

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



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*Committee on Regional Development*

**2005/2146(INI)**

24.11.2005

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Constitutional Affairs

on the period of reflection: the structure, subjects and context for an assessment  
of the debate on the European Union  
(2005/2146(INI))

Draftsman: Vladimír Železný

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Considers the reflection period as an opportunity to engage in a genuine debate on the application of the principle of subsidiarity and upgraded partnership in the area of regional development and to assess the degree to which this principle is observed in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the objectives of cohesion policy for the period 2007-2013 which are vital to full, balanced, and enduring development in all Member States, particularly in the poorest regions ;
2. Recommends that the Commission consults widely with Member States, national and other parliaments within Member States, regional and local authorities and other relevant bodies, the Committee of the Regions, business associations and trade unions prior to drafting any new proposals for regulations affecting the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the Member States in order to avoid unnecessary overregulation and preserve much-needed flexibility in dealing with current and future challenges to cohesion policy;
3. Recommends that, unless and until the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe is ratified by all Member States, the European Parliament continues to promote the changes it would effect in respect of cohesion policy as strongly as possible based on their own merits and that the principle of legal precaution be thoroughly applied when referring to the framework of general and special provisions concerning cohesion policy and its individual beneficiaries;
4. Proposes to develop regular consultations with national and other parliaments within the Member States and their relevant committees, including joint hearings with experts, to hold joint meetings between MEPs from every Member State and the corresponding national and regional members of parliament on matters of European interest concerning each region, to improve by means of cost assessments and regulatory impact analyses, the quality of the legislative process in the area of cohesion policy at national and EU level, thus ensuring that the needs of all regions, including the outermost regions, islands and sparsely populated, mountainous, and less-developed areas, will be adequately met;
5. Draws attention to the specific nature of cohesion policy, which is the hallmark of the EU model and which distinguishes the EU from a mere free-trade area; for this reason this solidarity-based policy must be given a higher profile at grass-roots level in all regions (particularly in the least-favoured ones) with a view to reconciling Europe and its people;
6. Welcomes the initiative 'plan D' for democracy, dialogue and debate taken by Commissioner Wallström to start an ongoing dialogue on European policies at both regional and local level; further, stresses the need to involve European youth in the wider debate and stimulate its commitment to 'European thought';
7. Stresses, in this regard, the absolute necessity of providing adequate funding for cohesion

policy, reiterating once again that the amount of 0.41% of Community GNI is the minimum level of funding below which that policy might prove ineffective in achieving its objectives;

- 8 Calls upon the Commission to submit an accurate, reasoned assessment of the effects which definite or possible enlargements of the EU to include new Member States will have on regional policy;
- 9 Recommends the use of specific tools such as the internet, television programmes, advertisements and information seminars in schools and directed at the young to generate a dialogue on European policies at national, regional and local level;
- 10 Encourages the Commission in cooperation with the Committee of the Regions to undertake a continuous evaluation of the dialogue on the future of Europe with particular regard to the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality;
- 11 Draws attention to the importance of supporting with adequate funding less-developed regions that represent a reserve of growth potential, such regions existing in all Member States but in particular in the 10 new Member States, and also the regions subject to the statistical effect, and the accession countries Bulgaria and Romania, so as to eradicate poverty for good and promote innovative and alternative approaches to achieving and maintaining multi-sectoral regional development and balanced growth throughout the EU;
- 12 Notes the obstacles that have been faced in ratifying the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe and emphasises the crucial role that structural policies can play in advocating the positive benefits of membership of the European Union.

## PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	on the period of reflection: the structure, subjects and context for an assessment of the debate on the European Union
<b>Procedure number</b>	2005/2146 (INI)
<b>Committee responsible</b>	AFCO
<b>Enhanced cooperation</b>	
<b>Drafts(wo)man</b> Date appointed	Vladimír Železný 5.10.2005
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	6.10.2005
<b>Date suggestions adopted</b>	22.11.2005
<b>Result of final vote</b>	for: 38 against: 0 abstentions: 4
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Alfonso Andria, Stavros Arnautakis, Elspeth Attwooll, Adam Jerzy Bielan, Jana Bobošíková, Graham Booth, Bernadette Bourzai, Gerardo Galeote Quecedo, Iratxe García Pérez, Eugenijus Gentvilas, Lidia Joanna Geringer de Oedenberg, Ambroise Guellec, Pedro Guerreiro, Gábor Harangozó, Marian Harkin, Konstantinos Hatzidakis, Alain Hutchinson, Carlos José Iturgaiz Angulo, Mieczysław Edmund Janowski, Gisela Kallenbach, Tunne Kelam, Miloš Koterec, Constanze Angela Krehl, Francesco Musotto, James Nicholson, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Jan Olbrycht, Markus Pieper, Elisabeth Schroedter, Alyn Smith, Grażyna Staniszevska, Catherine Stihler, Oldřich Vlasák, Vladimír Železný
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Jan Březina, Ole Christensen, Den Dover, Věra Flasarová, Louis Grech, Mirosław Mariusz Piotrowski, Toomas Savi, László Surján, Nikolaos Vakalis
<b>Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines