



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Regional Development

2010/2079(INI)

16.9.2010

OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on simplifying the implementation of the Research Framework Programmes
(2010/2079(INI))

Rapporteur: Alain Cadec

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses the importance of research and development for the purpose of confronting the major challenges facing the European Union, particularly in connection with the EU 2020 Strategy; recalls that cohesion policy makes a substantial contribution to the financing of R&D in the regions;
2. Welcomes the Commission's proposals aimed at simplifying administrative procedures for the complex and costly tendering and implementation procedure within the research framework programmes, in particular the gradual introduction of performance-based funding and flat-rate elements for the staff of the projects concerned; suggests reconsidering the so-called 'one project per topic' rule and encourages the introduction of a more flexible bottom-up thematic approach to speed the process between innovative ideas and their implementation; stresses, however, that because of the inherent unpredictability of research, projects whose results cannot be clearly known in advance are also valuable; also observes that it ought to be clear how audit rules are to be interpreted in order to make a clear difference between possible irregularities and deliberate fraud;
3. Welcomes the EU institutions' current discussions on the need to simplify regional development policy with a view to making it more transparent, more accessible for participants lacking in financial resources and more effective and providing greater legal certainty for beneficiaries; takes the view that the good practices identified in the course of this process may help simplify the implementation of FP7;
4. Stresses that beneficiaries' access to projects in the field of research and innovation requires high technical capacity and strong knowledge of administrative and financial procedures and, therefore, that this access is extremely difficult for smaller applicants such as SMEs and small research institutes located in peripheral regions; recalls that some 90% of businesses in Europe are SMEs and that it is necessary to ensure their full and effective involvement in the use of FP7 resources;
5. Is of the opinion that the EU's various instruments for cohesion, research and innovation should be implemented in an integrated manner with a view to ensuring their effectiveness; emphasises the need to seek synergies between these instruments and to eliminate obstacles to such synergies, in particular by harmonising the rules on audits and eligibility of costs in order to simplify implementation by beneficiaries;
6. Takes the view that research and innovation can be best fostered at regional level, thanks to the proximity between universities, public research bodies, large companies, SMEs and regional and local public authorities, for example within clusters; also notes that fostering research and innovation at the regional level can help reduce social and regional disparities; nonetheless encourages the various levels (regional, national and Community) to coordinate more effectively their efforts to plan R&D activities at European level; also

emphasises the need for better links between academia and industry;

7. Recalls that, like regional development policy, FP7 is based on the principles of partnership and co-financing; affirms its commitment to these principles of good management, and calls for their continued application despite the restrictions on public spending as a result of the economic crisis;
8. Recalls that FP7 focuses on large-scale projects likely to have a tangible impact on economic activity, innovation in product planning and ensuring a future for high value-added production, thereby creating jobs and leaving the European Union better equipped to compete globally; points out that the momentum generated by projects of excellence, in the areas of both applied and fundamental research, benefits all the EU territories, irrespective of their current level of scientific development, especially if synergy is achieved with regional policy funds, and is an effective adjunct to the primary objective of cohesion policy instruments, which is convergence, with a view both to balanced development and to competitiveness; notes nevertheless that special attention should also be devoted to smaller projects, which are also likely to have a concrete impact, for example by strengthening the link between innovation and social integration;
9. Asks the Commission to publish an analysis of the participation levels of different Member States in the FP7;
10. Points out that the increase in regional disparities in terms of research and development potential is a challenge which has to be addressed not only in the framework of Cohesion Policy, but also through research and innovation policy;
11. Is of the opinion that professional career exchanges should be encouraged, without fostering the brain drain from the EU to other parts of the world and, within the EU, from poorer countries to richer ones, which would undermine European cohesion policy.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	6.9.2010
Result of final vote	+: 34 -: 0 0: 5
Members present for the final vote	François Alfonsi, Charalampos Angourakis, Catherine Bearder, Victor Boştinaru, Zuzana Brzobohatá, John Bufton, Alain Cadec, Salvatore Caronna, Tamás Deutsch, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Danuta Maria Hübner, Filiz Hakaeva Hyusmenova, Seán Kelly, Constanze Angela Krehl, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Ramona Nicole Mănescu, Riikka Manner, Iosif Matula, Erminia Mazzoni, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Jan Olbrycht, Wojciech Michał Olejniczak, Markus Pieper, Tomasz Piotr Poręba, Georgios Stavrakakis, Csanád Szegedi, Nuno Teixeira, Oldřich Vlasák, Kerstin Westphal
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Karima Delli, Pat the Cope Gallagher, Ivars Godmanis, Catherine Grèze, Lena Kolarska-Bobińska, Veronica Lope Fontagné, Marie-Thérèse Sanchez-Schmid, Elisabeth Schroedter, Evžen Tošenovský, Sabine Verheyen