



**2023/0199(COD)**

12.10.2023

## OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council Establishing the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform ('STEP') and amending Directive 2003/87/EC, Regulations (EU) 2021/1058, (EU) 2021/1056, (EU) 2021/1057, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) 2021/1060, (EU) 2021/523, (EU) 2021/695, (EU) 2021/697 and (EU) 2021/241 (COM(2023)0335 – C9-0209/2023 – 2023/0199(COD))

Rapporteur for opinion: Rovana Plumb

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## **SHORT JUSTIFICATION**

### **Context of the legislative proposal**

The EU with its European internal market has significant assets to attract sustainable investments, and the Union has proven its commitment to build favourable conditions for the development of businesses, in particular those contributing to the green and digital transition. In the light of the challenges that the EU industry has been confronted with over the last years, the European Commission decided to propose a structural tool allowing for a common EU funding for this purpose, and put forward the proposal for a Strategic Technologies for European Platform ('STEP').

The proposed financing relies on the already existing financial instruments, which include, besides instruments such as the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the Innovation Fund, InvestEU, or Horizon Europe, also the cohesion policy funds. REGI rapporteur for opinion expresses her support for the objectives of the proposal, and for the contribution to them that can be delivered by the cohesion policy. REGI committee confirmed the Rapporteur's position in its vote on the legislative opinion.

### **Choice of the respective instrument**

Commission proposed that the support for the strategic sectors from the cohesion policy be delivered via the creation of a new dedicated priority in the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), and the Just Transition Fund (JTF).

As concerns the support from the ERDF and CF, new dedicated specific objectives, supporting investments contributing to STEP objective, are added. Rapporteur agrees with this approach, as it will allow for the use of the cohesion policy framework for the support of the strategic investments. Nevertheless, the position of the committee is to limit the use of resources for the STEP objectives to a maximum of 20% of the initial ERDF allocation. Considering incentives that accompany the use of the cohesion policy funds for the STEP objectives, this is deemed necessary in order not to undermine other cohesion policy objectives.

Rapporteur is also in favour of the use of the JTF resources for the STEP objectives, and proposes, based on a compromise reached in REGI, to extend the scope of the support from the JTF to include not only clean technologies, but also investments to address shortages of skills and labour in the key sectors.

### **Preserving the territorial, economic and social cohesion**

Rapporteur is convinced that new EU financial or economic policy tools should by no means harm the objective of the economic, territorial and social cohesion, in line with the principle 'do no harm to cohesion'. Cohesion remains a key EU objectives, enshrined in the Treaty.

Rapporteur proposes therefore to add the preservation and strengthening of the cohesion and of the solidarity among the Member States and regions to the STEP objectives, to streamline this concern into the new financial tool.

REGI committee also adopted amendments in this sense in the provisions related to the reporting and the evaluation of the platform, in order to make sure that the cohesion objectives as well as the partnership principle are effectively respected, and that the related monitoring is put in place.

### **Opening investments to large companies**

Commission proposed to allow, in the context of the STEP proposal, for the support of the large companies in the less developed and transition regions, as well as in the more developed regions of the Member States with the per capita GDP below the EU average. Rapporteur recognises the need for the inclusion of also the large companies in the support for industry in the field of critical technologies, as they are often particularly well placed to develop these technologies. Nevertheless, the Rapporteur insists on a particular focus that needs to be put on the support for the SMEs and midcap companies, considering their importance for the EU market and particular needs and challenges they face. REGI opinion reflects this position.

### **Incentives for the use of the support to STEP objectives**

Commission proposal foresees, by way of an incentive for the use of the support for the STEP objectives, an exceptional pre-financing in 2024 at the level of 30% for the STEP priority under the ERDF. Commission also proposed that an exceptional 30% pre-financing be paid under the JTF. Additionally, the co-financing rate for the STEP objectives financed under the ERDF-CF Regulation and the JTF Regulation can be increased up to 100%. Rapporteur supports the introduction of these incentives, and her position was endorsed by the REGI committee.

### **Extension of the administrative deadlines for the 2014-2020 period and derogation for the outermost regions**

Rapporteur considers that in view of the exceptional circumstances and of the increased pressure on the managing authorities in the context of the closure of programmes under the 2014-2020 period, it is necessary to extend the applicable deadlines. Accordingly, she proposed to extend the final accounting year of this period by 12 months, until end of June 2025, as well as the co-financing of up to 100% in the final accounting year of this period.

Rapporteur also took into account particular difficulties faced by the outermost regions and endorsed specific derogations, to alleviate structural challenges they are facing.

## **AMENDMENTS**

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committees responsible, to take the following into account:

## Amendment 1

### Proposal for a regulation Recital 2

*Text proposed by the Commission*

(2) ***The EU industry has proven its inbuilt resilience but is being challenged.*** High inflation, labour shortages, post-COVID supply chains disruptions, rising interest rates, and spikes in energy costs and input prices are weighing on the competitiveness of the EU industry. This is paired with strong, but not always fair, competition on the fragmented global market. The EU has already put forward several initiatives to support its industry, such as the Green Deal Industrial Plan,<sup>40</sup> the Critical Raw Materials Act<sup>41</sup>, the Net Zero Industry Act<sup>42</sup>, the new Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework for State aid,<sup>43</sup> and REPowerEU.<sup>44</sup> While these solutions provide fast and targeted support, the EU needs a more structural answer to the investment needs of its industries, safeguarding cohesion and the level playing field in the Single Market and to reduce the EU's strategic dependencies.

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<sup>40</sup> Communication on A Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age, COM(2023) 62 final.

<sup>41</sup> COM(2023) 160 final

<sup>42</sup> COM(2023) 161 final

<sup>43</sup> Communication on a Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework for State Aid measures (OJ C 101, 17.3.2023, p. 3).

<sup>44</sup> Regulation (EU) 2023/435 as regards REPowerEU (OJ L 63, 28.2.2023, p. 1).

*Amendment*

(2) High inflation, labour shortages, post-COVID supply chains disruptions, rising interest rates, and spikes in energy costs and input prices are weighing on the competitiveness of the EU industry. This is paired with strong, but not always fair, competition on the fragmented global market. The EU has already put forward several initiatives to support its industry, such as the Green Deal Industrial Plan,<sup>40</sup> the Critical Raw Materials Act<sup>41</sup>, the Net Zero Industry Act<sup>42</sup>, the new Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework for State aid,<sup>43</sup> and REPowerEU.<sup>44</sup> While these solutions provide fast and targeted ***and, in some cases, temporary*** support, ***by adapting frameworks for state aid***, the EU needs a more structural answer to the investment needs of its industries, safeguarding cohesion and the level playing field in the Single Market and to reduce the EU's strategic dependencies.

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<sup>40</sup> Communication on A Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age, COM(2023) 62 final.

<sup>41</sup> COM(2023) 160 final

<sup>42</sup> COM(2023) 161 final

<sup>43</sup> Communication on a Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework for State Aid measures (OJ C 101, 17.3.2023, p. 3).

<sup>44</sup> Regulation (EU) 2023/435 as regards REPowerEU (OJ L 63, 28.2.2023, p. 1).

