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International regulation in city-planning and environmental protection.

Urban Dimension in Cohesion Policy of EU

The Cohesion Policy of EU

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Cohesion policy

‘Cohesion policy’ is the policy behind the hundreds of thousands of projects all over Europe that receive funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund (Cohesion Fund applies to EU Member States which have a GDP lower than 90 % of the EU-27 average – Croatia not taken into account).

Economic and social cohesion – as defined in the 1986 Single European Act – is about ‘reducing disparities between the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favoured regions’. The EU's most recent treaty, the Lisbon Treaty, adds another facet to cohesion, referring to ‘economic, social and territorial cohesion’.



Cohesion policy

The idea is that cohesion policy should also promote more balanced, more sustainable ‘territorial development’ – a broader concept than regional policy, which is specifically linked to the ERDF and operates specifically at regional level.

In the 2014-2020 budgetary period, coordination and coherence between cohesion policy and the other EU policies contributing to regional development, namely rural development and fisheries and maritime policy, has been strengthened by laying down common provisions for the ERDF, the ESF, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). All five funds together are known as the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds.



Cohesion policy

Cohesion Policy has a strong impact in many fields

The investments help to deliver many other EU policy objectives.

It complements EU policies such as those dealing with education, employment, energy, the environment, the single market, research and innovation. In particular Cohesion Policy provides the necessary investment framework and strategy to meet our agreed growth goals

By 2020 the EU aims to meet five concrete objectives – on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion, and climate/energy. Each Member State has adopted its own national targets in these areas.

In order to reach these goals and address the diverse development needs in all EU regions, EUR351.8 billion – almost a third of the total EU budget – has been set aside for Cohesion Policy for 2014-2020.



Cohesion policy

Cohesion Policy underpins European solidarity

The bulk of Cohesion Policy funding is concentrated on less developed European countries and regions in order to help them to catch up and to reduce the economic, social and territorial disparities that still exist in the EU.

Overall financial impact

Cohesion Policy is a catalyst for further public and private funding, not only because it obliges Member States to co-finance from the national budget, but since it also creates investor confidence.

Taking into account national contributions and other private investment, the impact of Cohesion Policy for 2014-2020 is expected to be about EUR450 billion.



Key Achievements of the Cohesion policy

Creating jobs and growth

- Income has increased in the poorest EU regions with GDP per capita growing in these areas from 60.5% of the EU average in 2007 to 62.7% in 2010.
- An estimated 594000 new jobs were created from 2007 to 2012.

Strengthening research and innovation

- 61000 research projects have been supported.
- 5 million more EU citizens were covered by broadband connectivity.
- 21000 new long-term research jobs were created.

Key Achievements of the Cohesion policy

Investing in people

- Every year, around 15 million people take part in the thousands of projects cofinanced by the European Social Fund (ESF) across the EU.
- 2.4 million participants in ESF actions supporting access to employment found a job within 6 months (2007-2010).



Key Achievements of the Cohesion policy

Improving the environment

- Water supply systems have been modernised, benefiting 3.2 million citizens.
- 9400 projects improved the sustainability and attractiveness of towns and cities.

Modernising transport

- 1200 km of roads and 1500 km of railway line have helped to establish an efficient transEuropean transport network (TEN-T).



Key Achievements of the Cohesion policy

Supporting enterprises

- 198000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) received direct investment aid.
- 77800 start-ups were supported.
- 262000 jobs were created in SMEs



Cohesion policy

Setting the right objectives

The Commission works with the Member States and the regions

to draw up Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes

outlining investment priorities and development needs.

Programmes are managed, and individual projects selected,

by Managing Authorities in the Member States.



Cohesion policy

Cohesion Policy has set 11 thematic objectives supporting growth for the period 2014-2020.

- Investment from the ERDF will support all 11 objectives, but 1-4 are the main priorities for investment.
- Main priorities for the ESF are 8-11, though the Fund also supports 14.
- The Cohesion Fund supports objectives 47 and 11.



Cohesion policy



1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation



2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies



3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs



4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy



5. Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management



6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency



7. Promoting sustainable transport and improving network infrastructures



8. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility



9. Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination



10. Investing in education, training and lifelong learning



11. Improving the efficiency of public administration

Cohesion policy

Through its 11 thematic objectives, cohesion policy helps deliver the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy, the EU's growth strategy to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The cohesion policy funds will be the main investment tool for measures supporting employment, innovation, education, inclusion, and the shift towards a low-carbon economy.

Both the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF) support a number of main priorities under the thematic objectives, and a certain amount of financing is allocated to these priorities. Less developed regions have to concentrate at least 50 % of their ERDF funding and 60 % of ESF allocations on these objectives; the figures are 60 % and 70 % respectively for transition regions, and 80 % for more developed regions.



Cohesion policy

In order to maximise the impact of the available funding, the focus on results has been strengthened in the 2014-20 programming period, and certain conditions must be in place before funds can be channelled. These so-called ex ante conditionalities ensure that the right preconditions are in place for cohesion policy spending to have a real effect in the region.



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Cohesion policy

Cohesion policy makes a real difference, investing huge sums in some countries (up to 4 % of their GDP). Now, as the new programming period gets underway, the national authorities have set quantifiable objectives (in their national strategic reference frameworks).

Alongside the Commission they are measuring the effect that programmes are having. Every three years, the Commission publishes a Cohesion Report giving an account of how regions are developing and what effect cohesion policy is having. It also produces annual interim reports.



Cohesion policy

Impact and results – growth and jobs in the EU in 2007-2012

Increasing per capita GDP in the EU's least developed regions – GDP per capita in the so-called Convergence Regions increased from 60.5 % of the EU-27 average to 62.7 % between 2007 and 2010.

It is estimated that cohesion policy generated an additional 600 000 jobs from 2007 to 2012, at least one third of them in small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). 25 000 km of roads and 1 800 km of rail were constructed or modernised in 2007-2012 to help establish an efficient trans-European transport network (TEN-T). 200 000 SMEs received direct financial support, and cohesion policy helped 77 800 start-ups to get up and running.

Over 60 000 research projects were supported in the period 2007-2012.

1.9 million more people now have broadband access.



Cohesion policy

Measuring the impact and results of cohesion policy is critical to its ongoing success. It enables us to demonstrate the achievements of the policy to European citizens. It also offers the opportunity to learn from good practices and to continuously improve projects and programmes.



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