Basic information

2013/2178(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Optimise the potential of outermost regions by creating synergies between the EU structural funds and other EU programmes **Subject** 4.70.01 Structural funds, investment funds in general, programmes 4.70.06 Outlying and outermost regions, overseas countries and territories	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
REGI Regional Development	OMARJEE Younous (GUE /NGL)	20/06/2013
	Shadow rapporteur TEIXEIRA Nuno (PPE) ALVES Luís Paulo (S&D) GODMANIS Ivars (ALDE) BICEP Jean-Jacob (Verts /ALE) VLASÁK Oldřich (ECR)	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Regional and Urban Policy	HAHN Johannes

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
12/09/2013	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
11/02/2014	Vote in committee		
17/02/2014	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0121/2014	Summary
26/02/2014	Decision by Parliament	T7-0133/2014	Summary
26/02/2014	Results of vote in Parliament		
26/02/2014	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2013/2178(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/7/13726

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE524.718	02/12/2013	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE526.234	08/01/2014	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0121/2014	17/02/2014	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0133/2014	26/02/2014	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2014)447	22/07/2014	

Optimise the potential of outermost regions by creating synergies between the EU structural funds and other EU programmes

2013/2178(INI) - 26/02/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 446 votes to 73, with 47 abstentions, a resolution on optimising the potential of outermost regions (ORs) by creating synergies between the Structural Funds and other European Union programmes.

Members are convinced that the assets, resources and potential of the ORs highlighted by the European Commission, which lie in areas of key importance to EU research, innovation and growth, **attract too little support and financing under EU funds and programmes**. They deplored the approach advocated at European level whereby the cohesion policy alone should be used to finance virtually all OR development projects.

Stressing the importance of encouraging long-term investments and promoting innovation in the ORs, Parliament considered that the volume of **structural and investment funding** being provided to the ORs must be **adjusted or supplemented** in order to enable them to address the major challenges facing the EU.

With regards to meeting the objectives the EU has set as part of the Europe 2020 growth strategy, the Horizon 2020 strategy, the Energy 2020 strategy, the LIFE+ and Natura 2000 programmes and the trans-European telecommunications, transport and energy networks, the ORs are **regions of excellence** making a significant contribution towards the realisation of the objectives.

It is for this reason that the resolution foresees the **creation of the closest possible synergies between all EU instruments, funds and programmes in the following areas**:

Research and innovation: the Commission should make the necessary adjustments and guarantee OR access to the Horizon 2020 programme by setting up dedicated programmes that can help to foster greater OR inclusion in European and international research and innovation networks. Members supported the further development of universities in the Ors.

Internal market: the Commission is called upon to look into the issue of the additional costs and high cost of living in the ORs and to take this issue into account when shaping European policies and to enforce the competition rules more strictly in order to guard against monopolies and cartels in the Ors.

Environment and energy: Members believed that the ORs' potential in the areas of biodiversity management, conservation and rehabilitation, adaptation to climate change and renewable energy development can be maximised through the establishment of synergies and cross-funding arrangements between cohesion policy, the LIFE+ programme and the Energy 2020 strategy.

Youth: Parliament highlighted the need for greater synergies to be achieved between the Erasmus programme and the ESF in the ORs, in order to maximise local human capital and expertise. It called for further action on the employment front in the form of an **urgent pilot plan to combat unemployment** in the ORs. The resolution called for special youth employment action teams to be set up in the Commission, with a view to implementing the Youth Guarantee scheme and mobilising the ESF and the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).

Trans-European network (transport, telecommunications, energy): Members recalled that accessibility plays a key role where the development of the ORs is concerned and that the digital divide between the ORs and mainland Europe is hampering the ORs' development and competitiveness. They stressed therefore the need for synergies to be created in the ORs between the trans-European networks, the Connecting Europe Facility, the Civitas and Horizon 2020 programmes and ERDF and Cohesion Fund funding for transport, telecommunications and energy projects.

EU Maritime policy: recalling that the ORs contribute towards the EU's status as a world maritime power, the resolution stated that the lack of synergies between cohesion policy and the Common Fisheries Policy, which still takes too little account of conditions in the ORs. Parliament stressed the importance of **maintaining a POSEI scheme for fisheries**, and proposed that research and innovation should be stepped up in the maritime economy, as they are a potential source of growth.