## Amendment 2

### Proposal for a regulation Recital 2 a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

**(2a) STEP, in order to reach the goal of structural investments in critical technologies in high technology industry and to avoid overlaps, has to be closely coordinated with the existing EU initiatives to support the industry.**

### **Amendment 3**

#### **Proposal for a regulation**

##### **Recital 3**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(3) The uptake and scaling up in the Union of deep and digital technologies, clean technologies, and biotechnologies will be essential to seize the opportunities and meet the objectives of the green and digital transitions, thus promoting the competitiveness of the European industry and its sustainability. Therefore, immediate action is required to support the development or manufacturing in the Union of such technologies, safeguarding and strengthening their value chains thereby reducing the Union's strategic dependencies, and addressing existing labour and skills shortages in those sectors through trainings and apprenticeships and the creation of attractive, quality jobs accessible to all.

(3) The uptake and scaling up in the Union of deep and digital technologies, clean technologies, and biotechnologies will be essential to seize the opportunities and meet the objectives of the green and digital transitions, thus promoting the competitiveness of the European industry and its sustainability **and at the same time to further preserve economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among Member States and their regions, as well as to reduce disparities in the development of various regions**. Therefore, immediate action is required to support the development or manufacturing in the Union of such technologies, safeguarding and strengthening their value chains thereby reducing the Union's strategic dependencies, and addressing existing labour and skills shortages in those sectors through trainings and apprenticeships and the creation of attractive, quality jobs accessible to all.

### **Amendment 4**

#### **Proposal for a regulation**

##### **Recital 4**

(4) There is a need to support critical technologies in the following fields: deep and digital technologies, clean technologies, and biotechnologies (including the respective critical raw materials value chains), in particular projects, companies and sectors with a critical role for EU's competitiveness **and** resilience and its value chains. By way of example, deep technologies and digital technologies should include microelectronics, high-performance computing, quantum technologies (i.e., computing, communication and sensing technologies), cloud computing, edge computing, and artificial intelligence, cybersecurity technologies, robotics, 5G and advanced connectivity and virtual realities, including actions related to deep and digital technologies for the development of defence and aerospace applications. Clean technologies should include, among others, renewable energy; electricity and heat storage; heat pumps; electricity grid; renewable fuels of non-biological origin; sustainable **alternative fuels**; electrolyzers and fuel cells; carbon capture, utilisation and storage; energy efficiency; hydrogen and its related **infrastructure**; smart energy solutions; technologies vital to sustainability such as water purification and desalination; advanced materials such as nanomaterials, composites and future clean construction materials, and technologies for the sustainable extraction and processing of critical raw materials. Biotechnology should be considered to include technologies such as biomolecules and its applications, pharmaceuticals and medical technologies vital for health security, crop biotechnology, and industrial biotechnology, such as for waste disposal, and biomanufacturing. The Commission **may** issue guidance to further specify the scope of the technologies in these three

(4) ***As dependence on the global market has exposed EU industry to shortages which has led to chain disruptions and even stoppages of industrial processes,*** there is a need to support critical technologies in the following fields: deep and digital technologies, clean technologies, and biotechnologies (including the respective critical raw materials value chains ***in all of them***), in particular projects, companies and sectors with a critical role for EU's competitiveness, resilience and its value chains, ***and the entire CCS value chain, as well as technologies which can be utilized in replacing critical non-renewable materials with renewable materials, sustainable recovery and other processing.*** By way of example, deep technologies and digital technologies should include ***pharmaceuticals, photonics, advanced materials technologies, microelectronics, semiconductors, semiconductor equipment, communication technologies,*** high-performance computing, quantum technologies (i.e., computing, communication and sensing technologies), cloud computing, edge computing, and artificial intelligence, cybersecurity technologies, robotics, 5G, ***6G and others*** and advanced connectivity and virtual realities, including actions related to deep and digital technologies for the development of defence and aerospace applications, ***as well as applications to deliver healthcare, such as digital medical devices.*** Clean technologies should include, among others, renewable energy ***as batteries, solar panels, wind turbines, electrolyzers***; electricity and heat storage; heat pumps; electricity grid; ***geothermal energy***; renewable fuels of non-biological origin; ***all sustainable fuel technologies, including biofuels for road transport,*** electrolyzers and fuel cells; carbon capture,

fields considered to be critical in accordance with this Regulation, in order to promote a common interpretation of the projects, companies and sectors to be supported under the respective programmes in light of the common strategic objective. Moreover, technologies in any of these three fields which are subjects of an Important Project of Common European Interest (IPCEI) approved by the Commission pursuant to Article 107(3), point (b) TFEU should be deemed to be critical, and individual projects within the scope of such an IPCEI should be eligible for funding, in accordance with the respective programme rules, to the extent that the identified funding gap and the eligible costs have not yet been completely covered.

utilisation and storage; energy efficiency; **biolubricants; green** hydrogen and its related **infrastructure**; smart energy solutions; **cutting-edge solutions implemented for leak detection and repair inspections carried out along renewable gases and water transport and distribution networks**; technologies vital to sustainability such as water **efficiency**, purification and desalination **technologies; technologies related to circular economy, such as high quality recycling, resource and material efficiency**; advanced materials such as nanomaterials, composites and future clean construction materials, and technologies for the sustainable extraction and processing of critical raw materials; **technologies supporting construction of roads with negative carbon footprint and development of new green road stabilisation solutions**. Biotechnology should be considered to include technologies such as biomolecules and its applications, pharmaceuticals and medical technologies **and medical devices** vital for health security, crop biotechnology, and industrial biotechnology, such as for waste disposal, and biomanufacturing. The Commission **should, at the latest one month after the entry into force of this regulation**, issue guidance to further specify the scope of the technologies in these three fields considered to be critical in accordance with this Regulation, in order to promote a common interpretation of the projects, companies and sectors to be supported under the respective programmes in light of the common strategic objective. Moreover, technologies in any of these three fields which are subjects of an Important Project of Common European Interest (IPCEI) approved by the Commission pursuant to Article 107(3), point (b) TFEU should be deemed to be critical, and individual projects within the scope of such an IPCEI should be eligible for funding, in accordance with the respective programme



rules, to the extent that the identified funding gap and the eligible costs have not yet been completely covered.

## Amendment 5

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Recital 5

##### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(5) Strengthening the manufacturing capacity of key technologies in the Union will not be possible without a sizeable skilled workforce. However, labour and skills shortages have increased in all sectors including those considered key for the green and digital transition and endanger the rise of key technologies, also in the context of demographic change. Therefore, it is necessary to boost the activation of more people to the labour market relevant for strategic sectors, in particular through the creation of jobs and apprenticeships for young, disadvantaged persons, in particular, young people not in employment, education or training. Such support will complement a number of other actions aimed at meeting the skills needs stemming from the transition, outlined in the EU Skills Agenda.<sup>45</sup>

##### *Amendment*

(5) Strengthening the ***development and*** manufacturing capacity of key technologies in the Union will not be possible without a sizeable skilled workforce, ***including with digital, engineering and other technical knowledge***. However, labour and skills shortages have increased in all sectors including those considered key for the green and digital transition and endanger the rise of key technologies, also in the context of demographic change, ***especially in disadvantaged regions, including rural and remote areas and islands, which suffer from brain drain***. Therefore, it is necessary to boost the activation of more people to the labour market relevant for strategic sectors, in particular ***through quality and inclusive skilling, upskilling and re-skilling measures, and to help develop young persons' practical skills***, through the creation of jobs and apprenticeships for young, disadvantaged persons, in particular, young people not in employment, education or training. ***Fostering information and social dialogue with companies is indispensable. Consequently, it is necessary for the authorities to provide information concerning skills development and EU-funded opportunities, as well as to encourage cooperation, mobility programmes and exchange of knowledge and best practices***. Such support will complement a number of other actions aimed at meeting the skills needs stemming from the transition, outlined in the EU

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<sup>45</sup> Communication on a European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, COM(2020) 274 final.

