

Question for written answer E-002874/2024

to the Commission

Rule 144

Pasquale Tridico (The Left), Valentina Palmisano (The Left), Mario Furore (The Left), Carolina Morace (The Left), Gaetano Pedulla' (The Left), Danilo Della Valle (The Left)

Subject: Checking the conformity of the cohesion agreement signed between the Italian Government and Puglia Region with the EU's guidelines on territorial cohesion

On 29 November 2024, the Italian Government signed a cohesion agreement with Puglia Region concerning the use of the Development and Cohesion Fund and the accompanying operational programme, which are both funded exclusively with national and regional funds. Many Apulian mayors have voiced concerns about transparency and fairness in the distribution of funds, claiming favouritism and the exclusion of certain in-land areas deemed strategic for regional development. Although the agreement does not fall within the direct competences of the EU, it should adhere to the EU's principles and guidelines on economic, social and territorial cohesion.

In view of the above:

1. Is the Commission able to check that the cohesion agreement of 29 November is consistent with EU guidelines on territorial cohesion, with particular reference to the principles of transparency, inclusion, equal treatment and the pursuit of the general public interest?
2. What monitoring and control tools have been put in place to ensure that the use of national funds – whether used in an integrated or a complementary manner with EU structural funds – is in line with EU best practices in the area of regional development?
3. Does it intend to put forward specific guidelines for the Member States, designed to promote consistency between action funded at the national level and EU cohesion policy objectives?

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