Resolution on synergies for innovation: European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other European innovation funds and EU programmes

2016/2695(RSP) - 06/07/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 597 to 73, with 38 abstentions, a resolution on synergies for innovation: the European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon 2020 and other European innovation funds and EU programmes.

The text adopted in plenary was adopted by the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, Greens/EFA and EFDD groups.

Parliament restated that links between cohesion policy and other EU policies, funding programmes and initiatives (e.g. Horizon 2020, the Connecting Europe Facility, the digital single market, rural development, the energy union, the innovation union and the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives) have been strengthened within the Common Strategic Framework introduced by the Common Provisions Regulation establishing common provisions for all five of these funds – the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds).

The rationale of **strengthening synergies between Horizon 2020 and ESI Funds** lies in building meaningful interactions between investment strategies and interventions as a way to have significant impacts on the economy, combining innovation investments in **smart specialisation** priorities with world-class research and innovation initiatives, thus ensuring a higher impact of the funds. Members considered that the smart specialisation methodology should remain a model for cohesion policy post-2020.

While insisting on the need to strengthen result-orientation in cohesion policy, Parliament underlined the urgent need to **increase synergies with other EU policies** on competitiveness, in particular in the field of research and development, ICT, renewable energies and SMEs, with a view to increasing the exploitation rate of EU R&D results, creating new high-quality jobs and maintaining existing ones and promoting the green economy.

Members noted that **synergies with other policies and instruments must be further enhanced in order to maximise the impact of investments**. In this context, they noted the Stairway to Excellence (S2E) EU budget pilot project, which continues to support regions of 13 Member States in developing and exploiting the synergies between the ESI Funds. They called on the Commission and the Member States to:

- pay constant attention to the needs of SMEs in the design and implementation of the ESI Funds and Horizon 2020, as well as to synergies between these;
- prepare coordinated calls for proposals in order to ease access to multi-fund financing.

The resolution underlined that the European Structural and Investment Funds (EFSI) **must be complementary and additional to the ESI Funds and other EU programmes** such as Horizon 2020 and to the regular activities of the European Investment Bank.

Parliament also highlighted the preparations by the Commission for the possible establishment of a **European Innovation Council** (EIC) for better coordination of innovation initiatives in the European Union. The main objective of an EIC should be to help reduce barriers to commercialisation in Europe and

close the innovation divide. Furthermore, an EIC should involve all relevant stakeholders and have transparent, swift consultations and decision-making processes, avoiding overlap.

Lastly, the Commission is called upon to **monitor synergies between the funds systematically** and to issue a communication on this issue.