European Council of 22 and 23 March 2005 in Brussels, outdated, and therefore calls for reports to be submitted every three years;
10. Calls for undertakings that have received funding, depending on the amount, to be prohibited for at least 15 years from relocating or partially relocating to another development region unless they pay back the contribution received (Article 55);
11. Calls for it also to be possible for the requisite national cofinancing for ESF projects to be substantiated on the basis of a flat-rate payment of up to 25% of co-financing at programme level, provided that sum is calculated on the basis of recognised and on-the-record procedures such as random sampling (Articles 66 and 67);
12. Calls for the decisive rejection of any attempts to adjust the proposed financial framework with regard to either the total amount of resources or how they are distributed between the various objectives and components and considers, regardless of any such attempts, that the Commission's proposals concerning the approximate scale of funds to be allocated to the various objectives strike a fair balance between competing interests;
13. Believes that the Parliament should not be made to take a decision on such an important legislative proposal by means of a single vote and with no possibility to table amendments. Therefore, our committee asks the committee responsible to decide to apply article 75(3) of the European Parliament Rules of Procedure and in order to facilitate a positive outcome of the procedure includes its recommendations for modification in the Annex (Recitals 2, 3, 12, 13, 15, 26, 27, 41 and Articles 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 14, 17, 23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 33, 36, 43, 44, 45 and 51).

ANNEX
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MODIFICATION

Text proposed by the Commission ¹	Recommendations by Parliament
Recommendation 1 Recital 2	
(2) Cohesion policy should contribute to increasing growth, competitiveness <i>and</i> employment by incorporating the Community's priorities for sustainable development as defined at the European Councils in Lisbon and Göteborg.	(2) Cohesion policy should contribute to increasing growth, competitiveness, social cohesion , employment and social inclusion by incorporating the Community's priorities for sustainable development and combating exclusion as defined at the European Councils in Lisbon, <i>Nice</i> and Göteborg.
<i>Justification</i>	
<i>Cohesion policy should also be geared towards social inclusion, which is recognised as one of the Union's overarching objectives. When setting out the principles which form the framework for the proposal, it is essential to mention all elements of the third pillar system (competitiveness, social cohesion and sustainable development).</i>	
Recommendation 2 Recital 3	
(3) Economic, social and territorial disparities at both regional and national level have increased in the enlarged Community. Competitiveness <i>and</i> employment should therefore be increased throughout the Community.	(3) Economic, social and territorial disparities at both regional and national level have increased in the enlarged Community. Competitiveness, employment and social inclusion should therefore be increased throughout the Community.
<i>Justification</i>	
<i>Cohesion policy should also be geared towards social inclusion, which is recognised as one of the Union's overarching objectives.</i>	
Recommendation 3 Recital 12	
(12) The northern areas of the Union,	(12) The northern areas of the Union,

¹ OJ C ... /Not yet published in OJ.

which are very thinly populated, require appropriate financial treatment to offset the effects of that handicap.

which are very thinly populated, **and the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla with a high population density and high rates of unemployment** require appropriate financial treatment to offset the effects of that handicap.

Recommendation 4
Recital 13

(13) In view of the importance of the urban dimension and the contribution of towns and cities, **particularly medium-sized ones**, to regional development, greater account should be taken of them by developing their role in programming to promote urban **regeneration**.

(13) In view of the importance of the urban dimension and the contribution of **small, medium-sized and large** towns and cities to regional development, greater account should be taken of them by developing their role in programming to promote **sustainable urban development, which includes enhancing competitiveness, employment and social inclusion**.

Justification

The contribution made by urban areas to growth, innovation and social and economic cohesion should be taken into account; in order to do so, sustainable urban development measures should be developed, and this includes urban regeneration.

Recommendation 5
Recital 15

(15) Action for areas with a natural handicap, i.e. certain islands, mountainous areas **and** areas with a low density of population, should be strengthened to cope with their particular development difficulties, as well as for certain border areas of the Community following its enlargement.

(15) Action for areas with a natural handicap, i.e. certain islands, mountainous areas, areas with a low density of population, **and the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla** should be strengthened to cope with their particular development difficulties, as well as for certain border areas of the Community following its enlargement.

