

Basic information	
2006/2086(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Growth and jobs: cohesion policy in support, Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013	
Subject 4.15.02 Employment: guidelines, actions, Funds	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur
	REGI Regional Development		KREHL Constanze (PSE)
	Committee for opinion		Appointed
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		MATO ADROVER Ana (PPE-DE)
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	TRAN Transport and Tourism		BECSEY Zsolt László (PPE-DE)
	CULT Culture and Education		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	FEMM Women's Rights and Gender Equality		The committee decided not to give an opinion.

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
05/07/2005	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2005)0299 	Summary
06/04/2006	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
03/05/2006	Vote in committee		
10/05/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0175/2006	

17/05/2006	Debate in Parliament		
18/05/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0216/2006	Summary
18/05/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
18/05/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2006/2086(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/6/32951

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee opinion		PE367.818	07/03/2006	
Committee draft report		PE370.296	07/03/2006	
Committee opinion		PE368.023	04/04/2006	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE371.896	19/04/2006	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0175/2006	10/05/2006	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0216/2006	18/05/2006	Summary
European Commission				
Document type	Reference		Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	 COM(2005)0299		05/07/2005	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2006)3065		01/08/2006	
Follow-up document	 COM(2007)0798		11/12/2007	Summary

Growth and jobs: cohesion policy in support, Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013

2006/2086(INI) - 11/12/2007

The Commission has prepared this Communication in order to set out an initial overview of the new generation of cohesion policy strategies and programmes for the period 2007-2013. It forms part of the Lisbon package, which is central to the new cohesion policy strategies and programmes. The report also reflects on the potential role of the cohesion programmes in taking the Lisbon Strategy forward.

To recall, the revised cohesion policy, approved in 2006, introduced a number of reforms including the need to take on a more explicit and transparent focus expressed through the "Community Strategic guidelines on Cohesion" (CSGs). This framework encourages the Member States and regions to focus on those areas of investment that help deliver the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) whilst taking account of national and regional circumstances. In addition, the Member States have been asked to " earmark " major parts of their financial allocations to investments that can make a significant contribution to the Lisbon objectives. Further, the reformed cohesion policy provides for greater decentralisation of responsibilities to local and regional partners. By pooling local and regional knowledge, expertise and resources, the cohesion policy is well placed to focus on investments with the highest impact on growth and jobs.

The strategies drawn up by the Member States for the 2007-2013 programming period indicate that a clear change of emphasis is underway, in favour of the key Lisbon priorities. Under the earmarking provisions, the EU-15 Member States are required to invest the predominant part of their financial allocations (in other words 60% of Funds for their Convergence regions and 75% for their Regions competitiveness and employment regions) into categories that are central to growth-enhancing and job-creating investments. For the EU-12, the targets are voluntary but all new Member States have engaged in the earmarking exercise, albeit to varying degrees.

Globally, the results have been encouraging. For the less developed regions under the Convergence objective in EU-27, which together account for over 80% of cohesion policy resources, 65% of the funds are to be invested in the Lisbon-related objectives. This represents an increase of 11 percentage points compared to the previous programming period. Regions with programmes falling under the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective, which account for 16% of cohesion policy resources, and which traditionally have had to concentrate their more limited allocations on the more productive investments, plan to continue to invest a high proportion of the funds, 82% of the total for 2007-2013, on Lisbon-related priorities.

For the EU15 Member States, for which earmarking is obligatory, the corresponding figures are, as is to be expected, somewhat higher at 74% for the Convergence Objective and 83% for the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective, although these percentages vary significantly both across Member States and between different regions.

For the EU-12 Member States (and for which the earmarking provisions are not compulsory), the figure is some 59% under the Convergence Objective, which is also the same figure attained in the very limited number of programmes in these Member States that are supported by the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective.

The report concludes by noting that resources for the new generation of cohesion policy strategies and programmes (2007-2013) will be used to take the Lisbon objectives on growth and jobs forward. Thanks, primarily, to the implementation of reforms agreed upon for the 2007-2013 period. Encouraged by new earmarking provisions, the cohesion policy appears to have changed the nature of discourse between the Commission, national governments and regional governments. The paper calls upon the Member States and the regions to implement and deliver, within their programming documents, policies that prioritise and strengthen the Lisbon Agenda on jobs and growth. Indeed, the Commission will continue to work closely with the Member States using the systems and procedures that have been put in place for monitoring, evaluation and, where necessary, the adjustment of the programmes. In Spring 2008, the Commission will provide a more detailed report following the conclusions of all negotiations on the programmes for 2007-2013.

