Basic information

1997/2185(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
AGENDA 2000: economic and social cohesion **Subject** 4 Economic, social and territorial cohesion 8.20.08 Enlargement's economic and monetary point of view 8.20.20 Enlargement's employment and social point of view	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
REGI Regional Policy	SCHROEDTER Elisabeth (V)	25/11/1997

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AFET Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense Policy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
BUDG Budgets	COLOM I NAVAL Joan (PSE)	03/02/1998
CONT Budgetary Control	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
PECH Fisheries	GALLAGHER Pat the Cope (UPE)	17/11/1997

Council of the European Union

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
15/07/1997	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1997)2000	
22/10/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/05/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
25/05/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0210/1998	

16/06/1998	Debate in Parliament		
18/06/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
06/07/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1997/2185(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/4/09167

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0210/1998 OJ C 210 06.07.1998, p. 0007	25/05/1998	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0360/1998 OJ C 210 06.07.1998, p. 0168-0189	18/06/1998	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	COM(1997)2000	15/07/1997	Summary

AGENDA 2000: economic and social cohesion

1997/2185(COS) - 15/07/1997

OBJECTIVE: AGENDA 2000, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COHESION: presentation of the effects of enlargement on the Community's structural policies. SUBSTANCE: future enlargement requires the establishment of a rational and effective structural policy. In order to achieve this end within a financial framework which respects the budgetary constraints (0.46% of Union GNP of ECU 275 billion from 2000 to 2006) the Commission proposes four types of measure: 1) concentration of aid: the number of regional objectives would be reduced from seven to three: two regional objectives and one horizontal objective devoted to human resources. Objective 1 would continue to have a high priority (regions lagging behind in development) stressing measures dealing with unemployment and Objective 2 would be completely redefined. This objective would deal exclusively with economic and social restructuring and would bring together all measures intended for areas undergoing economic change (industry and services), declining rural areas, areas dependent on the fishing industry or urban areas in difficulty. The priorities of this objective will range from economic diversification to support for SMEs, vocational training and combating social exclusion. The third objective would cover all the other regions not covered by Objectives 1 and 2 and would seek to assist the Member States to modernize their education, training and employment systems. It would be based on a common European framework which would be implemented in a differing way from one Member State to the other. At the same time the number of Community initiatives would change from 13 to three: rural development, cross-border cooperation and human resources, paying special attention to equal opportunities; 2) the maintenance of the Cohesion Fund in its current form with annual funding from the budget of ECU 3 billion; 3) special support for the new Member States: the Commission proposes drawing ECU 1 billion a year from the total funding allocated to the new Member States (i.e. ECU 45 billion for the whole of the Fund) as a form of pre-accession aid. This amount would initially benefit all the applicant countries but would then

concentrate on those whose accession would take place at a later stage. This assistance would seek primarily to help these countries to harmonization their legislation with regard to infrastructures, transport and environmental standards; 4) enhancing cost-effectiveness of aid: the criteria for access to and granting of aid would be simplified. The Commission proposes a single multi-annual programme for each region for Objectives 1 and 2. Objective 3 would take the form of a national programme or a set of regional programmes. At the same time the responsibility for the management and implementation of the aid would be shared more effectively between the partners (Commission, national, regional and local authorities). In addition to the development of partnership (including public/private), a more decentralized management of aid would be used, but with more stringent systems of control which account more closely for the use made of the Fund. Regions producing the best performance would be able to receive allocations from a 10% reserve halfway through the period in relation to the results they have produced. Lastly, new forms of intervention (interest-rate subsidies, acquisition of holdings, etc.) could be granted in order to respond better to the economic viability of projects.

AGENDA 2000: economic and social cohesion

1997/2185(COS) - 18/06/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

In adopting the report by Mrs Elisabeth SCHROEDTER (V, D) on economic and social cohesion within the framework of AGENDA 2000, the European Parliament takes the view that the European Union's philosophy of integration is credible only if it continues to make economic and social cohesion a political priority. Welcoming the Commission's plan to reform the Structural Funds on the lines of concentration, simplification and efficiency, Parliament calls for account to be taken of the following objectives: - sustainable development, - a high level of employment achieved by paying particular attention to SMEs, - innovation and incorporation of new technologies, - an appropriate level of social protection, - the combatting of social exclusion, - a better quality of life, - an improved environment, - equal opportunities for men and women, - guarantee of a European added value when responsibilities are shifted, as planned, to the Member States It calls for continued priority to be given to aid for Objective 1 regions on the basis of a per capita GDP lower than 75% of the Community average. It believes that 2/3 of all Structural Fund resources should be allocated to these regions. It welcomes the Commission's proposal to allow all regions of the Union which will no longer be eligible under Objectives 1, 2 and 5b a transitional phase tailored to their requirements. It welcomes the idea of providing guaranteed funding for rural development as part of agricultural reform and urges that Parliament be allowed to participate in assessment and budget control regarding rural development programmes. It proposes the splitting of Objective 2 into two sub-categories - industrial/urban and rural and fisheries - with their own specific eligibility criteria, objectives and financial quotas - to ensure specific and guaranteed support for the rural environment. It calls for Objective 3 to be focussed on support for local development and employment initiatives. It calls on the Commission to ensure that resources for Community initiatives which have been limited are allocated only to projects with a European added value. It calls for special aid for regions which, given their geographic location, share an external border with applicant countries, particularly within the framework of INTERREG. Parliament supports moves by the Commission to improve the effectiveness and profitability of the Structural Funds while expressing doubt as to the viability of the 10% reserve system. It expresses the hope that EIB and EIF loans are used as supplementary funding in addition to Structural Fund subsidies. It calls on the Commission not to make savings which undermine the principle of economic and social cohesion by penalizing the failure to disperse appropriations through a decision not to reincorporate those appropriations into the budget in the context of multiannual programming. It suggests the introduction of provisional arrangements for establishing programmes prior to the final adoption of the structural fund regulations so as to guarantee the prompt participation of all parties concerned. It also calls on the Council to adopt structural fund rules in time to ensure that the programming phase can commence on schedule. The European Parliament welcomes the extension of the cohesion fund beyond the year 2000 for Member States whose per capita GDP is less than 90% of the Community average. Concerning enlargement the European Parliament considers that provision should be made for a specific horizontal financial instrument designed to ensure gradual and optimum integration of the applicant countries. In the fisheries sector it calls on the Commission to recognize the particular needs of fisheries areas. Finally, it considers it essential that the Union functions in a transparent manner and to involve the social partners more closely in the activities of the ESF.