Agriculture: Members pointed to the need to ensure that POSEI has the necessary resources to help OR producers to cope with the impact of the liberalisation of a number of sectors resulting from EU policies and international agreements concluded in the milk, sugar, rum, meat and banana sectors in particular. They believed that **synergies should be created between cohesion policy and the EAFRD** with a view to modernising and extending irrigation networks and for the purposes of spatial planning, training and capitalising on the tourism potential of sustainable agriculture and rural communities;

Combat against poverty and social exclusion: Members drew attention to the fact that a number of fundamental problems exist in the ORs, one of them being social exclusion. They advocated the establishment of a **social housing** investment scheme and the introduction of special measures under which aid in support of investment in social housing is not considered to be State aid.

External policy: Members deplored the continued lack of a proper linkage between the European funds EDF, ERDF and ETC, in particular in cross-border cooperation projects, despite the fact that this is essential if the funds' objectives are to be met.

The Commission is called upon to **take greater account of the impact that trade agreements concluded with non-EU countries have on OR economies**, with impact studies being conducted in advance of each agreement in order to ensure that any 'sensitive' products are protected and fair compensation is provided for any losses incurred in specific sectors. A procedure for consulting OR regional authorities should also be introduced.

Optimise the potential of outermost regions by creating synergies between the EU structural funds and other EU programmes

2013/2178(INI) - 17/02/2014 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Regional Development adopted the own-initiative report by Younous OMARJEE (GUE/NGL, FR) on optimising the potential of outermost regions (ORs) by creating synergies between the Structural Funds and other European Union programmes.

Members are convinced that the assets, resources and potential of the ORs highlighted by the European Commission, which lie in areas of key importance to EU research, innovation and growth, **attract too little support and financing under EU funds and programmes**. They considered that the volume of **structural and investment funding** being provided to the ORs must be **adjusted or supplemented** in order to enable them to address the major challenges facing the EU.

It is for this reason that the report foresees the **creation of the closest possible synergies between all EU instruments, funds and programmes in the following areas**:

Research and innovation: the Commission should make the necessary adjustments and guarantee OR access to the Horizon 2020 programme by setting up dedicated programmes that can help to foster greater OR inclusion in European and international research and innovation networks.

Internal market: the Commission is called upon to look into the issue of the additional costs and high cost of living in the ORs and to take this issue into account when shaping European policies.

Environment and energy: Members believed that the ORs' potential in the areas of biodiversity management, conservation and rehabilitation, adaptation to climate change and renewable energy development can be maximised through the establishment of synergies and cross-funding arrangements between cohesion policy, the LIFE+ programme and the Energy 2020 strategy.

Youth: Members highlighted the need for greater synergies to be achieved between the Erasmus programme and the ESF in the ORs, in order to maximise local human capital and expertise. They called for further action on the employment front in the form of an **urgent pilot plan to combat unemployment** in the ORs.

Trans-European network (transport, telecommunications, energy): Members recalled that accessibility plays a key role where the development of the ORs is concerned and that the digital divide between the ORs and mainland Europe is hampering the ORs' development and competitiveness.

Members stressed therefore the need for synergies to be created in the ORs between the trans-European networks, the Connecting Europe Facility, the Civitas and Horizon 2020 programmes and ERDF and Cohesion Fund funding for transport, telecommunications and energy projects.

EU Maritime policy: Members stated that the lack of synergies between cohesion policy and the Common Fisheries Policy, which still takes too little account of conditions in the ORs. The report stressed the importance of **maintaining a POSEI scheme for fisheries**, and proposed that research and innovation should be stepped up in the maritime economy, as they are a potential source of growth.

Agriculture: Members pointed to the need to ensure that POSEI has the necessary resources to help OR producers to cope with the impact of the liberalisation of a number of sectors resulting from EU policies and international agreements concluded in the milk, sugar, rum, meat and banana sectors in particular. They believed that synergies should be created between cohesion policy and the EAFRD.

Combat against poverty and social exclusion: Members drew attention to the fact that a number of fundamental problems exist in the ORs, one of them being social exclusion. They advocated the establishment of a social housing investment scheme.

External policy: the Commission is called upon to **take greater account of the impact that trade agreements concluded with non-EU countries have on OR economies**, with impact studies being conducted in advance of each agreement in order to ensure that any 'sensitive' products are protected and fair compensation is provided for any losses incurred in specific sectors. The report also called for a procedure for consulting OR regional authorities to be introduced.