

**Question for oral answer O-000082/2014
to the Commission**

Rule 128

Iskra Mihaylova

on behalf of the Committee on Regional Development

Subject: Delays in the start-up of cohesion policy for 2014-2020

The implementation of cohesion policy was supposed to start in 2014, but the programming stage is still far from being finalised: only a few Operational Programmes (OPs) have been adopted and – according to the latest information available – only 100 will actually be adopted by the end of this year. Moreover, for programmes not ready for adoption by 31 December 2014, the 2014 commitments can only be preserved by re-budgeting uncommitted amounts from 2014, in accordance with Article 19 of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) Regulation. However, this implies a revision of the MFF on the basis of a Commission proposal, with the Council's agreement and Parliament's consent. As a direct consequence, there will be significant delays in the concrete start-up of project implementation. However, 2014 should not be a lost year as regards investments from the five European Structural and Investment Funds.

1. In the light of the above, can the Commission indicate the exact state of play as regards the adoption of the Partnership Agreements and OPs, and the estimated timeframe for starting their implementation?
2. What were the main problems encountered, and by which Member States?
3. What is the Commission's current position regarding the treatment of commitments for OPs co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and the Cohesion Fund which will not be adopted by the end of 2014? Why was the issue of re-budgeting uncommitted amounts from 2014 in 2015 through an MFF revision not brought to Parliament's attention until now? What can be done to ensure that the revision process goes smoothly and is finalised before 1 May 2015, as specified in Article 19 of the MFF Regulation, so as to avoid losing uncommitted amounts from 2014? In this connection, does the Commission envisage taking any measures to facilitate the implementation of OPs?
4. What measures does the new Commission plan to take to speed up programming in order to ensure that the adopted OPs are implemented as soon as possible, without prejudice to their quality?
5. Can the Commission provide information as to how the situation with regard to unpaid bills from the 2007-2013 programming period affects the adoption of OPs and the start of the new implementation period?

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Deadline for reply: 21.11.2014