

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



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*Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*

**2004/0163(AVC)**

2.5.2005

## OPINION

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

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 – C6-0000/2005 - 2004/0163(AVC))

Draftsman: Jerzy Buzek

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the repeated references to the Community's priorities for sustainable development (SD), in particular the environment dimension defined at Gothenburg as well as the emphasis on the coordination of types of funding from Cohesion policy, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Fund for Fisheries (EFF);
2. Takes the view that reports presented by the Member States in accordance with the regulation should assess the contribution of the Funds to the goals of the European Sustainable Development Strategy (EU SDS) in order to assess progress towards SDS targets;
3. Agrees with the Commission's view that it is essential that activities supported by the Funds, EAFRD and EFF form part of an integrated plan of action;
4. Believes that challenges linked to disparities in attaining Community environmental objectives in areas such as water, waste, air quality, biodiversity conservation and climate policy must carry the same weight as the challenges linked to economic, social and territorial disparities in countries and regions whose development is lagging behind; *[Article 3]*
5. Calls on the Commission and the Council to ensure that the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund co-finance the conservation, management and sustainable development of zones with high biodiversity value in order to give additional support to the Natura 2000 network in relation to the basic financial instrument within the Life+ programme which provisions should be appropriately reformulated; *[Article 3]*
6. Considers that environmental NGOs must be recognised as partners on an equal footing with their social and economic colleagues, as sustainable development comprises social, economic and environmental pillars *[Article 10(1)(b) second indent]*;
7. Takes the view that under technical assistance, the Funds should also contribute to increasing the capacity of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in Structural Funds partnerships; *[Article 10]*
8. Stresses the need for more flexible programming rules in particular regarding the possibility of eventual reallocations of resources between projects and priorities in line with implementation performance; *[Article 19]*

9. Calls on the Commission to require Member States to show how they intend to finance the needs of the environment, in particular, supporting the Natura 2000 network, as a condition for the approval of national strategic reference frameworks and operational programmes for structural funding *[Article 31]*;
10. Suggests that, within the 'monofund approach' taken by the Commission, the ratio for cross-financing between the different funds should be increased to at least 20%; *[Article 33]*
11. Stresses that an equal threshold of EUR 50 million should be established for all major projects; *[Article 38]*
12. Welcomes the confirmation that the evaluation of the strategic guidelines, national strategic reference frameworks and operational programmes must take into account the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) legislation;
13. Considers that Member States should specify the arrangements for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of national strategic reference frameworks and operational programmes, and ensure timely Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) of the major infrastructure projects; further calls on the Commission to ensure that major infrastructure projects do not conflict with protection and improvement of the environment; *[Article 38 to 40]*
14. Suggests the creation of a specific rate of increase for geographically and naturally disadvantaged areas; *[Article 52]*
15. Believes that in the case of application of the “polluter pays” principle, the rules for calculation of eligible co-financing for projects generating revenue should reward (provide incentives for) project promoters in relation to the extent the principle is applied; *[Article 54]*
16. Considers that non-reimbursable VAT should remain eligible for the contributions of all funds, and not only in the case of the ESF;
17. Considers it important that the managing authorities, under the control of the Member States, regularly and appropriately publicise the operations which benefit from Community funds and the available appropriations by eligibility criterion; *[Article 68]*
18. Underlines that the level of pre-financing is crucial, in particular in the field of environment and recommends a common 10% ceiling for all funds; *[Article 81(1)]*
19. Underlines that as far as automatic decommitment is concerned, some adverse effects of the N+2 rule should be recognised and alleviated, and that therefore current rules for the Cohesion Fund should be maintained and the amounts subject to the N+2 rule should be reused within the cohesion policy; *[Article 81(2)]*

20. Takes the view that the European Social Fund should contribute to the further training of professional staff with qualifications related to the environmental protection.

## PROCEDURE

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| <b>Title</b>  | Proposal for a Council regulation laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund   |          |          |
| <b>Procedure number</b>   | 2004/0163(AVC)   |          |          |
| <b>Committee responsible</b>  | REGI   |          |          |
| <b>Committee asked for its opinion</b><br>Date announced in plenary | ENVI<br>0.0.0000   |          |          |
| <b>Enhanced cooperation</b>   |  |          |          |
| <b>Drafts(wo)man</b><br>Date appointed                              | Jerzy Buzek<br>0.0.0000  |          |          |
| <b>Discussed in committee</b>                                       | 0.0.0000   | 0.0.0000 | 0.0.0000 |
| <b>Date suggestions adopted</b>                                     | 21.4.2005  |          |          |
| <b>Result of final vote</b>   | for: 34<br>against: 0<br>abstentions: 0  |          |          |
| <b>Members present for the final vote</b>                           | Georgs Andrejevs, Dorette Corbey, Avril Doyle, Anne Ferreira, Karl-Heinz Florenz, Norbert Glante, Satu Hassi, Mary Honeyball, Holger Krahmer, Urszula Krupa, Peter Liese, Jules Maaten, Roberto Musacchio, Riitta Myller, Vittorio Prodi, Frédérique Ries, Dagmar Roth-Behrendt, Guido Sacconi, Richard Seeber, Kathy Sinnott, Bogusław Sonik, María Sornosa Martínez, Antonios Trakatellis, Thomas Ulmer, Anja Weisgerber |          |          |
| <b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>                       | Margrete Auken, María del Pilar Ayuso González, Danutė Budreikaitė, Jerzy Buzek, Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, Caroline Lucas, Renate Sommer, Andres Tarand   |          |          |
| <b>Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>     | Ursula Stenzel   |          |          |