Basic information

2014/2946(RSP) RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects	Procedure completed
Resolution on delays in the start-up of cohesion policy for 2014-2020 **Subject** 4.70.02 Cohesion policy, Cohesion Fund (CF)	

Key players

European Parliament	**Committee responsible**	**Rapporteur**	**Appointed**
	REGI Regional Development	MIHAYLOVA Iskra (ALDE)	04/11/2014
Council of the European Union	**Council configuration**	**Meetings**	**Date**
	General Affairs	3347	2014-11-19

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
19/11/2014	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
24/11/2014	Debate in Parliament		
27/11/2014	Decision by Parliament	T8-0068/2014	Summary
27/11/2014	Results of vote in Parliament		
27/11/2014	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2014/2946(RSP)
Procedure type	RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects
Procedure subtype	Debate or resolution on oral question/interpellation
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142-p5
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/8/01984

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Motion for a resolution		B8-0278/2014	24/11/2014	
Motion for a resolution		B8-0279/2014	24/11/2014	
Motion for a resolution		B8-0280/2014	24/11/2014	
Motion for a resolution		B8-0281/2014	24/11/2014	
Motion for a resolution		B8-0282/2014	24/11/2014	
Motion for a resolution		B8-0283/2014	24/11/2014	
Motion for a resolution		B8-0284/2014	24/11/2014	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0068/2014	27/11/2014	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2015)64	10/03/2015	

Resolution on delays in the start-up of cohesion policy for 2014-2020

2014/2946(RSP) - 27/11/2014 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 608 votes to 31, with 27 abstentions, a resolution on delays in the start-up of cohesion policy for 2014-2020.

The resolution adopted in plenary was tabled on behalf of the EPP, S&D, ECR, ALDE, GUE/NGL, Greens/EFA and EFDD groups.

Parliament recalled that cohesion policy represents the **main EU-wide investment policy in the real economy** and is an established catalyst for growth and jobs in the EU, with a budget of over **EUR 350 billion until 2020**, targeted at a limited number of strategic goals with growth-enhancing potential, such as innovation and research, the digital agenda, support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the low-carbon economy, training, education and infrastructure.

In accordance with Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Partnership Agreements should have been adopted by the end of August 2014 and Operational Programmes by the end of January 2015 at the latest.

However, there is a **clear delay in the programming process**, with only a limited number of Operational Programmes (just over 100) expected to be adopted by the end of 2014.

Two scenarios are envisaged for the adoption of Operational Programmes, both implying further delays as regards the start of implementation, namely:

(i) **the carry-over procedure** for those programmes considered ‘ready for adoption’ by 31 December 2014, and

(ii) **the rebudgeting** of the unused 2014 allocation for the European Structural and Investment Funds – entailing a technical revision of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) – for those considered ’not ready for adoption’ by the end of 2014.

According to the timeline presented by the Commission, Operational Programmes could be adopted between 15 February and 31 March 2015 under the carry-over procedure, and after 1 May 2015 under the rebudgeting procedure.

In this context, Parliament expressed its serious concern as regards the significant delay in the implementation of cohesion policy for the 2014-2020 period, while stressing that the current delays are challenging national, regional and local authorities’ capacity to plan effectively and implement the European Structural and Investment Funds for the 2014-2020 period.

Implementation of the 2014-2020 programming period: Parliament urged the Commission and the Member States to show responsibility and do their utmost to **speed up the adoption of a maximum number of Operational Programmes in 2014**, and to ensure that as many programmes as possible are ‘ready for adoption’ by 31 December 2014 so that they can benefit from the carry-over procedure.

As regards the second scenario, applicable to those Operational Programmes not ready for adoption by the end of 2014, Parliament invited the Commission to engage as soon as possible in discussions with Parliament and the Council in order to lay out a credible roadmap that ensures the adoption of the MFF revision as early as possible in 2015.

The Commission is asked to present to Parliament the **measures it envisages taking** to facilitate, as soon as possible, the implementation of the Operational Programmes, together with the timeline it envisages.

Backlog in payments: in addition to the delay in implementation for the 2014-2020 programming period, cohesion policy also faces a backlog in payments amounting to some **EUR 23 billion for the 2007-2013 programming period**.

Parliament stresses the importance and the urgency of **reaching an agreement** on the subject, on the basis of new proposals from the Commission, by the end of 2014.

The Commission is called upon to explain the impact of this delay in payments on the start of implementation of the new Operational Programmes, and to put forward solutions for limiting the damage as far as possible.

Lastly, Parliament requested that the **EUR 315 billion** investment package to be announced by the Commission be fully complementary with the 2014-2020 cohesion policy.

Resolution on delays in the start-up of cohesion policy for 2014-2020

2014/2946(RSP) - 19/11/2014

The Council adopted the **conclusions** welcoming the Commission's sixth report on cohesion, in which it noted that cohesion policy is the main investment policy at EU level for pursuing economic, social and territorial cohesion at a time when Europe is facing challenges in terms of competitiveness, high and persistent unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

Recalling that in the current programming period cohesion policy continues to play a key role for the re-launch of growth and jobs across the EU, the Council welcomed the commitment to support growth and jobs. It noted that it supports the incoming Commission's intention to launch an initiative mobilising **EUR 300 billion** of additional investment from public and private sources over the period 2015-2017.

The Council called on the Commission and the Member States to accelerate the **negotiation and the procedures leading to adoption of all the Partnership Agreements** and all the 2014-2020 Programmes. It stressed the negative impacts that could derive from a late adoption of the programmes.

The Council stressed the importance of ensuring the **availability of the allocated resources**, as agreed within the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020. It urged the Commission and the Member States to cooperate and explore all the possibilities in order to facilitate the prompt and timely implementation of the programmes 2014-2020 and to speed up all procedural steps needed to preserve the availability of the financial resources within the EU budget.

The conclusions also focused on:

- the importance of continuing efforts to **simplify** the implementation of cohesion policy, in order to enhance the result orientation of the policy and to reduce administrative burdens at all levels;
- the need to take account of the cohesion policy's role in the context of the **Europe 2020 strategy** review and its potential contribution to prepare EU economy for the future;
- the need to explore by the Member States opportunities linked to **sound and transparent financial instruments** and to involvement of private resources, while minimising the risks and
- ensuring that no additional burdens are put in the long-term on public budgets;
- the Commission to implement measures to link the effectiveness of ESI Funds to **sound economic governance** in dialogue with Member States;
- **reprogramming** which should be used only in cases where it could indeed have a direct impact on the correction of the challenges identified in the relevant country-specific recommendations under the economic governance mechanisms;
- reinforcing the **institutional and administrative capacity** to ensure the efficiency and the effectiveness of the investments by facilitating the exchange of good practice and knowledge in that respect;
- further analysing and developing the **territorial dimension** of cohesion policy.

Lastly, the Council recommended that a **regular debate** in the General Affairs Council takes place among relevant ministers to discuss on the implementation and results of the European structural and investment funds.