Basic information

2016/2304(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Increasing engagement of partners and visibility in the performance of European Structural and Investment Funds **Subject** 4.70.01 Structural funds, investment funds in general, programmes	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
REGI Regional Development	BUDA Daniel (PPE)	08/09/2016
	Shadow rapporteur GIUFFRIDA Michela (S&D) KŁOSOWSKI Sławomir (ECR) VAN MILTENBURG Matthijs (ALDE) PAPADIMOULIS Dimitrios (GUE/NGL) VANA Monika (Verts/ALE) D'AMATO Rosa (EFDD)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
BUDG Budgets	OLBRYCHT Jan (PPE)	09/11/2016
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	ROLIN Claude (PPE)	07/12/2016

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
24/11/2016	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
18/05/2017	Vote in committee		
24/05/2017	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0201/2017	Summary

12/06/2017	Debate in Parliament		
13/06/2017	Decision by Parliament	T8-0245/2017	Summary
13/06/2017	Results of vote in Parliament		
13/06/2017	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2016/2304(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/8/08468

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE599.809	02/03/2017	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE602.788	29/03/2017	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE599.700	04/05/2017	
Committee opinion	BUDG	PE601.229	12/05/2017	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0201/2017	24/05/2017	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0245/2017	13/06/2017	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2017)574	20/11/2017	

Increasing engagement of partners and visibility in the performance of European Structural and Investment Funds

2016/2304(INI) - 13/06/2017 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 469 votes to 51, with 13 abstentions, a resolution on increasing engagement of partners and visibility in the performance of European Structural and Investment Funds.

These EU funding policies have an impact to all EU citizens. Nevertheless, the results have not always been well communicated as regards the extent to which ESI Funds investments changed the daily life of EU citizens and overall public awareness and perceptions about the effectiveness of the EU's regional policy have been declining over the years.

A Eurobarometer survey of September 2015 showed that just over one third (34 %) of Europeans claim to have heard about EU co-financed projects improving the quality of life in the area in which they live.

Increased visibility: Parliament noted that ensuring the visibility of cohesion policy investments should remain a **shared responsibility** of the Commission and the Member States.

The managing authorities and the competent local and regional authorities should be the interface of communication with citizens by providing information *in situ* and bringing Europe closer to them. They are urged to **improve the quality of their communication** not only downstream with regard to the concrete results of ESI Funds, but also upstream in order to make project initiators aware of funding opportunities.

Challenges to be addressed: Members called on the Commission and the Council to address the issue of the increase in Euroscepticism and in anti-European populist propaganda which distorts information on Union policies.

They stressed in particular the need to:

- **develop more effective communication strategies** aiming to bridge the gap between the EU and its citizens;
- analyse the impact on the perception of EU policies of the measures aimed at strengthening the link with the European semester and at implementing structural reforms via programmes financed by ESI Funds;
- find a proper balance between the imperative to **simplify** the rules governing the implementation of cohesion policy and the need to preserve sound and transparent financial management and combat fraud while still communicating this properly to the public;
- continue the communication activities for another **four years** after closure of the project if necessary, to call for a more detailed and differentiated evaluation of the long-term impact of cohesion policy on citizens' lives.

Noting the important role played by the media in informing citizens on various EU policies and EU affairs in general, Members regretted the rather limited media coverage of EU cohesion policy investments. They stressed the need to **develop information campaigns and communication strategies that target the media**.

Improving communication and the engagement of partners during the second half of the 2014-2020 period: the Commission is called on to provide clear guidance in 2017 on how technical assistance could be used for communication in the current funding period, with a view to ensuring legal certainty for local and regional authorities and other beneficiaries.

Parliament highlighted the importance of the European code of conduct on partnership and the role of the partnership principle in enhancing the collective commitment to and ownership of cohesion policy. It called for the link between public authorities, potential beneficiaries, the private sector, civil society and citizens to be strengthened through open dialogue and ensure the right mix of partners to represent community interests at every stage of the process.

Fostering post-2020 communication on cohesion policy: Members called on the Commission and Member States to **boost the attractiveness of EU cohesion policy funding** through further simplification and limitation of gold plating, and to consider reducing the complexity and, where appropriate, the number of regulations and guidelines.

