

Resolution on the start of the implementation of the 2021-2027 cohesion policy

2022/2527(RSP) - 06/04/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the start of the implementation of the 2021-2027 cohesion policy.

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

Cohesion policy continuously represents the main EU-wide investment and solidarity policy for social equality and just transition, and is an established catalyst for sustainable growth and jobs, for economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU, and for achieving the EU's climate targets, the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals, with a budget amounting to EUR 392 billion until 2027.

The resolution highlighted that the **pandemic was the primary reason for the delay** in the cohesion policy negotiations, which caused a subsequent delay in the adoption of the legislative framework for the funding period 2021-2027. The majority of the Member States seemed unable to speed up the preparation of the programming process.

Prioritising the preparation of the recovery and resilience plans, as well as REACT-EU spending, while necessary in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, has inadvertently contributed to the aforementioned delay.

Parliament expressed serious concern as regards the significant delay in the implementation of cohesion policy for the 2021-2027 period, while recognising the importance of adopting high-quality programmes at the start of the programming period in order to avoid reprogramming at a later stage.

The resolution stressed that it is imperative to start the implementation of the new programmes as soon as adopted in order to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU.

Member States are called on to consider cohesion policy and the Recovery and Resilience Facility a **budgetary and operational tandem**, instead of prioritising the implementation of the national recovery and resilience plans over the programming and implementation of the cohesion programmes.

The Commission should take full advantage of the possibilities existing in the current Common Provisions Regulation for **faster approval** of partnership agreements and programmes.

Concerned that any perceived under-implementation might lead to calls for a reduction in the cohesion policy budget in the next programming period, Parliament called on the Commission to put forward a contingency plan to mitigate the risk of under-implementation and decommitments due to the late start of the programmes through a **legislative proposal** during the mid-term review and, if necessary, by means of a corresponding revision of the multiannual financial framework.

Lastly, the resolution underlined that the current delay in the implementation of the 2021-2027 cohesion policy programmes hinders Member States' ability to react, in the context of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, not only to the energy and supply crisis, but also to the refugee crisis in the medium and long term.

While welcoming the additional measures offered by the CARE proposal and the latest Commission proposal on increased pre-financing will help to increase the Member States' ability to react to this humanitarian crisis, Parliament stressed that CARE and the proposed use of REACT-EU funding might not be sufficient in the context of the current refugee crisis and encouraged the Commission to check whether it would be possible to use the 2022 funds under the current funding period, which might be decommitted due to delays in programming, for **CARE II**, in order to ensure continued care for refugees.