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<sup>45</sup> Communication on a European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, COM(2020) 274 final.

## Amendment 6

### Proposal for a regulation Recital 8

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(8) A Sovereignty Seal should be awarded to projects contributing to the STEP objectives, provided that the project has been assessed and complies with the minimum quality requirements, in particular eligibility, exclusion and award criteria, provided by a call for proposals under Horizon Europe, the Digital Europe programme,<sup>50</sup> the EU4Health programme,<sup>51</sup> the European Defence Fund or the Innovation Fund, and regardless of whether the project has received funding under those instruments. These minimum quality requirements will be established with a view to identify high quality projects. This Seal should be used as a quality label, to help projects attract public and private investments by certifying its contribution to the STEP objectives. Moreover, the Seal will promote better access to EU funding, notably by facilitating cumulative or combined funding from several Union instruments.

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<sup>50</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/694 establishing the Digital Europe Programme (OJ L 166, 11.5.2021, p. 1).

<sup>51</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/522 establishing a

#### *Amendment*

(8) A Sovereignty Seal should be awarded to projects contributing to the STEP objectives, provided that the project has been assessed and complies with the minimum quality requirements, in particular eligibility, exclusion and award criteria, provided by a call for proposals under Horizon Europe, the Digital Europe programme,<sup>50</sup> the EU4Health programme,<sup>51</sup> the European Defence Fund or the Innovation Fund, and regardless of whether the project has received funding under those instruments. ***The verification of the eligibility and evaluation criteria by competent authorities should be done in transparent and fair way.*** These minimum quality requirements will be established with a view to identify high quality projects. This Seal should be used as a quality label, to help projects attract public and private investments by certifying its contribution to the STEP objectives. Moreover, the Seal will promote better access to EU funding, notably by facilitating cumulative or combined funding from several Union instruments.

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<sup>50</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/694 establishing the Digital Europe Programme (OJ L 166, 11.5.2021, p. 1).

<sup>51</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/522 establishing a

Programme for the Union's action in the field of health, EU4Health Programme (OJ L 107, 26.3.2021, p. 1).

Programme for the Union's action in the field of health, EU4Health Programme (OJ L 107, 26.3.2021, p. 1).

## Amendment 7

### Proposal for a regulation Recital 9

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(9) To that end, it should be possible to rely on assessments made for the purposes of other Union programmes in accordance with Articles 126 and 127 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046,<sup>52</sup> in order to reduce administrative burden for beneficiaries of Union funds and encourage investment in priority technologies. Provided they comply with the provisions of the RRF Regulation,<sup>53</sup> Member States should consider including actions awarded the Sovereignty Seal when preparing their recovery and resilience plans **and** when proposing their Recovering and Resilience Plans and when deciding on investment projects to be financed from its share of the Modernisation Fund. The Sovereignty Seal should also be taken into account by the Commission in the context of the procedure provided for in Article 19 of the EIB Statute and of the policy check laid down in Article 23 of the InvestEU Regulation. In addition, the implementing partners should be required to examine projects having been awarded the Sovereignty Seal in case they fall within their geographic and activity scope in accordance with Article 26(5) of that Regulation. Authorities in charge of programmes falling under STEP should also be encouraged to consider support for strategic projects identified in accordance with the Net Zero Industry and the Critical Raw Materials Acts that are within the scope of Article 2 of the Regulation and for which rules on cumulative funding may

#### *Amendment*

(9) To that end, it should be possible to rely on assessments made for the purposes of other Union programmes in accordance with Articles 126 and 127 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046,<sup>52</sup> in order to reduce administrative burden for beneficiaries of Union funds and encourage investment in priority technologies. Provided they comply with the provisions of the RRF Regulation,<sup>53</sup> Member States should consider including actions awarded the Sovereignty Seal when preparing their recovery and resilience plans, when proposing **or revising** their Recovering and Resilience Plans and when deciding on investment projects to be financed from its share of the Modernisation Fund. The Sovereignty Seal should also be taken into account by the Commission in the context of the procedure provided for in Article 19 of the EIB Statute and of the policy check laid down in Article 23 of the InvestEU Regulation. In addition, the implementing partners should be required to examine projects having been awarded the Sovereignty Seal in case they fall within their geographic and activity scope in accordance with Article 26(5) of that Regulation. Authorities in charge of programmes falling under STEP should also be encouraged to consider support for strategic projects identified in accordance with the Net Zero Industry and the Critical Raw Materials Acts that are within the scope of Article 2 of the Regulation and for which rules on cumulative funding may

apply.

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<sup>52</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1).

<sup>53</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/241 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility (OJ L 57, 18.2.2021, p. 17).

apply.

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<sup>52</sup> Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1).

<sup>53</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/241 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility (OJ L 57, 18.2.2021, p. 17).

## Amendment 8

### Proposal for a regulation Recital 10

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(10) A new publicly available website (the ‘Sovereignty Portal’) should be set up by the Commission to provide information on available support to companies and project promoters seeking funds for STEP investments. To that end, it should display in an accessible and user-friendly manner the funding opportunities for STEP investments available under the EU budget. This should include information about directly managed programmes, such as Horizon Europe, the Digital Europe programme, the EU4Health programme, and the Innovation Fund, and also other programmes such as InvestEU, the RRF, and cohesion policy funds. Moreover, the Sovereignty Portal should help increase the visibility for STEP investments towards investors, by listing the projects that have been awarded a Sovereignty Seal. The Portal should also list the national competent authorities responsible for acting as contact points for the implementation of the STEP at national level.

#### *Amendment*

(10) A new publicly available website (the ‘Sovereignty Portal’) should be set up by the Commission to provide information on available support to companies, ***with a focus on SMEs and mid-caps*** and project promoters seeking funds for STEP investments. To that end, it should display in an accessible and user-friendly manner, ***in all official EU languages***, the funding opportunities for STEP investments available under the EU budget. This should include information about directly managed programmes, such as Horizon Europe, the Digital Europe programme, the EU4Health programme, and the Innovation Fund, and also other programmes such as InvestEU, the RRF, and cohesion policy funds. Moreover, the Sovereignty Portal should help increase the visibility for STEP investments towards investors, by listing the projects that have been awarded a Sovereignty Seal. The Portal should also list the national competent authorities responsible for acting as contact points for the implementation of the STEP at national level. ***The Portal should provide an interactive component, enabling users to introduce their project specifications and receive personalised advice.***

## Amendment 9

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Recital 11

##### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(11) While the STEP relies on the reprogramming and reinforcement of existing programmes for supporting strategic investments, it is also ***an important*** element for testing the feasibility and preparation of new interventions as a step towards ***a*** European Sovereignty Fund. The evaluation in 2025 will assess the relevance of the actions undertaken and serve as basis for assessing the need for an upscaling of the support towards strategic sectors.

##### *Amendment*

(11) While the STEP relies on the reprogramming and reinforcement of existing programmes for supporting strategic investments, it is also ***a critical*** element for testing the feasibility and preparation of new interventions as a ***possible*** step towards ***the creation of a dedicated*** European Sovereignty Fund. ***The European Sovereignty Fund should strengthen the Union's strategic autonomy in key sectors while supporting the completion of green and digital transition.*** The evaluation in 2025 will assess the relevance of the actions undertaken and serve as basis for assessing the need for an upscaling of the support towards strategic sectors.