Recommendation 6
Recital 26

(26) In order to ensure a genuine economic impact, contributions from the Structural Funds may not replace public expenditure by the Member States under the terms of this Regulation. **Verification, through**

(26) In order to ensure a genuine economic impact, contributions from the Structural Funds may not replace public expenditure by the Member States under the terms of this Regulation.

partnership, of the principle of additionality should concentrate on the regions under the “Convergence” objective because of the extent of the financial resources allocated to them and may result in a financial correction if additionality is not respected.

Justification

Verification of the principle of additionality should apply to regions benefiting from the Funds under all three of the objectives foreseen by the Regulation and not only under the “Convergence” objective.

Recommendation 7
Recital 27

(27) In the context of its effort in favour of economic and social cohesion, the Community promotes the goal of eliminating inequalities and promoting equality between women and men as enshrined in Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty.

(27) In the context of its effort in favour of economic and social cohesion, the Community promotes the goal of eliminating inequalities and promoting equality between women and men as enshrined in Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty, ***and between persons with and without disabilities.***

Recommendation 8
Recital 41

(41) The Member States, regions and managing authorities should organise, within the operational programmes co-financed by the ERDF under the “Convergence” and the “Regional competitiveness and employment” objectives, sub-delegation to the urban authorities for the priorities concerning the ***regeneration of towns and cities.***

(41) The Member States, regions and managing authorities should organise, within the operational programmes co-financed by the ERDF under the “Convergence” and the “Regional competitiveness and employment” objectives, sub-delegation to the urban authorities for the priorities concerning the ***sustainable development of urban areas.***

Justification

The contribution made by urban areas to growth, innovation and social and economic cohesion should be taken into account; in order to do so, sustainable urban development measures should be developed, and this includes urban regeneration.

Recommendation 9
Article 1, paragraph 3

This Regulation defines the context for cohesion policy, including the method for fixing the Community's strategic guidelines for cohesion policy, the national strategic reference framework and the **annual** examination at Community level.

This Regulation defines the context for cohesion policy, including the method for fixing the Community's strategic guidelines for cohesion policy, the national strategic reference framework and the **triennial** examination at Community level.

Justification

Annual examination would entail enormous administrative expenses both on the part of Member States as well as the Commission.

Recommendation 10
Article 2, point 6 a (new)

6a) 'Accessible': guarantees full and equal access for all people, including people with disabilities; this definition is applicable to all areas covered by the scope of this Regulation.

Justification

The Structural Funds are an important tool in promoting and creating an accessible environment for disabled persons in relation to goods and services including in the field of information communication technologies, transport and the built environment. It is very important that Structural Funds do not lead to the creation of further access barriers for disabled people. It is important to provide an explicit definition of the term "accessible" in relation to the needs of disabled persons in order that the term is fully understood to mean the removal of access barriers also faced by disabled persons in society.

Recommendation 11
Article 3, paragraph 2, point (b)

b) the "Regional competitiveness and employment" objective shall, outside the least-developed regions, be aimed at strengthening regions' competitiveness and attractiveness as well as employment by anticipating economic and social changes, including those linked to the opening of trade, through innovation and the promotion

b) the "Regional competitiveness and employment" objective shall, outside the least-developed regions, be aimed at strengthening regions' competitiveness and attractiveness as well as employment by anticipating economic and social changes, including those linked to the opening of trade, through innovation and the promotion

of the knowledge society, entrepreneurship, the protection and improvement of the environment, and the improvement of accessibility, the adaptability of workers and businesses as well as the development of inclusive job markets.

of the knowledge society, entrepreneurship, ***stimulating creativity, recovery, the development and modernisation of small enterprises and micro-enterprises, including traditional activities***, the protection and improvement of the environment, and the improvement of accessibility, the adaptability of workers and businesses ***and their organisations***, as well as the development of inclusive job markets,

Justification

It is important to consider the essential role of small businesses and micro-enterprises and craft industries in job creation. In addition to approaches targeting specific sections of the public, it is necessary to create a horizontal measure aimed at life-long training for managers and employees in small and micro-enterprises, as well as those responsible for their intermediary organisations and training.

Recommendation 12 Article 3, paragraph 3

3. Under the three objectives, assistance from the Funds shall, according to their nature, take into account on the one hand specific economic and social features, and on the other hand specific territorial features. The assistance shall, in an appropriate manner, support urban ***regeneration*** particularly as part of regional development and the renewal of rural areas and of areas dependent on fisheries through economic diversification. The assistance shall also support areas affected by geographical or natural handicaps which aggravate the problems of development, particularly in the outermost regions (Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Reunion, the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands) as well as the northern areas with very low population density, certain islands and island Member States, ***and*** mountain areas.