To conclude, the Commission argues, that for the cohesion policy to be a real success, it is critical that strong economic growth, more and better jobs and higher standard of living for all of the EU's citizens is continually promoted.

Growth and jobs: cohesion policy in support, Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013

2006/2086(INI) - 18/05/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Constanze **KREHL (PES, Germany)** on preparing for the assent procedure for the Community's strategic guidelines for the period 2007-2013 (Cohesion Policy in Support of Growth and Jobs). Parliament felt that future cohesion policy must help to meet the challenges posed by the most recent enlargement of the EU by helping to reduce regional disparities and fostering a society based on full employment, equal opportunities, inclusion, and social cohesion. The strategic guidelines should not restrict the scope of the regulations on the individual funds, but only clarify the EU's strategic priorities. Parliament pointed to the need to ensure that the regions have sufficient flexibility to be able to react specifically to regional requirements. It referred in this connection to the differing needs of industrial regions, rural areas, cities and urban areas, sparsely populated areas and the very outermost regions and island, mountain and border regions. Aid should be channelled towards areas suffering structural disadvantages such as depopulation, population ageing, or inaccessibility and for the economic and social development of those areas to be boosted.

Parliament stressed, however, that the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy was primarily a matter for the Member States and that cohesion policy has to form a unified whole with the Lisbon and Göteborg objectives and become a key factor in their attainment through national and regional development programmes. It called on the Commission proactively to support public-private partnerships (PPPs) as a funding instrument and not to treat the Member States differently, and supported the possibilities offered by JESSICA, JEREMIE and JASPERS in this connection.

Parliament welcomed the fact that the guidelines focus on three priorities and requested that active attention be given to equality of opportunities between men and women in all three priorities.

Making Europe and its regions more attractive to investors and workers:Parliament supported the decision to establish a durable transport infrastructure and asked for support measures to optimise traffic management, taking into account road safety. It was essential to complete the trans-European transport network so as to enable the advantages of the internal market to be fully exploited. Parliament made the following points:

- it called for an express requirement for and recognition of the principle and practice of accessibility for disabled persons in the strategic guidelines and in the evaluation process required by the strategic guidelines;
- transport infrastructures should be developed, particularly at the EU's former external borders with the new Member States and between Member States where they are not yet adequately developed;
- it called for a specific reference to the secondary road networks to be included in the Community strategic guidelines, given that support for the construction of regional roads can be of importance in increasing the mobility of workers and thereby in improving access to employment opportunities;
- there must be a sustainable use of natural resources, in particular water. Parliament called also for specific support for the implementation of environmental priorities such as Natura 2000, the Water Framework Directive and the sustainable prevention of natural disasters;
- Parliament specifically supported the possibility of the funds intervening in the sphere of sustainable energy policy and welcomed the use of all renewable energy in electricity, heating, cooling and transport;
- there must be an integrated approach to urban development and to the development of urban areas in order to achieve greater energy efficiency. Parliament referred to the effort required in the housing sector to attain the Kyoto objectives.

Promoting knowledge and innovation for growth:Parliamentwelcomedthe specific focus on research and development (R&D), in particular support for the formation of high technology clusters, innovative industrial regions and SMEs in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector. It pointed, however, to the need to reduce the technology divide within and between regions and Member States by strengthening technological cooperation networks. Parliament asked for the following:

- measures and investments to promote innovation should not be confined to technological innovation but should apply to all types of innovation enabling businesses to carry out economic and social modernisation. Furthermore, efforts should be made to develop the innovation potential of small and micro-businesses, particularly in traditional sectors;
- the Commission should accord special importance to programmes to promote ICT and make provision for simple means of joint financing through the funds in the case of integrated projects, for instance by making joint financing more attractive to private investments by fostering cooperation between universities and businesses;
- all regions should be able to carry out PPP projects under the same conditions in the R&D, innovation and ICT fields, since this would help to reduce the technology divide;
- information, advice and assistance activities carried out by intermediary organisations, particularly for small and micro-businesses and craft businesses, were essential if these businesses are to achieve the objectives of the cohesion policy, and Parliament asked that support to such activities to be treated as a priority at regional level.

