



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

Committee on Regional Development

2011/2071(INI)

13.7.2011

OPINION

of the Committee on Regional Development

for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs

on the European Semester for Economic Policy Coordination
(2011/2071(INI))

Rapporteur: Michael Theurer

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Regional Development calls on the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Underlines the crucial role of the cohesion policy as a key instrument for Europe 2020; considers that a strong and well-funded cohesion policy is an effective and efficient instrument to implement Europe 2020 and prevent future economic and financial crises, owing to its long-term development programmes, budgetary dimension and decentralised administration system and the incorporation of the EU's priorities for sustainable development; stresses in this regard the importance of involving regions in achieving the EU 2020 goal;
2. Points out that cohesion policy rests on its widespread acceptance, consistent approaches and sound financing;
3. Points out that, owing to the multi-level governance approach, regional policy has a consolidated methodology for an integrated approach and a reliable guidance system for mobilising investments and incentivising new initiatives on the ground which could support the effectiveness of economic policies in an appropriate manner and the development of greater synergy between EU and Member State budgets; calls, therefore, on the European Commission to put forward specific recommendations on how the structural funds can be used to this end within the framework of the operational programmes;
4. Considers it essential for cohesion policy to play a part in overcoming the challenges of reducing structural imbalances and internal competitive disparities, highlighting the importance of adapting policies to the specific conditions and needs in the regions so as to maximise their potential and mitigate their handicaps;
5. Points out that, in most areas, the key national goals agreed by the European Council are far from having been achieved; regrets that the national goals are not ambitious, that an excessive importance has been given to short-term results and that, in most areas, the EU Member States are still far from attaining the EU key goals agreed by the European Council; calls for the involvement of cohesion policy priorities in structured and early debate on annual budget orientations, thorough ex-ante impact assessments and results-based policy planning and project formulation; regrets the fact that the Member States use different methods for setting national goals, and calls on the Commission to examine the possibility of drawing up guidelines in this area; points out that additional efforts are required in order to reach the targets in the areas of employment, research and development, energy efficiency, tertiary education and poverty;
6. Recalls the important role played by regional policy in the development of national programmes within the framework of the European Semester, notably by setting targets and determining actions to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion;
7. Stresses that it is important for many Member States to improve their regions'

competitiveness so as to correct macroeconomic imbalances;

8. Considers it necessary, therefore, for cohesion also to be oriented towards strengthening regional (and not merely national) potentials and stakeholders in particular; believes that strengthening regional potentials in coordination with national potentials makes cohesion policy once again emerge as a necessary tool for achieving the requisite synergies;
9. Emphasises the role of cohesion policy in implementing European development objectives and in ensuring budgetary discipline; supports in this context the multi-level decision-making process, and multi-level responsibility for budgetary discipline;
10. Points out that the Europe 2020 strategy needs to have more of a territorial dimension; takes the view, consequently, that – taking into account the particularities and different development levels of European regions – directly involving regional and local authorities and partners in the planning and implementation of relevant programmes would lead to a greater feeling of responsibility for the goals of the strategy at all levels and would ensure greater awareness on the ground of its objectives and results;
11. Calls on the Member States and their regions to involve national and regional parliaments, social partners, public authorities and civil society more closely in the formation of national reform, development and cohesion programmes, and to consult them regularly; underlines in this regard the timely engagement of the Committee of the Regions as a platform for coordination between regions in order to make them report on the state of play of the regional and local participation in the European semester;
12. Points out that Parliament has a crucial role to play in establishing full democratic legitimacy for the European Semester; calls, therefore, on the European Commission to fully involve Parliament and its respective committees; highlights the important role the Committee of the Regions could play in evaluating and intensifying the European Semester, particularly given its enhanced institutional role under the Lisbon Treaty; notes that, within the context of the current European Semester, the regions and local authorities have had little involvement in the development of national programmes; calls for it to be expressly laid down, in the case of each Member State, how the regions and local authorities are to be involved in the process in the coming year;

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

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| Date adopted | 12.7.2011 |
| Result of final vote | +: 41 -: 4 0: 1 |
| Members present for the final vote | François Alfonsi, Luís Paulo Alves, Charalampos Angourakis, Catherine Bearder, Victor Boștinaru, Zuzana Brzobohatá, John Bufton, Alain Cadec, Francesco De Angelis, Tamás Deutsch, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Elie Hoarau, Brice Hortefeux, Danuta Maria Hübner, Juozas Imbrasas, María Irigoyen Pérez, Seán Kelly, Mojca Kleva, Petru Constantin Luhan, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Riikka Manner, Iosif Matula, Erminia Mazzoni, Miroslav Mikolášik, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Franz Obermayr, Jan Olbrycht, Markus Pieper, Monika Smolková, Georgios Stavrakakis, Nuno Teixeira, Michael Theurer, Michail Tremopoulos, Oldřich Vlasák, Kerstin Westphal, Hermann Winkler, Joachim Zeller |
| Substitute(s) present for the final vote | Andrea Cozzolino, Karima Delli, Ivars Godmanis, Karin Kadenbach, Marek Henryk Migalski, Vilja Savisaar-Toomast, Elisabeth Schroedter, Derek Vaughan |
| Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote | Norica Nicolai |