## Amendment 10

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Recital 13

##### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(13) In order to extend support possibilities for investments aimed at strengthening industrial development and reinforcement of value chains in strategic sectors, the scope of support from the ERDF should be extended by providing for new specific objectives under the ERDF, without prejudice to the rules on eligibility of expenditure and climate spending as set out in Regulation (EU) 2021/1060<sup>55</sup> and Regulation (EU) 2021/1058<sup>56</sup>. In strategic sectors, it should also be possible to support productive investments in enterprises ***other than SMEs***, which can

##### *Amendment*

(13) In order to extend support possibilities for investments aimed at strengthening industrial development and reinforcement of value chains in strategic sectors, the scope of support from the ERDF should be extended by providing for new specific objectives under the ERDF, without prejudice to the rules on eligibility of expenditure and climate spending as set out in Regulation (EU) 2021/1060<sup>55</sup> and Regulation (EU) 2021/1058<sup>56</sup>. In strategic sectors, it should also be possible to support productive investments in enterprises ***with a focus on SMEs and***

make a significant contribution to the development of less developed and transition regions, as well as in more developed regions of Member States with a GDP per capita below the EU average. Managing authorities are encouraged to promote the collaboration between large enterprises and local SMEs, supply chains, innovation and technology ecosystems. This would allow reinforcing Europe's overall capacity to strengthen its position in those sectors through providing access to all Member States for such investments, thus counteracting the risk of increasing disparities.

***midcaps and*** which can make a significant contribution to the development of less developed and transition regions, ***territories defined in just transition plans***, as well as in more developed regions of Member States with a GDP per capita below the EU average. Managing authorities are encouraged to promote the collaboration between large enterprises and local SMEs, supply chains, innovation and technology ecosystems. This would allow reinforcing Europe's overall capacity to strengthen its position in those sectors through providing access to all Member States for such investments, thus counteracting the risk of increasing disparities. ***The resources programmed for these new specific objectives should be limited to a maximum of 20% of the initial allocation of the ERDF.***

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<sup>55</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 laying down common provisions (OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 159).

<sup>56</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund (OJ L 224, 24.6.2021, p. 31).

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<sup>55</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 laying down common provisions (OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 159).

<sup>56</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1058 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund (OJ L 224, 24.6.2021, p. 31).

## Amendment 11

### Proposal for a regulation Recital 14

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(14) The scope of support of the JTF, laid down in Regulation (EU) 2021/1056,<sup>57</sup> should also be extended to cover investments in clean technologies contributing to the objectives of the STEP by **large** enterprises, provided that they are compatible with the expected contribution to the transition to climate neutrality as set out in the territorial just transition plans. The support provided for such investments

#### *Amendment*

(14) The scope of support of the JTF, laid down in Regulation (EU) 2021/1056,<sup>57</sup> should also be extended to cover ***projects to address shortages of labour and skills critical to quality jobs in support of the STEP objectives and to promote*** investments in clean technologies contributing to the objectives of the STEP by enterprises ***with focus on SMEs and mid-caps***, provided that they are



should not require a revision of the territorial just transition plan *where that revision would be exclusively linked to the gap analysis justifying the investment from the perspective of job creation.*

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<sup>57</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1056 establishing the Just Transition Fund (OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 1).

compatible with the expected contribution to the transition to climate neutrality as set out in the territorial just transition plans . The support provided for such investments should not require a revision of the territorial just transition plan.

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<sup>57</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1056 establishing the Just Transition Fund (OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 1).

## Amendment 12

### Proposal for a regulation Recital 16

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(16) In order to help accelerate investments and provide immediate liquidity for investments supporting the STEP objectives under the ERDF, the ESF+<sup>59</sup> and the JTF, an additional amount of exceptional pre-financing should be provided in the form of a one-off payment with respect to the priorities dedicated to investments supporting the STEP objectives. The additional pre-financing should apply to the whole of the JTF allocation given the need to accelerate its implementation and the strong links of the JTF to support Member States towards the STEP objectives. The rules applying for those amounts of exceptional pre-financing should be consistent with the rules applicable to pre-financing set out in Regulation (EU) 2021/1060. Moreover, to further incentivise the uptake of such investments and ensure its faster implementation, the possibility for an **increased** EU financing rate of 100% for the STEP priorities should be available. When implementing the new STEP objectives, managing authorities are encouraged to apply certain social criteria or promote social positive outcomes, such as creating apprenticeships and jobs for

#### *Amendment*

(16) In order to help accelerate investments and provide immediate liquidity for investments supporting the STEP objectives under the ERDF, the ESF+<sup>59</sup> and the JTF, an additional amount of exceptional pre-financing should be provided in the form of a one-off payment with respect to the priorities dedicated to investments supporting the STEP objectives. The additional pre-financing should apply to the whole of the JTF allocation given the need to accelerate its implementation and the strong links of the JTF to support Member States towards the STEP objectives. The rules applying for those amounts of exceptional pre-financing should be consistent with the rules applicable to pre-financing set out in Regulation (EU) 2021/1060. Moreover, to further incentivise the uptake of such investments and ensure its faster implementation, the possibility for an EU financing rate of **up to** 100% for the STEP priorities should be available. When implementing the new STEP objectives, managing authorities are encouraged to apply certain social criteria or promote social positive outcomes, such as creating **paid** apprenticeships and **quality** jobs for

young disadvantaged persons, in particular young persons not in employment, education or training, applying the social award criteria in the Directives on public procurement when a project is implemented by a body subject to public procurement, and paying the applicable wages as agreed through collective bargaining.

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<sup>59</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) (OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 21).

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<sup>59</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1057 establishing the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) (OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 21).

## Amendment 13

### Proposal for a regulation Recital 18

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(18) The regulatory framework for the implementation of the 2014-2020 programmes has been adapted over the past years to provide Member States and regions **with additional** with additional flexibility in terms of implementation rules and more liquidity to tackle the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war **or** aggression against Ukraine. These measures, introduced at the end of the programming period, require sufficient time and administrative resources to be fully exploited and implemented; also at a time where Member States will focus resources on revising the 2021-2027 operational programmes linked to the STEP objectives. With a view to alleviate the administrative burden on programme authorities and to prevent possible loss of funds at closure for purely administrative reasons, the deadlines for the administrative closure of the programmes under the 2014-2020 period should be extended in Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013<sup>61</sup> and Regulation (EU) No 223/2014<sup>62</sup>. More specifically, the

#### *Amendment*

(18) The regulatory framework for the implementation of the 2014-2020 programmes has been adapted over the past years to provide Member States and regions with additional flexibility in terms of implementation rules and more liquidity to tackle the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war **of** aggression against Ukraine. These measures, introduced at the end of the programming period, require sufficient time and administrative resources to be fully exploited and implemented; also at a time where Member States will focus resources on revising the 2021-2027 operational programmes linked to the STEP objectives. With a view to alleviate the administrative burden on programme authorities and to prevent possible loss of funds at closure for purely administrative reasons, the deadlines for the administrative closure of the programmes under the 2014-2020 period should be extended in Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013<sup>61</sup> and Regulation (EU) No 223/2014<sup>62</sup>. More specifically, the deadline for the submission of that final



deadline for the submission of that final payment application should be extended by 12 months. Furthermore, the deadline for the submission of the closure documents should also be extended by 12 months. In the context of this amendment, it is appropriate to clarify that distribution of food and material bought until the end of the eligibility period (end-2023) may continue after that date. In order to ensure a sound implementation of the EU budget and respect for the payment ceilings, payments to be made in 2025 should be capped at **1 %** of the financial appropriations from resources under the Multiannual Financial Framework per programme. Amounts due exceeding the ceiling of **1%** of programme appropriations per fund for 2025 would not be paid in 2025 nor in subsequent years but only used for the clearance of pre-financing. Unused amounts shall be decommitted in accordance with the general rules for decommitment at closure.

payment application should be extended by 12 months. Furthermore, the deadline for the submission of the closure documents should also be extended by 12 months.

