AMENDMENTS
1 - 53

Draft opinion
Isabel Benjumea Benjumea
(PE662.007v01-00)

2019 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Commission
(2020/2140(DEC))
AM_Com_NonLegOpinion
Amendment 1
Isabel Benjumea Benjumea
Draft opinion
Paragraph 1

1. Notes that more than half of EU expenditure in 2019 may be considered as high-risk, including reimbursement-based payments for investments in the areas of cohesion and rural development; notes that the increase in the estimated rate of material error from 4.5% in 2018 to 4.9% in 2019 can result in auditors giving an adverse opinion on EU expenditure;

Amendment

1. Notes that more than half of EU expenditure in 2019 may be considered as high-risk, including reimbursement-based payments for investments in the areas of cohesion and rural development, which is worthwhile considering also in the context of the COVID-19 crisis; notes that the increase in the estimated rate of material error from 4.5% in 2018 to 4.9% in 2019 can result in auditors giving an adverse opinion on EU expenditure, with the potential for a possible subsequent loss of funding, made somewhat more considerable by strict time limits foreseen in certain cohesion policy-related pieces of legislation adopted in the wake of this crisis;

Or. en

Amendment 2
Daniel Buda
Draft opinion
Paragraph 1

1. Notes that more than half of EU expenditure in 2019 may be considered as high-risk, including reimbursement-based payments for investments in the areas of cohesion and rural development; notes that the increase in the estimated rate of material error from 4.5% in 2018 to 4.9% in 2019 can result in auditors giving an adverse opinion on EU expenditure;

Amendment

1. Notes that more than half of EU expenditure in 2019 may be considered as high-risk, including reimbursement-based payments for investments in the areas of cohesion and rural development; notes that the increase in the estimated rate of material error from 4.5% in 2018 to 4.9% in 2019 can result in auditors giving an adverse opinion on EU expenditure; highlights the fact that high risk expenditure accounted for over half
(53%) of the expenditure audited in 2019, which was an increase on 2018;

Amendment 3
Mónica Silvana González, Corina Creţu, Pedro Marques, Elisabetta Gualmini, Isabel Carvalhais, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro

Draft opinion
Paragraph 1

Draft opinion

1. Notes that more than half of EU expenditure in 2019 may be considered as high-risk, including reimbursement-based payments for investments in the areas of cohesion and rural development; notes that the increase in the estimated rate of material error from 4.5 % in 2018 to 4.9 % in 2019 can result in auditors giving an adverse opinion on EU expenditure;

Amendment

1. Notes that for the Court of Auditors the revenue for 2019 was legal and regular, and the increase in the estimated rate of material error from 4.5 % in 2018 to 4.9 % in 2019 can result in auditors giving an adverse opinion on EU expenditure;

Amendment 4
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte

Draft opinion
Paragraph 1

Draft opinion

1. Notes that more than half of EU expenditure in 2019 may be considered as high-risk, including reimbursement-based payments for investments in the areas of cohesion and rural development; notes that the increase in the estimated rate of material error from 4.5 % in 2018 to 4.9 % in 2019 can result in auditors giving an adverse opinion on EU expenditure;

Amendment

1. Notes with concern that more than half of EU expenditure in 2019 may be considered as high-risk, including reimbursement-based payments for investments in the areas of cohesion and rural development; notes with concern that the increase in the estimated rate of material error from 4.5 % in 2018 to 4.9 % in 2019 can result in auditors giving an adverse opinion on EU expenditure;
Amendment 5
Elżbieta Kruk, Raffaele Fitto, Andżelika Anna Moźdżanowska, Valdemar Tomaševski, Izabela-Helena Kloc, Krzysztof Jurgiel

Draft opinion
Paragraph 1

1. Notes that more than half of EU expenditure in 2019 may be considered as high-risk, including reimbursement-based payments for investments in the areas of cohesion and rural development; notes that the increase in the estimated rate of material error from 4.5% in 2018 to 4.9% in 2019 can result in auditors giving an adverse opinion on EU expenditure;