More and better jobs:Parliament stressed the importance of investing in human capital, and demanded that the European Social Fund support those Member State policies which are in line with the integrated guidelines and recommendations within the framework of the European employment strategy and with the relevant Community objectives as regards social inclusion, anti-discrimination, the promotion of equality and general and professional training. Parliament welcomed the three action priorities of the employment policy guidelines and stressed that they must not under any circumstances be accompanied by a deterioration in the situation of workers. It called for the following:

- accompanying and support measures seeking to prevent the social exclusion of disadvantaged groups to be incorporated in support measures, with a view to enhancing their employability;
- greater support for "lifelong learning" projects involving support both for improvements in educational infrastructures and staff qualifications, and support for new options starting as early as the school and preschool stage;
- Commission support for the cooperation of Member States and notifying cohesion policy players of the most innovative projects in an appropriate manner;

-in the event of a general failure to meet the criteria of: sustainable development, gender mainstreaming the rights set out in Article 13 of the EC Treaty (prohibition of discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation), environmental law,

the Commission must demand improvements or the repayment of monies already disbursed.

The territorial aspect of cohesion policy:Parliament reiterated its demand for an increase in aid for urban areas and called on Member States to foster multi-level governance by including cities, their functional urban areas and rural peripheral areas in both the development and the implementation of national strategic reference frameworks and operational programmes.

It was essential that measures for urban areas should extend beyond traditional metropolises and also allow for the role of the cities, satellite towns, and urban marketplaces linked to the leading urban centres. In the area of cross-border cooperation, due attention should be paid, within the framework of this instrument, to the following sectors: culture, the environment, R&D, ICT, exchanges between administrative authorities, disaster

prevention and health. Member States were asked to specify a priority for innovative measures and transnational cooperation in their operational programmes. Parliament called for clear rules on both resource allocation and spending controls and for Member States to take full responsibility for expenditure of cohesion policy funding.

Growth and jobs: cohesion policy in support, Community Strategic Guidelines 2007-2013

2006/2086(INI) - 05/07/2005 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present the EU's Cohesion Policy supporting growth and jobs for the period 2007-2013.

CONTENT: one of the main purposes of this Commission report is to present the guidelines for supporting growth and jobs within the EU. Based on the calls for sustainable and competitive jobs under the Lisbon Agenda the report examines in detail the role of this objective within the context of the Cohesion funds.

As the Communication notes in its opening paragraph, the EU's recent enlargement to 25 Member States (soon 27 following the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in 2007) has dramatically increased disparity levels across the EU. The Cohesion policy, supported by the Structural and Cohesion funds, seeks to smooth out these disparities by fostering convergence between the regions. The challenge now is to identify those actions which best support the promotion of sustainable growth, competitiveness and employment as set out in the Lisbon strategy. The Commission suggests that a number of policies are needed in order to create a climate conducive to investment. These include the effective implementation of the Single Market, administrative reforms, good governance, a business friendly climate and the availability of a highly skilled workforce.

This Commission proposal seeks improvements in two main fields of operation. Firstly, an improved integration of Community priorities into national and regional development programmes and secondly, improved ownership of cohesion policy initiatives on the ground. Such a move should be enacted through improved dialogue between the Commission, the Member States and the regions. At the same time the Communication proposes further decentralisation of responsibilities in areas such as financial management and control. The proposed changes should create a clearer division of responsibilities between the Commission, the Member States and Parliament.

As such the Community Strategic Guidelines sketched out in this report are characterised by the three overarching priorities:

- **Guideline I:** making Europe a more attractive place to invest and work: expanding and improving infrastructures; improving the environmental contribution to growth and jobs; addressing Europe's intensive use of traditional energy sources and supporting renewable and alternative technologies;
- **Guideline II:** knowledge and innovation for growth: increasing and improving investment in RTD; facilitating innovation and promoting entrepreneurship; developing an information society for all; facilitating access to finance;
- **Guideline III:** more and better jobs: Attracting and retaining more people in employment and modernising social protection systems; improving the adaptability of workers and enterprises and the flexibility of the labour market; increasing investment in human capital through better education and skills; enhancing administrative capacity, maintaining a healthy labour force.

The Guidelines also pay particular attention to territorial cohesion and cooperation. They recognize the contribution of cities to growth and jobs, support the economic diversification of rural areas and enhance cross-border, trans-national and interregional cooperation.

The Guidelines are not 'one-size-fits-all'. On the basis of the priorities outlined, each Member State or region has to find the suitable policy mix for its own development path in the light of its particular economic, social, institutional and cultural conditions.

The Guidelines will be decided by the Council on the basis of unanimity, after the adoption of the regulations (following an agreement on the Financial Perspectives 2007-2013) and on the basis of a Commission proposal. They will form the basis for preparing National Strategic Reference Frameworks and the resulting operational programmes to be adopted by the Commission.