***Therefore, Member States may submit the final payment application by June 30, 2025 and the final documents by 15 February 2026, in order to give Member States sufficient time to finalise the process linked to the closure of projects.***

In the context of this amendment, it is appropriate to clarify that distribution of food and material bought until the end of the eligibility period (end-2023) may continue after that date. In order to ensure a sound implementation of the EU budget and respect for the payment ceilings, payments to be made in 2025 should be capped at **10%** of the financial appropriations from resources under the Multiannual Financial Framework per programme. Amounts due exceeding the ceiling of **10%** of programme appropriations per fund for 2025 would not be paid in 2025 nor in subsequent years but only used for the clearance of pre-financing. Unused amounts shall be decommitted in accordance with the general rules for decommitment at closure.

***In this context, a specific derogation provision should be made for the outermost regions.***

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<sup>61</sup> Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 laying down common provisions (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320).

<sup>62</sup> Regulation (EU) 223/2014 on the Fund for European Aid on the Most Deprived (OJ L 72, 12.3.2014, p. 1).

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<sup>61</sup> Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 laying down common provisions (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320).

<sup>62</sup> Regulation (EU) 223/2014 on the Fund for European Aid on the Most Deprived (OJ L 72, 12.3.2014, p. 1).

## **Amendment 14**

### **Proposal for a regulation Article 2 – title**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

STEP objectives

STEP objectives **and eligibility**

## Amendment 15

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – introductory part

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

1. To strengthen European sovereignty and security, accelerate the Union's green and digital transitions and enhance its competitiveness, reduce its strategic dependencies, **favour** a level playing field in the Single Market for investments throughout the Union, **and** promote inclusive access to attractive, quality jobs, the Platform shall pursue the following objectives:

1. ***In order*** to strengthen European ***industrial*** sovereignty and security, ***to*** accelerate the Union's ***socially balanced*** green and digital transitions and enhance its competitiveness, ***cohesive development of its regions***, reduce its strategic dependencies, ***ensure*** a level playing field in the Single Market for investments throughout the Union, ***especially of SMEs and mid-caps, to foster cross-border participation, and to*** promote inclusive access to attractive, quality jobs, ***reduce brain drain***, the Platform shall pursue the following objectives:

## Amendment 16

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point a – introductory part

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(a) supporting the development or manufacturing throughout the Union, or safeguarding and strengthening the respective value chains, of critical technologies in the following fields:

(a) supporting the development or manufacturing ***of coherent and connected critical technologies or related services*** throughout the ***regions of the*** Union, ***including through establishment of new production facilities*** or safeguarding and strengthening the respective value chains, of critical technologies in the following fields, ***while respecting the “do no significant harm” principle within the meaning of Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060:***

## Amendment 17

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point b a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***(ba) preserving and strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity among Member States and regions.***

## Amendment 18

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 2 – point a

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(a) bring an innovative, cutting-edge element with significant economic potential to the Single Market;

(a) bring an innovative, cutting-edge element with significant economic, ***digital, ecological and social*** potential to ***the regions in*** the Single Market;

## Amendment 19

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 2 – point b

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(b) contribute to reduce or prevent strategic dependencies of the Union.

(b) contribute to reduce or prevent strategic dependencies of the Union, ***its Member States and regions in the fields referred to in the first paragraph.***

## Amendment 20

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 4

*Text proposed by the Commission*

4. ***The value chain*** for the manufacturing of critical technologies referred to in the first paragraph ***relates to*** final products, ***as well as*** key components, ***specific machinery*** and critical raw materials primarily used for the production of those products.

*Amendment*

4. For the manufacturing of critical technologies referred to in the first paragraph, ***the supply chain covers*** final products, key components ***designed and primarily used as direct input for the production of those products***, and critical raw materials primarily used for the production of those products, ***critical supply lines related to manufacturing, as well as related services ranging from raw material to end user.***

**Amendment 21**

**Proposal for a regulation**  
**Article 2 – paragraph 4 a (new)**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***4a. Non-associated third-country entities are not eligible for support under this regulation, i.e. legal entity that is established in a non-associated third country or, where it is established in the Union or in an associated country that has its executive management structures in a non-associated third country.***

**Amendment 22**

**Proposal for a regulation**  
**Article 2 – paragraph 4 b (new)**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***4b. By way of derogation from the preceding paragraph, a legal entity established in the Union or in an associated country and controlled by a non-associated third country or a non-associated third-country entity shall be eligible to be a recipient or subcontractor involved in an action only if guarantees***

*approved by the Member State or the associated country in which it is established in accordance with its national procedures are made available to the Commission. Those guarantees may refer to the legal entity's executive management structure established in the Union or in an associated country. If considered to be appropriate by the Member State or associated country in which the legal entity is established, those guarantees may also refer to specific governmental rights in the control over the legal entity. The guarantees provide assurances that participation in an action of such a legal entity is not contrary to the objectives set out in Article 2 of this Regulation.*

## Amendment 23

### Proposal for a regulation Article 4 – title

*Text proposed by the Commission*

Sovereignty Seal *and cumulative funding*

*Amendment*

Sovereignty Seal

## Amendment 24

### Proposal for a regulation Article 4 – paragraph 1

*Text proposed by the Commission*

1. The Commission shall award a Sovereignty Seal to any action contributing to any of the Platform objectives, provided the action has been assessed and complies with the minimum quality requirements, in particular eligibility, exclusion and award criteria, provided by a call for proposals under Regulation (EU) 2021/695, Regulation (EU) 2021/694, Regulation (EU) 2021/697, Regulation (EU) 2021/522, or Commission Delegated Regulation (EU)

*Amendment*

1. The Commission shall award a Sovereignty Seal to any action contributing to any of the Platform objectives, provided the action has been ***presented by a Member State***, assessed and complies with the minimum quality requirements, in particular eligibility, exclusion and award criteria, ***as well as conditionalities, as defined in Regulation (EU) 2021/1060*** and provided by a call for proposals under Regulation (EU) 2021/695, Regulation

## Amendment 25

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 4 – paragraph 2 – point b

##### *Text proposed by the Commission*

(b) financing the action through ***cumulative or*** combined funding with another Union instrument in line with the rules of the applicable basic acts.

##### *Amendment*

(b) financing the action through combined funding with another Union instrument in line with the rules of the applicable basic acts.

## Amendment 26

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 4 – paragraph 7

##### *Text proposed by the Commission*

7. The award of a Sovereignty Seal ***and provision of cumulative funding*** is without prejudice to applicable State aid rules and to the Union's international obligations.

##### *Amendment*

7. The award of a Sovereignty Seal is without prejudice to applicable State aid rules and to the Union's international obligations.

## Amendment 27

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 5 – paragraph 1

##### *Text proposed by the Commission*

1. The Commission shall monitor the implementation of the Platform and measure the achievement of the Platform objectives set out in Article 2. The monitoring of implementation shall be targeted and proportionate to the activities carried out under the Platform.