Amendment

1. Notes that the estimated error rate for the section ‘Cohesion’ drops from 5% (for 2018) to 4.4%, which is in line with the downward trend of the error rate in this area (in 2015 and 2016 it was 5.2% and 4.8% respectively); recalls that for the 2000-2006 programming period, this section of the EU budget recorded a double digit error rate;

Or. en

Amendment 6
Isabel Benjumea Benjumea

Draft opinion
Paragraph 1 a (new)

1 a. Welcomes efforts to simplify requirements to be made of project managers and management authorities in the Member States under the 2021-2027 Common Provisions Regulation, as further simplification of rules and procedures can contribute to a more efficient use of funds and a reduced error rate; emphasises, that any increase in funding requires greater attention and that in the event of an error, the institutions risk a loss to their credibility;

Amendment

1 a. Welcomes efforts to simplify requirements to be made of project managers and management authorities in the Member States under the 2021-2027 Common Provisions Regulation, as further simplification of rules and procedures can contribute to a more efficient use of funds and a reduced error rate; emphasises, that any increase in funding requires greater attention and that in the event of an error, the institutions risk a loss to their credibility;

Or. en
Amendment 7
Elżbieta Kruk, Raffaele Fitto, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Valdemar Tomaševski, Izabela-Helena Kloc, Krzysztof Jurgiel

Draft opinion
Paragraph 1 a (new)

Amendment

1 a. Is of the opinion that the level of error estimated by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) for 2019 expenditure in this area should be assessed in the context of the multiannual nature of the programmes, in which case further corrections are exercised at a later stage which would lead to a significant reduction of the risk at the programme closure;

Or. en

Amendment 8
Elżbieta Kruk, Raffaele Fitto, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Valdemar Tomaševski, Izabela-Helena Kloc, Krzysztof Jurgiel

Draft opinion
Paragraph 1 b (new)

Amendment

1 b. Addresses the European Court of Auditors with a request to produce a report with an estimated error rate after the closure of the 2007-2013 Cohesion Policy programmes;

Or. en

Amendment 9
Isabel Benjumea Benjumea

Draft opinion
Paragraph 2
2. Acknowledges that high-risk expenditures are often subject to complex rules and eligibility conditions, and that such rules and conditions are often supplemented by further requirements imposed by national authorities, leading to an increased risk of error that underlines the difference between error and fraud; recalls in this respect its previous positions on the errors in the reimbursement of VAT and the need to simplify the rules in this area to help the Member States to comply with their obligations to pay beneficiaries;
level of error in spending on ‘Economic, social and territorial cohesion’ from 5 % in 2018 to 4,4 % in 2019; welcomes this year-on-year improvement, but is disappointed that it has not proved possible to decrease the error rate to the 3 % level recorded in 2017;

Or. en

Amendment 12
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3

Draft opinion

3. Notes the decrease in the estimated level of error in spending on ‘Economic, social and territorial cohesion’ from 5 % in 2018 to 4,4 % in 2019; welcomes this year-on-year improvement, but is disappointed that it has not proved possible to decrease the error rate to the 3 % level recorded in 2017;

Amendment

3. Notes the decrease in the estimated level of error in spending on ‘Economic, social and territorial cohesion’ from 5 % in 2018 to 4,4 % in 2019; welcomes this year-on-year improvement, but is disappointed that it has not proved possible to decrease the error rate to the 3 % level recorded in 2017; is concerned that of the 236 transactions examined, 29 errors had not been detected by audit authorities, taking account of the 64 errors previously discovered by audit authorities and corrections applied by programme authorities (worth a total of 334 million euros for both programming periods taken together);

Or. en

Amendment 13
Mónica Silvana González, Corina Creţu, Pedro Marques, Elisabetta Gualmini, Isabel Carvalhais, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Andrea Cozzolino