Taking into consideration how EU cohesion policy contributes to positive identification with the European integration project, Members called on the Commission to consider a compulsory communication field in the project application forms, as part of an increased use of technical assistance through an **envelope set aside for communication**, at programme level. They called on the Member States to consider implementing **existing models of participatory governance**, involving stakeholders in a participatory budgeting process in order to determine the resources allocated for national, regional and local co-financing.

Lastly, the Commission and the Member States are asked to strengthen the role and position of pre-existing communication and information networks and to use the **interactive EU e-communication platform** on cohesion policy implementation, so as to collect all relevant data on ESI Fund projects, allowing end-users to give their feedback on the implementation process and the results achieved.

Such a platform would facilitate the evaluation of the effectiveness of cohesion policy communication.

Increasing engagement of partners and visibility in the performance of European Structural and Investment Funds

2016/2304(INI) - 24/05/2017 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Regional Development adopted an own-initiative report by Daniel BUDA (EPP, RO) in increasing engagement of partners and visibility in the performance of European Structural and Investment Funds.

These EU funding policies have an impact to all EU citizens. Nevertheless, the results have not always been well communicated as regards the extent to which ESI Funds investments changed the daily life of EU citizens and overall public awareness and perceptions about the effectiveness of the EU's regional policy have been declining over the years.

Increased visibility: Members noted that ensuring the visibility of cohesion policy investments should remain a shared responsibility of the Commission and the Member States. The managing authorities and the competent local and regional authorities should be the interface of communication with citizens by providing information *in situ* and bringing Europe closer to them. They are urged to improve the quality of their communication and in particular on the **final results** of projects. Providing visibility for a policy involves a **dual process** of communication and interaction with partners.

Challenges to be addressed: stressing the increase in Euroscepticism and in anti-European populist propaganda, which distorts information on Union policies, the Commission and the Council are called upon to analyse and address their underlying causes.

There is an urgent need to develop **more effective communication strategies** aiming to bridge the gap between the EU and its citizens. Members invited the Commission and the Council to analyse, both for the current framework and for the post-2020 reform of cohesion policy, the impact on the perception of EU policies of the measures aimed at strengthening the link with the European semester and at implementing structural reforms via programmes financed by ESI Funds.

The report reiterated the need to find a proper balance between the imperative to simplify the rules governing the implementation of cohesion policy and the need to **preserve sound and transparent financial management** and combat fraud while still communicating this properly to the public.

Another issue is that the long-term, strategic nature of cohesion policy investments means that results are sometimes not immediate, a situation that is detrimental to the visibility of cohesion policy instruments, especially when compared with other Union tools, such as the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI). Members urged, therefore, that communication activities should, where appropriate, continue for another **four years after closure of the project**.

Noting the important role played by the media in informing citizens on various EU policies and EU affairs in general, Members regretted the rather limited media coverage of EU cohesion policy investments. They stressed the need to develop information campaigns and communication strategies that **target the media**.

Improving communication and the engagement of partners during the second half of the 2014-2020 period: the Commission is called on to provide clear guidance in 2017 on how technical assistance could be used for communication in the current funding period, with a view to ensuring legal certainty for local and regional authorities and other beneficiaries.

The report highlighted the importance of the European code of conduct on partnership and the role of the partnership principle in enhancing the collective commitment to and ownership of cohesion policy. It called for the link between public authorities, potential beneficiaries, the private sector, civil society and citizens to be strengthened through open dialogue and for the communicational dimension of cross-border and inter-regional cooperation to be enhanced.

Fostering post-2020 communication on cohesion policy: Members called on the Commission and Member States to boost the attractiveness of EU cohesion policy funding through further simplification and limitation of gold plating, and to consider reducing the complexity and, where appropriate, the number of regulations and guidelines.

Taking into consideration how EU cohesion policy contributes to positive identification with the European integration project, Members called on the Commission to consider a **compulsory communication field** in the project application forms, as part of an increased use of technical assistance through an envelope set aside for communication, at programme level.

Members further insisted on increasing urban-rural cooperation to develop territorial partnerships between cities and rural areas through fully exploiting the potential of synergies between EU funds and building on the expertise of urban areas and their greater capacity in managing funds.

Lastly, the Commission and the Member States are asked to strengthen the role and position of pre-existing communication and information networks and to use the interactive **EU e-communication platform** on cohesion policy implementation, so as to collect all relevant data on ESI Fund projects, allowing end-users to give their feedback on the implementation process and the results achieved.

Such a platform would facilitate the evaluation of the effectiveness of cohesion policy communication.