



*Committee on Regional Development
The Chair*

20.7.2023

Mr Johan Van Overtveldt
Chair
Committee on Budgets
BRUSSELS

Subject: Opinion on the interim report on the proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 laying down the multi-annual financial framework for the years 2021-2027 (COM(2023)0337 – 2023/0201(APP))

Dear Mr Chair,

Under the procedure referred to above, the Committee on Regional Development has been asked to submit an opinion to your committee. At its meeting of 27 June 2023, the committee decided to send the opinion in the form of a letter.

The Committee on Regional Development considered the matter at its meeting of 19 July 2023. At that meeting¹, it decided to call on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution.

Yours sincerely,

Younous Omarjee

¹ The following were present for the final vote: Younous Omarjee (Chair and rapporteur for opinion), Isabel Benjumea Benjumea (vice-chair), Krzysztof Hetman (Vice-Chair), Nora Mebarek (Vice-Chair), François Alfonsi, Adrian-Dragoş Benea, Franc Bogovič, Vlad-Marius Botoş, Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Carlos Coelho, Rosanna Conte, Corina Creţu, Rosa D'Amato, Christian Doleschal, Herbert Dorfmann, Matthias Ecke, Carlo Fidanza, Sandro Gozi, Mircea-Gheorghe Hava, Peter Jahr, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Martina Michels, Ana Miranda, Alin Mituţa, Dan-Ştefan Motreanu, Denis Nesci, Niklas Nienass, Andrey Novakov, Alessandro Panza, Caroline Roose, Marcos Ros Sempere, André Rougé, Susana Solís Pérez, Irène Tolleret, Yana Toom, Stefania Zambelli, Carlo Fidanza (for ECR pursuant to Rule 209(7))

SUGGESTIONS

The REGI Committee

1. Reminds that Cohesion Policy and its financial instruments have played a central part in the EU answer to most of unexpected challenges which it faced over the last years, such as the COVID-19 crisis and the challenges linked to the inflow of refugees in the aftermath of the Russian aggression on Ukraine, proving the policy's adaptability and the adequacy of its instruments to deliver appropriate measures in a timely manner;
2. In this context, expresses its firm position that the mobilisation of the Cohesion Policy funds for urgent needs should not affect negatively the long-term investments planned and that all funds based on Article 175 TFEU must follow the principles and objectives set up by the treaties themselves ; believes that cohesion policy should not undergo any transfers to other funds which could jeopardize the cohesion funds' ability to deliver on their goals, and further, that , as also highlighted in the European Commission's Eight Cohesion report, EU policies and funds should do no harm to cohesion objectives and, to the contrary, should reinforce them; Believes that any additional objectives or urgency should be addressed with additional financial means;
3. Reminds that investments under Cohesion Policy funds are of crucial importance in terms of reducing territorial disparities and progressing towards great territorial cohesion in the EU, in particular in the current unstable economic, social and political context; recalls that pursuant to Article 174 TFEU, the Union shall aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions, and that particular attention shall be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition, and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as islands, outermost, cross-border and mountain regions;
4. Welcomes the proposal to increase the budgetary ceilings for payments for the remaining years of the MFF 2021-2027, submitted in the context of the MFF revision, and thereby allow for a budgetary room for manoeuvre in case of unexpected needs;; underlines though the importance of the rapid and efficient implementation of cohesion policy for the 2021-2027 period and stresses the need to speed up this process in order to avoid any further delays;
5. Stresses that the allocations under the EU Solidarity Fund have clearly been insufficient in view of the number and intensity of natural disasters; insists on the necessity to demonstrate EU solidarity with the regions concerned, and to deliver concrete financial assistance to them; welcomes the proposed reinforcement of the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve by 2.5BN but believes that the budgeted sum risks to be insufficient and invites Commission to closely monitor the needs in this respect, in view of ensuring the adequate EU response;
6. Recalls the request of the European Parliament¹ for a large revision of the EUSF, aimed, inter alia, at the integration of the 'Build Back Better' principle to be fully in Article 3 of the EUSF Regulation, with a view to contributing to the improvement of the quality of these regions' infrastructure during reconstruction and to better prepare them to avoid

¹ European Parliament resolution of 18 May 2021 on the review of the European Union Solidarity Fund (with the Chair as rapporteur)

future disasters by building preventive infrastructure; recalls the need to urgently strengthen EU policy regarding adaptation to climate change;

7. Reiterates the European Parliament's support for the efficient implementation of the Union budget in accordance with the principles laid down in the Financial Regulation including the respect for the rule of law and the fundamental rights;
8. Welcomes that the Commission has further developed a methodology² to track gender equality-related spending in the 2021-2027 MFF, which looks at policy design and resource allocation and in particular the presentation of an ex-post gender impact assessment on a more granular level and reporting on volumes; calls on the Commission to assess holistically gender impact and facilitate that all the relevant data is available for the tracking.

² https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/eu-budget/performance-and-reporting/horizontal-priorities/gender-equality-mainstreaming_en