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3

Draft opinion

Amendment

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3. **Notes** the decrease in the estimated level of error in spending on ‘Economic, social and territorial cohesion’ from 5% in 2018 to 4.4% in 2019; welcomes this year-on-year improvement, but is disappointed that it has not proved possible to decrease the error rate to the 3% level recorded in 2017;

3. **Welcomes** the decrease in the estimated level of error in spending on ‘Economic, social and territorial cohesion’ from 5% in 2018 to 4.4% in 2019; welcomes this year-on-year improvement, but is disappointed that it has not proved possible to decrease the error rate to the 3% level recorded in 2017, **so efforts should be made in this regard during the next programming period**;

**Amendment 14**
Niklas Nienaß

**Draft opinion**
**Paragraph 3**

**Draft opinion**

3. Notes the decrease in the estimated level of error in spending on ‘Economic, social and territorial cohesion’ from 5% in 2018 to 4.4% in 2019; welcomes this year-on-year improvement, but is disappointed that it has not proved possible to decrease the error rate to the 3% level recorded in 2017;

3. Notes the decrease in the estimated level of error in spending on ‘Economic, social and territorial cohesion’ from 5% in 2018 to 4.4% in 2019; welcomes this year-on-year improvement, but is disappointed that it has not proved possible to decrease the error rate to the 3% level recorded in 2017, **despite the simplification measures provided for in the Omnibus Regulation**;

**Amendment 15**
Daniel Buda

**Draft opinion**
**Paragraph 4**

**Draft opinion**

4. Notes that the main reasons for this error rate are project ineligibility, infringement of internal market rules, and ineligible expenditure; recalls that these areas have high inherent risk of error and

4. Notes that the main reasons for this error rate are project ineligibility, infringement of internal market rules, and ineligible expenditure; recalls that these areas have high inherent risk of error and
that checks by managing authorities are not always effective; stresses that the European Union needs cohesive, efficient and reliable mechanisms for stimulating Member States' absorption of European funding;

Or. ro

Amendment 16
Niklas Nienäss

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4

Draft opinion

4. Notes that the main reasons for this error rate are project ineligibility, infringement of internal market rules, and ineligible expenditure; recalls that these areas have high inherent risk of error and that checks by managing authorities are not always effective;

Amendment

4. Notes that the main reasons for this error rate are project ineligibility, infringement of internal market rules, and ineligible expenditure; recalls that these areas have high risk of error and that checks by managing authorities are not always effective; considers that more information and transparency is required from Member States when using public procurement in the implementation of cohesion policy resources;

Or. en

Amendment 17
Mónica Silvana González, Corina Creţu, Pedro Marques, Elisabetta Gualmini, Isabel Carvalhais, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Andrea Cozzolino

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4

Draft opinion

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Amendment

4. Notes that the main reasons for this error rate are project ineligibility, infringement of internal market rules, and ineligible expenditure; recalls that these areas have high inherent risk of error and that checks by managing authorities are not
always effective; always effective; underlines that a financial error, in most of the cases, does not constitute fraud;

Amendment 18
Elżbieta Kruk, Raffaele Fitto, Andżelika Anna Mozdżanowska, Valdemar Tomaševski, Izabela-Helena Kloc, Krzysztof Jurgiel

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4

Draft opinion
Amendment

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4. Notes that the main reasons for this error rate are project ineligibility, infringement of internal market rules, and ineligible expenditure; recalls that these areas have high inherent risk of error and that checks by managing authorities and audit institutions are not always effective;

Amendment 19
Niklas Nienaß

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 a (new)

Draft opinion
Amendment

4 a. Believes that EU funds are to be used to support the people living in the regions, not to finance the financial or political benefits of national politicians in charge of regional management; condemns any kleptocratic misuse of EU resources by Member States; calls for centralized management of funds by the Commission, if elite-driven corruption and conflicts of interest occur; reaffirms the need for a strong rule of law mechanism and requires the Commission to use it to its full extent as soon as it is
introduced; urges the Commission to investigate any cases, that are brought to the Commission's attention and to strictly follow-up according to applicable rules including by suspending and recovering resources;

Or. en

Amendment 20
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

4 a. Regrets that ‘Ineligible projects’ made 55% as a main type of error; notes that for five ERDF projects, from the 2014-2020 programming period, aid was granted to beneficiaries or operations that did not meet the eligibility conditions set out in the applicable regulation and multiannual operational programmes;

Or. en

Amendment 21
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 b (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

4 b. Regrets that ‘Infringements of internal market rules’ made 24% as a main type of error (9% - infringements of state aid rules; 15% - serious non-compliance with public procurement rules);

Or. en
Amendment 22
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 c (new)

Draft opinion  Amendment

4 c.  Regrets that ‘Ineligible expenditure’ made 12% as a main type of error;

Or. en

Amendment 23
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 d (new)

Draft opinion  Amendment

4 d.  Finds unacceptable the weaknesses found in the work of several audit authorities covered by ECA sample, which currently limit the reliance that can be placed on that work (the recalculated rate was above the 2 % materiality threshold in nine out of 20 assurance packages for the 2014-2020 period, the Commission adjusted the residual error rates for eight assurance packages to a figure above 2 %);

Or. en

Amendment 24
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 e (new)

Draft opinion  Amendment

4 e.  Notes that for 120 of the sampled transactions (55 %), the European Court
of Auditors (ECA) was able to draw conclusions on the basis of its review of the work carried out by the audit authorities; is deeply concerned that ECA identified shortcomings with regards to the scope, quality and/or documentation of that work in 100 transactions (45 %), which required the ECA to carry out once more the corresponding audit procedures;

Amendment 25
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 f (new)

4 f. Is very concerned about the weaknesses found in the work of several audit authorities covered by the European Court of Auditors' (ECA) sample, which currently limit the reliance that can be placed on that work (the recalculated rate was above the 2 % materiality threshold in nine out of 20 assurance packages for the 2014-2020 period, the Commission adjusted the residual error rates for eight assurance packages to a figure above 2 %); notes that for 120 of the sampled transactions (55 %), the ECA was able to draw conclusions on the basis of its review of the work carried out by the audit authorities; is deeply concerned that ECA identified shortcomings with the scope, quality and/or documentation of that work in 100 transactions (45 %), which required the ECA to carry out once more the corresponding audit procedures;

Amendment 26
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte
Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 g (new)

Draft opinion

4 g. Notes that 13 of the compliance audits (5 by DG REGIO and 8 by DG EMPL) were final by May 2020, but for half of these audits, therefore, the residual rates were not yet final;

Amendment 27
Elżbieta Kruk, Raffaele Fitto, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Valdemar Tomaševski, Izabela-Helena Kloc, Krzysztof Jurgiel

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5

Draft opinion

5. Welcomes efforts to simplify requirements to be made of project managers and management authorities in the Member States under the 2021-2027 programming period of the Common Provisions Regulation;

Amendment

5. Welcomes efforts to simplify requirements to be made of project managers and management authorities in the Member States under the 2021-2027 programming period of the Common Provisions Regulation; however, as also noted by the European Court of Auditors, a number of provisions lack clarity as to their implementation and many procedures risk being complex depending on the rules of the different Member States. To this end, the Commission is invited, in a structured dialogue with Member States, to analyse administrative practices and procedures at Member State level in order to eliminate inefficiencies and to disseminate examples of effective administrative practices and procedures to all competent authorities of the Member States;

Or. en
Amendment 28
Vlad-Marius Botoș, Ondřej Knotek, Susana Solís Pérez

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5

5. Welcomes efforts to simplify requirements to be made of project managers and management authorities in the Member States under the 2021-2027 programming period of the Common Provisions Regulation; underlines that the key to solving this issue is through simpler national eligibility rules which might help reduce, first of all, the administrative burden and second of all, the source of error, thereby ensuring a high level of transparency; urges wider use of Simplified Cost Options, which ECA also considers a great relief for applicants and for control; points out that there is a need for an improvement of the audit working methods put in place at the national level.

Amendment

5. Welcomes efforts to simplify requirements to be made of project managers and management authorities in the Member States under the 2021-2027 programming period of the Common Provisions Regulation and the MFF related funds;
6. Points out that cohesion policy has already proven its added value and will be even more indispensable in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis; underlines that eliminating the root causes of irregularities via streamlining and strengthening of administrative capacities would help beneficiaries and authorities concentrate on results and contribute to reducing the error rate;

notes that the urgent flexibility measures adopted in response to the pandemic have had an immediate effect, and that many of these measures, which have yielded outstanding results, should be continued;

Or. ro

6. Points out that cohesion policy has already proven its added value and will be even more indispensable in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis; underlines that eliminating the root causes of irregularities via streamlining and strengthening of administrative capacities would help beneficiaries and authorities concentrate on results and contribute to reducing the error rate; strongly believes that the rule-of-law conditionality will also contribute to increasing the regularity of EU funding;

Or. en
Amendment 32  
Mathilde Androuët

Draft opinion  
Paragraph 6

6. Points out that cohesion policy has already proven its added value and will be even more indispensable in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis; underlines that eliminating the root causes of irregularities via streamlining and **strengthening of administrative capacities** would help beneficiaries and authorities concentrate on results and contribute to reducing the error rate;

6. Points out that cohesion policy has already proven its added value and will be even more indispensable in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis; underlines that eliminating the root causes of irregularities via streamlining and **the presentation of feasibility studies for projects** would help beneficiaries and authorities concentrate on results and contribute to reducing the error rate;

Or. fr

Amendment 33  
Vlad-Marius Botoș, Ondřej Knotek, Susana Solís Pérez

Draft opinion  
Paragraph 6 a (new)

6 a. **Acknowledges that COVID-19 crisis has provided a new and unexpected challenge that the EU and its Member States need to respond determinedly and provide solutions at the EU and national level; welcomes the increasing financial flexibility in cohesion spending which enables Member States to use the funds to finance crisis-related projects; underlines the necessity of fostering the continuity and deeper cooperation of all stakeholders relevant to cohesion policy, mainly SMEs, municipalities and regions, which will struggle with unemployment and healthcare in the coming months;**

Or. en
Amendment 34
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte

Draft opinion
Paragraph 6 a (new)

Draft opinion
Amendment

6 a. Calls on the Commission to:
- clarify eligibility conditions (including by defining what is meant by ‘physically completed’ and/or ‘fully implemented’ operations to help Member States to verify that operations comply with Article 65(6) of the CPR and avoid the non-detection of ineligible operations);
- take action to increase the reliability of the residual rates reported by audit authorities (analyse the main sources of undetected errors and develop the necessary measures together with audit authorities to improve the reliability of reported residual rates);

Or. en

Amendment 35
Elżbieta Kruk, Raffaele Fitto, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Valdemar Tomaševski, Izabela-Helena Kloc, Krzysztof Jurgiel

Draft opinion
Paragraph 6 a (new)

Draft opinion
Amendment

6 a. Shares the Court's conclusions stating that the change in the rules for the implementation of ESI Funds (Cohesion Policy and Agriculture / Fisheries), due to the crisis related to the COVID-19 pandemic, should further accelerate the implementation process;

Or. en
Amendment 36  
Daniel Buda  

Draft opinion  
Paragraph 7

7. Notes with concern that, at the end of the sixth year of implementation, absorption rates for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) are 6.6% lower than at the same stage in the previous programming period; and draws attention to the risk that, as the eligibility period draws to an end and given the circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, Member States may prioritise spending over performance and regularity.

Draft opinion  
Paragraph 7

Amendment 37  
Isabel Benjumea Benjumea  

Draft opinion  
Paragraph 7

7. Notes with concern that, at the end of the sixth year of implementation, absorption rates for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) are 6.6% lower than at the same stage in the previous programming period; and draws attention to the risk that, as the eligibility period draws to an end and given the circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, Member States may prioritise spending over performance and regularity; emphasizes that Member States' objectives for the 2021-2027 programming period will be far more ambitious, as a response to the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 crisis, with a view to protecting citizens, saving jobs and bolstering the investment climate, involving all levels of government in the development and implementation of the recovery plans;

Draft opinion  
Paragraph 7

Amendment 37  
Isabel Benjumea Benjumea  

Draft opinion  
Paragraph 7

7. Notes with concern that, at the end of the sixth year of implementation, absorption rates for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) are 6.6% lower than at the same stage in the previous programming period; and draws attention to the risk that, as the
eligibility period draws to an end and given the circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, Member States may prioritise spending over performance and regularity.

calls on the Commission and the Council to develop a plan to speed up the process in resolving the issue, including measures to simplify procedures, which under the above-mentioned circumstances would contribute to the responsible and adequate use of funds, and thus to recovery in the Member States.

Amendment 38
Mathilde Androuët
Draft opinion
Paragraph 7

7. Notes with concern that, at the end of the sixth year of implementation, absorption rates for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) are 6.6% lower than at the same stage in the previous programming period; and draws attention to the risk that, as the eligibility period draws to an end and given the circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, Member States may prioritise spending over performance and regularity.

Amendment 39
Martina Michels
Draft opinion
Paragraph 7

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Amendment 40
Elżbieta Kruk, Raffaele Fitto, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Valdemar Tomaševski, Izabela-Heleńa Kloc, Krzysztof Jurgiel

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7

Draft opinion

7. Notes with concern that, at the end of the sixth year of implementation, absorption rates for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) are 6,6% lower than at the same stage in the previous programming period; and draws attention to the risk that, as the eligibility period draws to an end and given the circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, Member States may prioritise spending over performance and regularity.

Or. en

Amendment 41
Vlad-Marius Botoș, Ondřej Knotek, Susana Solís Pérez

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7

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7. Notes with concern that, at the end of the sixth year of implementation, absorption rates for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) are 6.6% lower than at the same stage in the previous programming period; and draws attention to the risk that, as the eligibility period draws to an end and given the circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, Member States may prioritise spending over performance and regularity.

Underlines that the increasing shift from performance to compliance hinders the cohesion objectives and generates unnecessary spending.
Amendment 43
Mónica Silvana González, Corina Crețu, Pedro Marques, Elisabetta Gualmini, Isabel Carvalhais, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Andrea Cozzolino

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7

Draft opinion

7. Notes with concern that, at the end of the sixth year of implementation, absorption rates for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) are 6.6% lower than at the same stage in the previous programming period; and draws attention to the risk that, as the eligibility period draws to an end and given the circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, Member States may prioritise spending over performance and regularity.

Amendment

7. Notes with concern that, at the end of the sixth year of implementation, absorption rates for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) are 6.6% lower than at the same stage in the previous programming period; and draws attention to the risk that, as the eligibility period draws to an end and given the circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, Member States should pay special attention to absorption rates in the next programming period without causing any prejudice to performance and regularity.

Or. en

Amendment 44
Isabel Benjumea Benjumea

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7 a (new)

Draft opinion

7 a. Notes with concern the European Court of Auditors report for 2019 as well, as it would point out, that most of the errors in expenses of programmes under shared management have their origins in errors in audits by national audit authorities; welcomes therefore the creation of technical assistance programmes by the European Commission for collaboration with managing bodies, training programmes and deepening the figures of National Experts programme as a tool to increase the knowledge of the instruments and avoid aforementioned errors; points out in
In this context the necessary monitoring of the European Commission's Anti-Fraud Strategy as well as support and assistance to States in the implementation of anti-fraud measures, including the analysis of irregularities reported by Member States in the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds.


Amendment 45
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7 a (new)

Draft opinion
Amendment

7 a. Regrets that the delayed timing of a number of evaluations and studies analysing the results of the 2007-2013 period and the early stages of programming and implementation of the 2014-2020 cohesion policy programmes means that lessons learned are too late to have an impact on either the current or following programming periods (the results of the 2014-2020 ex-post evaluations, for example, are expected to be available by the end of 2025 as required by the CPR, by then the 2021-2027 programming period will be in its fifth year and the Commission is likely to be well advanced in preparing its legislative proposals for the post-2027 period);

Amendment 46
Draft opinion
Paragraph 7 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

7 a. Points out that concerning fraud, both the Commission and the Member States are responsible for addressing fraud in Cohesion spending. They need to step up their efforts to prevent and detect fraud, in cooperation with EPPO and the anti-fraud office (OLAF).

Or. en

Amendment 47
Martina Michels

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

7 a. Points out that the Union is having recourse to financial instruments and guarantees for the EIB group, placing the Union budget at greater risk of exposure, as already pointed out by the ECA;

Or. en

Amendment 48
Elżbieta Kruk, Raffaele Fitto, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Valdemar Tomaševski, Izabela-Helena Kloc, Krzysztof Jurgiel

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

7 a. Agrees with the approach of the European Court of Auditors that it is necessary to ensure appropriate funding for payments under the EU budget for the
forthcoming years;

Or. en

Amendment 49
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7 b (new)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft opinion</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 b. Finds the effects of the relatively low levels of implementation in cohesion policy, compared to the rest of EU budget, worrisome; notes that an eventual time lag between the start of the programme, implementation and realisation of outputs and results, together with the fact that the latest data available relates to the end of 2018 in an implementation period lasting until the end of 2023, make it harder at this stage to achieve the objectives;</td>
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Or. en

Amendment 50
Elżbieta Kruk, Raffaele Fitto, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Valdemar Tomaševski, Izabela-Helena Kloc, Krzysztof Jurgiel

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7 b (new)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Draft opinion</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 b. Calls on the Commission to identify the regions have a low funding take-up rates and to help them to improve it through the identification of the rules that can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Cohesion Funds;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Or. en
Amendment 51
Maximilian Krah, Joachim Kuhs, Alessandro Panza, Vincenzo Sofo, Rosanna Conte

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7 c (new)

Draft opinion

7 c. Regrets that of 72 indicators in total, only one third of the indicators are on track to meet their targets and that about half of the indicators are not on track; regrets that of 9 indicators linked to the general objectives, only two are on track, meanwhile about one third of the indicators had a mid-term milestone target set for 2018; notes that in total, 40% of the output indicators are on track, for result and impact indicators, this percentage is 10%; stresses that of all 10 indicators from the programme statements linked to the objective of supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors, only 1 – ‘Number of households with improved energy consumption classification indicator’ – is on track;

Amendment

7 c. Urges the Commission to propose clear and easily applicable definitions and criteria for monitoring the funds available to fight the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis;

Or. en

Amendment 52
Elżbieta Kruk, Raffaele Fitto, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Valdemar Tomaševski, Izabela-Helena Kloc, Krzysztof Jurgiel

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7 c (new)

Draft opinion

7 c. Urges the Commission to propose clear and easily applicable definitions and criteria for monitoring the funds available to fight the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis;

Amendment

7 c. Urges the Commission to propose clear and easily applicable definitions and criteria for monitoring the funds available to fight the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis;

Or. en
Amendment 53
Elżbieta Kruk, Raffaele Fitto, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska, Valdemar Tomaševski, Izabela-Helena Kloc, Krzysztof Jurgiel

Draft opinion
Paragraph 7 d (new)

Draft opinion

7 d. Invites the Commission to interrupt or suspend payments in case of fraud, but where serious deficiencies in management and control systems have been identified, to use the block as last resort, when all other options have been exhausted, because suspending payments could have serious consequences for the regions severely hit already by the COVID-19 crisis;

Amendment

Or. en