##### *Amendment*

1. The Commission shall monitor the implementation of the Platform and measure the achievement of the Platform objectives set out in Article 2. The monitoring of implementation shall be targeted and proportionate to the activities carried out under the Platform, ***using existing reporting channels and data, the monitoring of which shall be further***

*rationalised.*

## Amendment 28

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 5 – paragraph 3

*Text proposed by the Commission*

3. The Commission shall report on the expenditure financed by the Platform. It shall, as appropriate, report on the achievements related to each of the specific Platform objectives.

*Amendment*

3. The Commission shall report ***annually*** on the expenditure financed by the Platform. It shall, as appropriate, report on the achievements related to each of the specific Platform objectives ***and in particular on objective set out in Art. 2(1) point (ba) to ensure that the implementation of the Platform does not harm cohesion within the EU.***

## Amendment 29

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 6 – paragraph 1 – point d a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***(da) practical guidelines to facilitate access to programmes and funds;***

## Amendment 30

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 7 – paragraph 2

*Text proposed by the Commission*

2. The annual report shall include consolidated information on the progress made in implementing the Platform objectives under each of the programmes and funds.

*Amendment*

2. The annual report shall include consolidated information on the progress made in implementing the Platform objectives under each of the programmes and funds. ***It shall include qualitative and quantitative information on how the objectives of the Article 174 TFEU are being met, as well as a comprehensive and transparent analysis on the usage of***

*funds.*

## Amendment 31

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 7 – paragraph 3 – point b a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

***(ba) the number of approved projects by Member State, as well as the amount dedicated to them.***

## Amendment 32

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 8 – paragraph 2

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

2. The evaluation report shall, in particular, assess to which extent the objectives have been achieved, the efficiency of the use of the resources and the European added value. It shall also consider the continued relevance of all objectives and actions, in view of their potential upscaling.

2. The evaluation report shall ***provide an overview of the Member States and their regions where the programmes have been amended, including information on relevant aspects of the partnership principle as set out in Article ... of Regulation (EU) .... and***, in particular, assess to which extent the objectives have been achieved, the efficiency of the use of the resources and the European added value, ***and contribution to the goals of the Article 174 TFEU***. It shall also consider the continued relevance of all ***STEP*** objectives and actions, in view of their potential upscaling. ***It shall be accompanied by a thorough economic, social and environmental assessment of differentiated territorial impacts and effects for cohesion in the implementation of the Platform.***

## Amendment 33

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 10 – paragraph 1 – point 3



*Text proposed by the Commission*

The resources under the specific objective referred to in Article 3(1), first subparagraph, points (a)(vi) and (b)(ix) shall be programmed under dedicated priorities corresponding to the respective policy objective.

*Amendment*

The resources under the specific objective referred to in Article 3(1), first subparagraph, points (a)(vi) and (b)(ix) shall be programmed under dedicated priorities corresponding to the respective policy objective ***and shall be limited to a maximum of 20 % of the initial allocation of the ERDF.***

**Amendment 34**

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 10 – paragraph 1 – point 3**

Regulation (EU) 2021/1058

Article 3 – paragraph 1a – subparagraph 2

*Text proposed by the Commission*

The Commission shall pay 30 % of the ERDF allocation to ***that*** priority as set out in the decision approving the programme amendment as exceptional one-off pre-financing in addition to the yearly pre-financing for the programme provided for in Article 90(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 or in Article 51(2), (3) and (4) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059. The exceptional pre-financing shall be paid by 31 December 2024, provided the Commission has adopted the decision approving the programme amendment by 31 October 2024.

*Amendment*

The Commission shall pay 30 % of the ERDF allocation to ***the*** priority ***contributing to the STEP objectives referred to in Article 2 of Regulation .../... [STEP Regulation]*** as set out in the decision approving the programme amendment as exceptional one-off pre-financing in addition to the yearly pre-financing for the programme provided for in Article 90(1) and (2) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 or in Article 51(2), (3) and (4) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059. The exceptional pre-financing shall be paid by 31 December 2024, provided the Commission has adopted the decision approving the programme amendment by 31 October 2024.

**Amendment 35**

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 10 – paragraph 1 – point 3**

Regulation (EU) 2021/1058  
Article 3 – paragraph 1a – subparagraph 7

*Text proposed by the Commission*

By way of derogation from Article 112 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, the **maximum** co-financing rates for dedicated priorities established to support the STEP objectives **shall be increased** to 100 %.

*Amendment*

By way of derogation from Article 112 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, the co-financing rates for dedicated priorities established to support the STEP objectives **referred to in Article 2 of Regulation .../... [STEP Regulation] may be increased up** to 100 %.

## Amendment 36

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 10 – paragraph 1 – point 4

Regulation (EU) 2021/1058

Article 5 – paragraph 2 – point e

*Text proposed by the Commission*

when they contribute to the **specific objective under PO 1 set out in Article 3(1), first subparagraph, point (a)(vi) or to the specific objective under PO 2 set out in point (b)(ix) of that subparagraph**, in less developed and transition regions, as well as more developed regions in Member States whose average GDP per capita is below the EU average of the EU-27 measured in purchasing power standards (PPS) and calculated on the basis of Union figures for the period 2015-2017.

*Amendment*

when they contribute to the **STEP objectives referred to in Article 2 of Regulation .../... [STEP Regulation] under PO 1 or under** the specific objective under PO 2 in less developed and transition regions, as well as more developed regions in Member States whose average GDP per capita is below the EU average of the EU-27 measured in purchasing power standards (PPS) and calculated on the basis of Union figures for the period 2015-2017, **while preserving a focus on the SMEs and mid-caps**.

## Amendment 37

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 10 – paragraph 1 – point 5

Regulation (EU) 2021/1058

Article 5 – paragraph 3a

*Text proposed by the Commission*

3a. In order to contribute to the specific

*Amendment*

3a. In order to contribute to the specific

objectives under PO 1 set out in Article 3(1), **first subparagraph, point (a)(vi)** and under PO 2 set out in **point (b)(ix) of that subparagraph**, the ERDF shall also support training, life-long learning, reskilling and education activities.

objectives under PO 1 set out in Article 3(1) and under PO 2 set out in **Article 3(2)**, the ERDF shall also support training, life-long learning, reskilling and education activities.

## Amendment 38

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 11 – paragraph 1 – point 1

Regulation (EU) 2021/1056

Article 2 – paragraph 1

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

In accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 5(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, the JTF shall contribute to the specific objective of enabling regions and people to address the social, employment, economic and environmental impacts of the transition towards the Union's 2030 targets for energy and climate and a climate-neutral economy of the Union by 2050, based on the Paris Agreement. The JTF may also support investments contributing to the STEP objective referred to in Article 2(1), point (a)(ii) of Regulation .../... [STEP Regulation].

#### *Amendment*

In accordance with the second subparagraph of Article 5(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, the JTF shall contribute to the specific objective of enabling regions and people to address the social, employment, economic and environmental impacts of the transition towards the Union's 2030 targets for energy and climate and a climate-neutral economy of the Union by 2050, based on the Paris Agreement. The JTF may also support investments contributing to the STEP objective referred to in Article 2(1), point (a)(ii) **and point (b)** of Regulation .../... [STEP Regulation].