3. Under the three objectives, assistance from the Funds shall, according to their nature, take into account on the one hand specific economic and social features, and on the other hand specific territorial features. The assistance shall, in an appropriate manner, support ***sustainable*** urban ***development*** particularly as part of regional development and the renewal of rural areas and of areas dependent on fisheries through economic diversification. The assistance shall also support areas affected by geographical or natural handicaps which aggravate the problems of development, particularly in the outermost regions (Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Reunion, the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands) as well as the northern areas with very low population density, certain islands and island Member States, mountain areas ***and the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla with a high population density.***

Recommendation 13 Article 5, paragraph 4

4. Notwithstanding paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article, and Article 6, the outermost regions (Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Reunion, the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands) shall benefit from specific funding from the ERDF to facilitate their integration into the internal market and to compensate for their specific constraints.

4. Notwithstanding paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article, and Article 6, the outermost regions (Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Reunion, the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands) **and the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla** shall benefit from specific funding from the ERDF to facilitate their integration into the internal market and to compensate for their specific constraints.

Recommendation 14
Article 10, paragraph 1, subparagraph 2

Each Member State shall designate the most representative partners at national, regional and local level and in the economic and social or other spheres, hereinafter “partners”. The Member State shall ensure broad and effective involvement of all the appropriate bodies, in accordance with national rules and practices taking account of the need to promote equality between men and women and sustainable development through the integration of environmental protection and improvement requirements.

Each Member State shall designate the most representative partners at national, regional and local level and in the economic and social or other spheres, hereinafter “partners”. The Member State shall ensure broad and effective involvement of all the appropriate bodies, in accordance with national rules and practices taking account of the need to promote **social inclusion, equality between men and women, as well as between persons with and without disabilities** and sustainable development through the integration of environmental protection and improvement requirements.

Recommendation 15
Article 14, Title

Equality between men and women

Equality between men and women **and non-discrimination against, and accessibility for, persons with disabilities**

Recommendation 16
Article 14

The Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of gender perspective is promoted during the various stages of implementing the Funds.

The Member States and the Commission shall ensure that equality between men and women and the integration of gender perspective is promoted during the various stages of implementing the Funds. **They**

shall also ensure that cohesion policy respects the principles of non-discrimination.

Justification

Article 13 of the Treaty points out that appropriate action may be taken to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Recommendation 17
Article 14, paragraph 1a (new)

The Member States and the Commission shall ensure non-discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, and that, in particular, accessibility for persons with disabilities is a condition of benefiting from the Funds and is monitored during the various stages of implementation of the Funds.

Justification

Structural Funds are an essential tool for reducing and alleviating social exclusion on any grounds and for creating a same level playing field between people with or without disabilities by combating discrimination in all areas of life, in particular by promoting and creating an accessible physical environment for people with disabilities in relation to information communication technologies, transport and the built environment. It is very important that Structural Funds do not lead to the further discrimination and creation of further access barriers for people with disabilities which will perpetuate the social exclusion of 40 million people with disabilities in the European Union and other persons with reduced mobility, and have negative implications for society in general.

Recommendation 18
Article 17, paragraph 1, point (b)

b) 16.56% for the transitional and specific support referred to in Article 6(2), using eligible population, regional prosperity, national prosperity **and** unemployment as the criteria for calculating the indicative breakdowns by Member State.

b) 16.56% for the transitional and specific support referred to in Article 6(2), using eligible population, regional prosperity, national prosperity, unemployment **and level of education** as the criteria for calculating the indicative breakdowns by Member State.

Recommendation 19
Article 23, paragraph 2

For each of the objectives of the Funds, those guidelines shall in particular give effect to the priorities of the Community with a view to promote balanced, harmonious and sustainable development.

For each of the objectives of the Funds, those guidelines shall in particular give effect to the priorities of the Community with a view to promote balanced, harmonious and sustainable development, ***equality between women and men and social inclusion.***

Justification

The strategic guidelines should also include the promotion of sexual equality and social inclusion.

Recommendation 20
Article 25, paragraph 3, point (a)

a) the thematic and territorial priorities, including for urban ***regeneration*** and the diversification of rural economies and of areas dependent on fisheries;

a) the thematic and territorial priorities, including for ***sustainable*** urban development and the diversification of rural economies and of areas dependent on fisheries;

Justification

The contribution made by urban areas to growth, innovation and social and economic cohesion should be taken into account; in order to do so, sustainable urban development measures should be developed, and this includes urban regeneration.

