

HIGH LEVEL GROUP REFLECTING ON FUTURE COHESION POLICY

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THEMATIC CONCENTRATION FOR COHESION POLICY POST 2013

This document has been prepared by DG Regional Policy as the basis for a discussion with experts as part of a general reflection process on the future of cohesion policy. It does not prejudge in any way the final position of DG Regional Policy or the Commission on these questions.

1. INTRODUCTION

In order to maximize the impact of cohesion policy and provide high European value-added, it will be necessary that Member States and regions concentrate EU and national resources on a limited number of commonly agreed priorities in line with the Europe 2020 strategy. At the same time Member States and regions would be provided with flexibility to choose the policy mix within each priority, which allows them to reach the objectives and targets set within the context of the specific challenges they are facing.

2. IMPLEMENTATION OF THEMATIC CONCENTRATION

Member States and regions would need to concentrate EU and national resources on a small number of priorities according to their specific challenges. The Regulation would establish a menu of thematic priorities directly linked to the priorities, the Integrated Guidelines and the flagship projects of the Europe 2020 strategy, and reflecting also the specificities of Cohesion Policy (bold items in annex). The menu would be accompanied by typology of outcome and core indicators at the level of the priority and categorization of expenditure items.

Depending on the amount of Community funding involved, Member States and regions would be obliged to focus on more or less priorities, some of them possibly being obligatory. More developed Member States and regions could, for example, be required to allocate the entirety of the financial allocation available to two/three priorities, while less developed ones may select more priorities. The number of priorities in transition regions would fall between these. Alternatively, the priorities could be defined in somewhat greater degree of detail, while possibly allowing Member States to concentrate on more.

In order to reflect the diversity of programming arrangements in Member State and in particular the balance between national and regional programming, the ceiling for the maximum number of priorities would be applied at programming level (i.e. national or regional). To avoid a distortion of the system in areas where both national and regional programmes are operating, the sum of priorities would not exceed the ceiling set out in the regulation.

Example 1 – Member State with exclusively competitiveness programmes at regional level. Each regional programme would choose two to three thematic priorities.

Example 2 – Member State with exclusively national convergence programmes. The total number of thematic priorities in all national programmes should not exceed the ceiling defined in the regulation.

Example 3 – Member State with a mix of national and regional programmes in convergence regions. In any given region the total number of thematic priorities (i.e. the sum of priorities in regional and national priorities) cannot exceed the ceiling defined in the regulations.

The arrangements for respect of the ceiling would be laid out in the National Development Investment and Partnership Contract.

Q1: What thematic priorities best correspond to those areas where Cohesion Policy can contribute to Europe 2020?

ANNEX

EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY AND THEMATIC PRIORITIES FOR COHESION POLICY

Europe 2020 Strategy				Cohesion Policy
EU priority ¹	Objective ²	Headline target ³	Flagship initiatives	Thematic priorities
Smart growth	§ Improving the conditions for innovation, research and development	§ R&D 3% of GDP § (A new indicator of innovation)	Innovation Union A Digital Agenda for Europe An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs	§ Strengthening research and technological development (IG4⁴)
				§ Promoting innovation and smart specialization (IG4)
	§ Improving education levels	§ At least 40% 30-34 years old having completed tertiary education § Reduce school drop-out rates to less than 10%	Youth on the Move An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs	§ Improving the quality and performance of education and training system at all levels and increasing participation in tertiary or equivalent education (EGL 9)
Sustainable growth	§ Meeting climate change and energy objectives	§ 20% reduction of G-G emission § 20% increase in	Resource efficient Europe	§ Supporting in all sectors the shift towards a low-carbon, resource efficient and climate resilient economy (IG5)
				§ Promoting renewable energy sources (IG5)

¹ European Council conclusions of 17.06.2010, §1, p.2.

² Idem §3, p.3.

³ Idem Annex I, pp. 10-11.

⁴ Integrated Guidelines for the economic and employment policies of the Member States, Recommendation for a Council Recommendation, 27.4.2010.

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		§ energy efficiency 20% increase in production of renewable	An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs An Industrial Policy in the era of globalisation	§ Upgrading Europe’s energy network (IG5) § Promoting sustainable transport (IG5) § Correcting and preventing unsustainable use of resources (IG5) § