



**2023/2129(DEC)**

07.11.2023

# **DRAFT OPINION**

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on discharge in respect of the implementation of the general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2022, section III - Commission (2023/2129(DEC))

Rapporteur for opinion: Younous Omarjee

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Reminds that cohesion spending is reimbursement-based and hence very complex and more prone to error than other spending areas; acknowledges that the proximity of the closure of the 2014-2020 period, the flexibilities and additional funding made available through CRII(+), CARE and REACT-EU and the parallel implementation of the RRF may have contributed to increasing the pressure on the managing authorities and beneficiaries and thus the number of errors;
2. Reminds that, without prejudice to the need to support the authorities and beneficiaries to better comply with spending rules and minimise errors, the most pressing issues to be addressed in the area of cohesion policy are, on the one hand, the overly complex rules and procedures and the disproportionate administrative burden they entail and, on the other hand, the effective targeting of the funds;
3. Highlights the role of the EPPO in protecting the EU budget; reminds that, in her appearance before the Committee on Regional Development on 25 May 2023, the European Public Prosecutor noted that the management and control system for EU expenditure currently in place is not designed to detect fraud and that audits or administrative investigations rarely detect financial crime; stresses the need to provide the EPPO with the necessary means to carry out its duties; is of the opinion that a strengthened EPPO would make it possible for the legislator to further simplify the regulatory framework for cohesion;
4. Notes that the Commission's error estimates are above the materiality threshold but are significantly lower than the Court's<sup>1</sup>; draws attention to the different methodologies applied by the two institutions; is worried about the growing discrepancy between the assessments provided by the Court of Auditors and the Commission, especially in the area of cohesion;
5. Draws attention to the increased risk of decommitments in the coming years and urges the Commission to continue its cooperation with the Member States and the regions to both speed up and ease the good closure of the 2014-2020 programming period;
6. Is concerned that the prioritisation of the RRF in the Member States is causing delays in the implementation of funds under the CPR 2021-2027.

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<sup>1</sup> European Court of Auditors, [Annual report on the implementation of the EU budget for the 2022 financial year](#).