Recommendation 21
Article 25, paragraph 3, point (c)

c) for the “Regional competitiveness and employment” objective only, the list of regions chosen for regional competitiveness as referred to in the second subparagraph of Article 6(1).

c) for the “Regional competitiveness and employment” objective only, the list of regions ***and other areas*** chosen for regional competitiveness as referred to in the second subparagraph of Article 6(1).

Justification

As indicated in Article 34 paragraph 2 of the Regulation, a Member State may propose operational programmes under the “Regional competitiveness and employment” objective at other territorial levels, including urban areas.

Recommendation 22
Article 27, paragraph 1, subparagraph 1

1. For the first time in **2008** and at the latest by 1 October **each year**, each Member State shall present to the Commission a report on the progress in implementing its strategy and achieving its goals, taking particular account of the indicators set, and their contribution towards implementing the Community strategic guidelines on cohesion, as well as of available evaluations.

1. For the first time in **2010** and at the latest by 1 October **every three years thereafter**, each Member State shall present to the Commission a report on the progress in implementing its strategy and achieving its goals, taking particular account of the indicators set, and their contribution towards implementing the Community strategic guidelines on cohesion, as well as of available evaluations.

Justification

See recommendation 9.

Recommendation 23
Article 27, paragraph 1, subparagraph 2

The report shall refer to the national action plan on employment.

The report shall refer to the national action plan on employment **and national action plans on social inclusion.**

Justification

It is also important to include a reference to the national action plans on social inclusion.

Recommendation 24
Article 29, title

Annual examination

Examination

Justification

See recommendation 9.

Recommendation 25
Article 30, paragraph 1, point (a a) (new)

(aa) The report shall be based on examination and assessment by the Commission of the Member States' reports as referred to in Article 27 and of any other

available information.

Justification

See recommendation 9.

Recommendation 26
Article 33, paragraph 2

2. Without prejudice to the derogations laid down in the specific regulations of the Funds, the ERDF and the ESF may finance, in a complementary manner and subject to a limit of **5%** of each priority of an operational programme, measures falling within the scope of assistance from the other Fund, provided that they are necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the operation and are directly linked to it.

2. Without prejudice to the derogations laid down in the specific regulations of the Funds, the ERDF and the ESF may finance, in a complementary manner and subject to a limit of **10%** of each priority of an operational programme, measures falling within the scope of assistance from the other Fund, provided that they are necessary for the satisfactory implementation of the operation and are directly linked to it.

Justification

Experience seems to show that for some proposals the percentage of 5% may be considered too small.

Recommendation 27
Article 36, paragraph 3, subparagraph 2, point (b a) (new)

ba) information on the mainstreaming of the existing principles of the EQUAL programme.

Justification

Care must be taken to ensure that the existing EQUAL programme is mainstreamed into the new programmes.

Recommendation 28
Article 36, paragraph 3, subparagraph 3, point (b)

b) the leverage effect on the key priorities and goals of the European Employment Strategy and on the goals of the Community in the sphere of social inclusion.

b) the leverage effect on the key priorities and goals of the European Employment Strategy and on the goals of the Community in the sphere of social inclusion, ***the social integration of migrants, social cohesion, equality between men and women and the most vulnerable sectors of the population.***

Recommendation 29
Article 36, paragraph 3, subparagraph 3, point (b a) (new)

ba) information on the mainstreaming of the existing principles of the EQUAL programme.

Justification

Care must be taken to ensure that the existing equal programme is mainstreamed into the new programmes.

Recommendation 30
Article 36, paragraph 4, point (b)

b) information on the approach to the urban issue, including the list of cities chosen and the procedures for sub-delegation to urban authorities, possibly by means of a global grant;

b) measures for the sustainable urban development, including the list of cities chosen and the procedures for sub-delegation to urban authorities, possibly by means of a global grant;

Justification

In view of the wording of Article 36 points 4 (a) and (c), it is preferable to talk about measures rather than information; furthermore, the concept of information is too vague and needs clarifying.

Recommendation 31
Article 36, paragraph 4, point (d a) (new)

(da) information on the mainstreaming of the existing principles of the EQUAL programme.

Justification

Care must be taken to ensure that the existing equal programme is mainstreamed into the new programmes.

Recommendation 32
Article 43, paragraph 3 a (new)

3a. Economic, social or business organisations shall be eligible for the technical assistance measures.

Justification

Experience shows that some Member States are reluctant to use intermediate organisations that are not directly dependent on public administration, hence it is appropriate to mention them explicitly.

Recommendation 33 Article 44, paragraph 1

1. At the initiative of the Member State, for each operational programme, the Funds may finance preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities and activities to reinforce the administrative capacity for implementing the Funds within the following limits:

1. At the initiative of the Member States, for each operational programme, the Funds may finance preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities and activities to reinforce the administrative capacity, ***including that of civil society partners***, for implementing the funds within the following limits:

Justification

To ensure the involvement of social partners and enhance their capacity to allow them to play a full part at local and regional level in the delivery of programmes.

Recommendation 34 Article 44, paragraph 2 a (new)

2a. Economic, social or business organisations shall be eligible for the technical assistance measures.

Justification

Experience shows that some Member States are reluctant to use intermediate organisations that are not directly dependent on public administration, hence it is appropriate to mention them explicitly.

Recommendation 35 Article 45, paragraph 1, subparagraph 2

Evaluations shall aim to improve the quality, effectiveness and consistency of Fund assistance and the implementation of operational programmes. They shall also appraise their impact with respect to the strategic objectives of the Community, to Article 158 of the Treaty and to the specific structural problems affecting the Member States and regions concerned, while taking

Evaluations shall aim to improve the quality, effectiveness and consistency of Fund assistance and the implementation of operational programmes. They shall also appraise their impact with respect to the strategic objectives of the Community, to Article 158 of the Treaty and to the specific structural problems affecting the Member States and regions concerned, while taking

account of the needs of sustainable development and of the relevant Community legislation concerning environmental impact and strategic environmental assessment.

account of the needs of sustainable development, and of the relevant Community legislation concerning environmental impact and strategic environmental assessment, **and accessibility for disabled persons.**

Justification

Non-discrimination and social inclusion, including accessibility for disabled people, are important commitments and goals of the European Community and must be explicitly recognised in the objectives for the strategic guidelines. The phrasing is consistent with Article 10.

Recommendation 36
Article 51, paragraph 4

4. The maximum contribution from the Funds shall be increased to 85% of public expenditure for operational programmes under the “Convergence” and the “Regional competitiveness and employment” objectives in the outermost regions **and** for operational programmes of the outlying Greek islands under the “Convergence” objective.

4. The maximum contribution from the Funds shall be increased to 85% of public expenditure for operational programmes under the “Convergence” and the “Regional competitiveness and employment” objectives in the outermost regions, for operational programmes of the outlying Greek islands under the “Convergence” objective **and for operational programmes under the "Convergence" objective in the regions where per capita GDP, measured in purchasing power parities and calculated on the basis of Community figures for the last three years is less than 60% of the Community average.**

Justification

There are many regions, particularly in the new Member States, whose per capita GDP is smaller than that of the outermost regions and the outlying Greek islands. Therefore, the former should also be allowed from the Funds up to 85% of public expenditure for operational programmes.

PROCEDURE

Title	Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund
References	COM(2004)0492 - 2004/0163(AVC)
Committee responsible	REGI
Committee asked for its opinion Date announced in plenary	EMPL
Enhanced cooperation	-
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Jacek Protasiewicz 3.1.2005
Discussed in committee	16.3.2005 19.4.2004
Date amendments adopted	20.4.2005
Result of final vote	for: 29 against: 0 abstentions: 0
Members present for the final vote	Jan Andersson, Roselyne Bachelot-Narquin, Emine Bozkurt, Milan Cabrnoch, Ole Christensen, Luigi Cocilovo, Jean Louis Cottigny, Carlo Fatuzzo, Ilda Figueiredo, Joel Hasse Ferreira, Stephen Hughes, Sepp Kustatscher, Jean Lambert, Raymond Langendries, Bernard Lehideux, Thomas Mann, Ana Mato Adrover, Maria Matsouka, Mary Lou McDonald, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Csaba Óry, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou, Jacek Protasiewicz, José Albino Silva Peneda, Anne Van Lancker, Gabriele Zimmer.
Substitutes present for the final vote	Udo Bullmann, Elisabeth Schroedter, Marc Tarabella, Patrizia Toia.
Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	-