

Border Regions' instrument for development and growth (BRIDGEforEU)

2018/0198(COD) - 14/02/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 489 votes to 55, with 82 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on a mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context.

The European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure amended the Commission's proposal as follows.

Voluntary mechanism

Parliament wanted to clarify certain aspects, in particular as regards the voluntary nature and scope of the mechanism, as well as the subsidiarity and proportionality of the proposal. It considered that the application of the mechanism shall be on a voluntary basis based on a case-by-case assessment by Member States of a specific joint project in a cross-border region. The Regulation shall not affect, by any means, the sovereignty of Member States nor contradict their constitutions.

To remove legal obstacles to the implementation of a joint project in cross-border regions on one of its borders with one or more neighbouring Member States, Member States may thus decide to activate the mechanism or use other means.

Cross-border coordination points

Members suggested that coordination points shall be required in all Member States. Since the application of the mechanism is voluntary, it shall be possible for Member States to choose using an instrument which they consider to be more beneficial. The Commission shall create a database of all national and regional cross-border coordination points. The implementation of the Regulation shall be accompanied by a supporting communication strategy with the aim of promoting the exchange of best practices; providing practical information and interpretation of the subject area and the thematic focus of this Regulation; and clarifying the precise procedure for concluding a Commitment or Statement.

Own-initiative document

If an initiator identifies a legal obstacle to the planning, development, financing, staffing and operation of a joint project, he should draw up an own-initiative document describing the joint project and its context, the legal obstacle or obstacles in the Member State of application and the decisive reasons for removing these legal obstacles.

Within six months (rather than three months) of receipt of the initiative document, the competent cross-border coordination point in the implementing Member State shall send a written reply to the initiator in which it may: (i) redirect the initiator to opt for an existing mechanism to resolve one or more legal obstacles hampering the implementation of the joint project or to directly transmit the initiative document to the competent body under the corresponding mechanism; (ii) inform the initiator that one or more of the Member States concerned have decided not to resolve one or more of the legal obstacles identified by the initiator while setting out the reasons for that decision in writing.

Report

By the 1st of the month following the date of entry into force of the Regulation plus three years, the Commission shall report on the application of the Regulation. Prior to the preparation of this report, the Commission shall carry out a public consultation of the various stakeholders involved, including local and regional authorities and civil society organisations.