Resolution on delays in the start-up of cohesion policy for 2014-2020

2014/2946(RSP) - 19/11/2014

The Council adopted the **conclusions** welcoming the Commission’s sixth report on cohesion, in which it noted that cohesion policy is the main investment policy at EU level for pursuing economic, social and territorial cohesion at a time when Europe is facing challenges in terms of competitiveness, high and persistent unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

Recalling that in the current programming period cohesion policy continues to play a key role for the re-launch of growth and jobs across the EU, the Council welcomed the commitment to support growth and jobs. It noted that it supports the incoming Commission's intention to launch an initiative mobilising **EUR 300 billion** of additional investment from public and private sources over the period 2015-2017.

The Council called on the Commission and the Member States to accelerate the **negotiation and the procedures leading to adoption of all the Partnership Agreements** and all the 2014-2020 Programmes. It stressed the negative impacts that could derive from a late adoption of the programmes.

The Council stressed the importance of ensuring the **availability of the allocated resources**, as agreed within the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020. It urged the Commission and the Member States to cooperate and explore all the possibilities in order to facilitate the prompt and timely implementation of the programmes 2014-2020 and to speed up all procedural steps needed to preserve the availability of the financial resources within the EU budget.

The conclusions also focused on:

- the importance of continuing efforts to **simplify** the implementation of cohesion policy, in order to enhance the result orientation of the policy and to reduce administrative burdens at all levels;
- the need to take account of the cohesion policy’s role in the context of the **Europe 2020 strategy** review and its potential contribution to prepare EU economy for the future;
- the need to explore by the Member States opportunities linked to **sound and transparent financial instruments** and to involvement of private resources, while minimising the risks and
- ensuring that no additional burdens are put in the long-term on public budgets;
- the Commission to implement measures to link the effectiveness of ESI Funds to **sound economic governance** in dialogue with Member States;
- **reprogramming** which should be used only in cases where it could indeed have a direct impact on the correction of the challenges identified in the relevant country-specific recommendations under the economic governance mechanisms;
- reinforcing the **institutional and administrative capacity** to ensure the efficiency and the effectiveness of the investments by facilitating the exchange of good practice and knowledge in that respect;
- further analysing and developing the **territorial dimension** of cohesion policy.

Lastly, the Council recommended that a **regular debate** in the General Affairs Council takes place among relevant ministers to discuss on the implementation and results of the European structural and investment funds.