## Amendment 39

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 11 – paragraph 1 – point 2

Regulation (EU) 2021/1056

Article 8 – paragraph 2 – subparagraph 3 a (new)

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

The JTF **may also support** productive investments in enterprises **other than SMEs** contributing to the STEP objectives referred to in Article 2 of Regulation .../...<sup>65</sup> [STEPRegulation]. That support may be

#### *Amendment*

The JTF **also supports** productive investments in enterprises, **with a focus on the SMEs and mid-caps**, contributing to the STEP objectives referred to in Article 2 of Regulation .../...<sup>65</sup> [STEPRegulation].

provided irrespective of whether the gap analysis was carried out in accordance with Article 11(2)(h) and irrespective of its outcome. Such investments shall only be eligible where they do not lead to relocation as defined in point (27) of Article 2 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060. The provision of such support shall not require a revision of the territorial just transition plan *where that revision would be exclusively linked to the gap analysis*.

That support may be provided irrespective of whether the gap analysis was carried out in accordance with Article 11(2)(h) and irrespective of its outcome. Such investments shall only be eligible where they do not lead to relocation as defined in point (27) of Article 2 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, *where apprenticeships and jobs, in particular for young and disadvantaged persons, or young persons not in employment, education or training for new skills are key part of the project*. The provision of such support shall not require a revision of the territorial just transition plan.

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<sup>65</sup> Regulation .../... of the European Parliament and of the Council ... [insert full title and OJ reference].

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<sup>65</sup> Regulation .../... of the European Parliament and of the Council ... [insert full title and OJ reference].

## Amendment 40

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 11 – paragraph 1 – point 3

Regulation (EU) 2021/1056

Article 10 – paragraph 4 – subparagraph 6

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

By way of derogation from Article 112 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, the **maximum** co-financing rates for dedicated priorities established to support the STEP objectives **shall** be increased to 100 %.

#### *Amendment*

By way of derogation from Article 112 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, the co-financing rates for dedicated priorities established to support the STEP objectives **referred to in Article 2 of Regulation .../... [STEP Regulation] may** be increased **up** to 100 %.

## Amendment 41

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 13 – paragraph 1 – point 1

Regulation (EU) 2021/1060

Article 2 – point 45

*Text proposed by the Commission*

(45) ‘Seal of Excellence’ means the quality label attributed by the Commission in respect of a proposal, which shows that the proposal which has been assessed in a call for proposals under a Union instrument ***is deemed to comply with the minimum quality requirements of that Union instrument, but*** could not be funded due to lack of budget available for that call for proposals, and might receive support from other Union or national sources of funding; or the ‘Sovereignty Seal’ referred to in Article 4 of Regulation .../...<sup>67</sup> [STEP Regulation].

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<sup>67</sup> Regulation .../... of the European Parliament and of the Council ... [insert full title and OJ reference].

*Amendment*

(45) ‘Seal of Excellence’ means the quality label attributed by the Commission in respect of a proposal, which shows that the proposal which has been assessed in a call for proposals under a Union instrument could not be funded due to lack of budget available for that call for proposals, and might receive support from other Union or national sources of funding, ***if it complies with respective criteria and conditions***; or the ‘Sovereignty Seal’ referred to in Article 4 of Regulation .../...<sup>67</sup> [STEP Regulation].’

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<sup>67</sup> Regulation .../... of the European Parliament and of the Council ... [insert full title and OJ reference].

**Amendment 42**

**Proposal for a regulation**

**Article 13 – paragraph 1 – point 4**

Regulation (EU) 2021/1060

Annex 1 – table 1

*Text proposed by the Commission*

(4) In the Annex I, Table 1, the following rows are added:

INTERVENTION FIELD		Coefficient for the calculation of support to climate change objectives	Coefficient for the calculation of support to environmental objectives
145a	Support for the development of skills or access to employment in deep and digital	0%	0%

	technologies, biotechnologies.		
145b	Support for the development of skills or access to employment in clean technologies.	100%	40%
188	Productive investments in large enterprises linked primarily to clean technologies.	100%	40%
189	Productive investments in SMEs linked primarily to clean technologies.	100%	40%
190	Productive investments in large enterprises linked primarily to biotechnologies.	0%	0%
191	Productive investments in SMEs linked primarily to biotechnologies.	0%	0%
192	Productive investments in large enterprises linked primarily to deep and digital technologies.	0%	0%
193	Productive investments in SMEs linked primarily to deep and digital technologies.	0%	0%

*Amendment*

(4) In the Annex I, Table 1, the following rows are added:

INTERVENTION FIELD		Coefficient for the calculation of support to climate change objectives	Coefficient for the calculation of support to environmental objectives
145a	Support for the development of skills or access to employment in deep and digital technologies, biotechnologies <i>(contributing to the STEP objectives of Article 2 of Regulation ... / ... [STEP Regulation])</i> .	0%	0%
145b	Support for the development of skills or access to employment in clean technologies <i>(contributing to the STEP objectives of Article 2 of Regulation ... / ... [STEP Regulation])</i> .	100%	40%
188	Productive investments in large enterprises linked primarily to clean technologies <i>(contributing to the STEP objectives of Article 2 of Regulation ... / ... [STEP Regulation])</i> .	100%	40%

189	Productive investments in SMEs linked primarily to clean technologies.	100%	40%
190	Productive investments in large enterprises linked primarily to biotechnologies <i>(contributing to the STEP objectives of Article 2 of Regulation ... /. .. [STEP Regulation]).</i>	0%	0%
191	Productive investments in SMEs linked primarily to biotechnologies <i>(contributing to the STEP objectives of Article 2 of Regulation ... /. .. [STEP Regulation]).</i>	0%	0%
192	Productive investments in large enterprises linked primarily to deep and digital technologies <i>(contributing to the STEP objectives of Article 2 of Regulation ... /. .. [STEP Regulation]).</i>	0%	0%
193	Productive investments in SMEs linked	0%	0%



	primarily to deep and digital technologies <i>(contributing to the STEP objectives of Article 2 of Regulation ... / ... [STEP Regulation]).</i>		
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### Amendment 43

#### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 13 – paragraph 1 – point 5

Regulation (EU) 2021/1060

Annex 1 – table 6

*Text proposed by the Commission*

(5) In Annex I, Table 6, the following row is added:

11	Contributing to skills and jobs in deep and digital technologies, clean technologies, biotechnologies	0%	0%
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*Amendment*

(5) In Annex I, Table 6, the following row is added:

11	Contributing to skills and jobs in deep and digital technologies, clean technologies, biotechnologies <i>(contributing to the STEP objectives in</i>	0%	0%
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	<i>Article 2 of Regulation ... /..[STEP Regulation]).</i>		
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#### Amendment 44

##### Proposal for a regulation

##### Article 14 – paragraph 1 – point -1 (new)

Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Article 2 – point 29

##### *Present text*

(29) 'accounting year', means, for the purposes of Part Three and Part Four, the period from 1 July to 30 June, except for the first accounting year of the programming period, in respect of which it means the period from the start date for eligibility of expenditure until 30 June 2015. The final accounting year shall be from 1 July **2023** to 30 June **2024**;

##### *Amendment*

***(-1) In Article 2, paragraph (29) is replaced by the following:***

(29) 'accounting year', means, for the purposes of Part Three and Part Four, the period from 1 July to 30 June, except for the first accounting year of the programming period, in respect of which it means the period from the start date for eligibility of expenditure until 30 June 2015. The final accounting year shall be from 1 July **2024** to 30 June **2025**;

*(<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02013R1303-20230301>)*

#### Amendment 45

##### Proposal for a regulation

##### Article 14 – paragraph 1 – point -1 a (new)

Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Article 24 – paragraph 1a (new)

##### *Text proposed by the Commission*

##### *Amendment*

***(-1a) In Article 24 the following paragraph (1a) is inserted:***

***1a. By way of derogation from Article 60(1) and the first and fourth subparagraphs of Article 120(3), a co-financing rate of up to 100 % may be***

*applied to expenditure declared in the final accounting year for one or more priority axes in a programme supported by the ERDF, the ESF or the Cohesion Fund. By way of derogation from Article 30(1) and (2) and Article 96(10), the application of the co-financing rate of up to 100 % shall not require a Commission decision approving a programme amendment. The Member State shall notify the revised financial tables to the Commission following approval by the monitoring committee. The co-financing rate of up to 100 % shall apply only if the financial tables are notified to the Commission before the submission of the final application for an interim payment for the final accounting year in accordance with Article 135(2).*

#### **Amendment 46**

##### **Proposal for a regulation**

##### **Article 14 – paragraph 1 – point 1**

Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Article 135 – paragraph 6 – subparagraph 2

##### *Text proposed by the Commission*

Amounts from resources other than REACT-EU reimbursed by the Commission as interim payments in 2025 shall not exceed **1** % of the total financial appropriations to the programme concerned by Fund, REACT-EU resources excluded. Amounts that would be due to be paid by the Commission in 2025 exceeding this percentage shall not be paid and shall be used exclusively for the clearing of pre-financing at closure.

##### *Amendment*

Amounts from resources other than REACT-EU reimbursed by the Commission as interim payments in 2025 shall not exceed **10** % of the total financial appropriations to the programme concerned by Fund, REACT-EU resources excluded. Amounts that would be due to be paid by the Commission in 2025 exceeding this percentage shall not be paid and shall be used exclusively for the clearing of pre-financing at closure.

#### **Amendment 47**

##### **Proposal for a regulation**

##### **Article 14 – paragraph 1 – point 1 a (new)**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

**(1a) In Article 135 the following paragraph 6a is added:**

**6a. For the outermost regions as defined in Article 349 TFEU, by way of derogation from paragraph 2 the deadline for the submission of the final application for an interim payment for the final accounting year shall be 30 June 2025. The last application for interim payment submitted by 31 December 2025 shall be deemed to be the final application for an interim payment for the final accounting year. Amounts from resources other than REACT-EU reimbursed by the Commission as interim payments in 2025 shall not exceed 15 % of the total financial appropriations to the programme concerned by Fund, REACT-EU resources excluded. Amounts that would be due to be paid by the Commission in 2025 exceeding this percentage shall not be paid and shall be used exclusively for the clearing of pre-financing at closure.**

## **Amendment 48**

### **Proposal for a regulation**

#### **Article 14 – paragraph 1 – point 2**

Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Article 138 – subparagraph 1 a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

By way of derogation from the deadline set out in the first subparagraph, Member States may submit the documents referred to under points (a), (b) and (c) for the final accounting year by 15 February 2026.

*Amendment*

By way of derogation from the deadline set out in the first subparagraph, Member States may submit **the final implementation report for the operational programme according to Article 141 and** the documents referred to under points (a), (b) and (c) for the final accounting year by 15 February 2026.

## Amendment 49

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 14 – paragraph 1 – point 2 a (new)

Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013

Article 141 – paragraph 1

#### *Present text*

1. In addition to the documents referred to **in** Article 138, for the final accounting year from 1 July **2023** to 30 June **2024**, Member States shall submit a final implementation report for the operational programme or the last annual implementation report for the operational programme supported by the EMFF.

#### *Amendment*

**(2a) In Article 141, the first paragraph is replaced by the following:**

1. In addition to the documents referred to **the** Article 138, for the final accounting year from 1 July **2024** to 30 June **2025**, Member States shall submit a final implementation report for the operational programme or the last annual implementation report for the operational programme supported by the EMFF.

(<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02013R1303-20230301#tocId198>)

## Amendment 50

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 15 – paragraph 1 – point 3

Regulation (EU) No 223/2014

Article 45 – paragraph 6 – subparagraph 2

#### *Text proposed by the Commission*

Amounts reimbursed by the Commission as interim payments in 2025 shall not exceed **1** % of the total financial appropriations to the programme concerned. Amounts that would be due to be paid by the Commission in 2025 exceeding this percentage shall not be paid and shall be used exclusively for the clearing of pre-financing at closure.’

#### *Amendment*

Amounts reimbursed by the Commission as interim payments in 2025 shall not exceed **15** % of the total financial appropriations to the programme concerned. Amounts that would be due to be paid by the Commission in 2025 exceeding this percentage shall not be paid and shall be used exclusively for the clearing of pre-financing at closure.’

## PROCEDURE – COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Title</b>	Establishing the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform ('STEP') and amending Directive 2003/87/EC, Regulations (EU) 2021/1058, (EU) 2021/1056, (EU) 2021/1057, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) 2021/1060, (EU) 2021/523, (EU) 2021/695, (EU) 2021/697 and (EU) 2021/241	
<b>References</b>	COM(2023)0335 – C9-0209/2023 – 2023/0199(COD)	
<b>Committees responsible</b> Date announced in plenary	BUDG 13.7.2023	ITRE 13.7.2023
<b>Opinion by</b> Date announced in plenary	REGI 13.7.2023	
<b>Associated committees - date announced in plenary</b>	13.7.2023	
<b>Rapporteur for the opinion</b> Date appointed	Rovana Plumb 13.7.2023	
<b>Rule 58 – Joint committee procedure</b> Date announced in plenary	13.7.2023	
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	7.9.2023	
<b>Date adopted</b>	20.9.2023	
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 24 -: 5 0: 4	
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Matteo Adinolfi, François Alfonsi, Pascal Arimont, Adrian-Dragoş Benea, Isabel Benjumea Benjumea, Erik Bergkvist, Stéphane Bijoux, Franc Bogovič, Vlad-Marius Botoş, Rosa D'Amato, Mircea-Gheorghe Hava, Krzysztof Hetman, Manolis Kefalogiannis, Ondřej Knotek, Elżbieta Kruk, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Nora Mebarek, Alin Mituţa, Dan-Ştefan Motreanu, Andželika Anna Możdżanowska, Denis Nesci, Niklas Nienass, Younous Omarjee, Alessandro Panza, Marcos Ros Sempere, André Rougé, Susana Solís Pérez, Irène Tolleret	
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Daniel Buda, Carlos Coelho, Ciarán Cuffe, Hannes Heide, Rovana Plumb, Stanislav Polčák, Peter Pollák, Bronis Ropė	
<b>Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote</b>	Lina Gálvez Muñoz, Elsi Katainen, Maite Pagazaurtundúa	

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

24	+
ECR	Elzbieta Kruk, Andželika Anna Mozdżanowska, Denis Nesci
PPE	Isabel Benjumea Benjumea, Franc Bogovič, Daniel Buda, Carlos Coelho, Mircea-Gheorghe Hava, Krzysztof Hetman, Dan-Ștefan Motreanu, Peter Pollák
Renew	Vlad-Marius Botoș, Elsi Katainen, Alin Mituța, Susana Solís Pérez, Irène Tolleret
S&D	Adrian-Dragoș Benea, Erik Bergkvist, Hannes Heide, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Nora Mebarek, Rovana Plumb, Marcos Ros Sempere
The Left	Younous Omarjee

5	-
Verts/ALE	François Alfonsi, Ciarán Cuffe, Rosa D'Amato, Niklas Nienass, Bronis Ropé

4	0
ID	Matteo Adinolfi, Alessandro Panza, André Rougé
Renew	Ondřej Knotek

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention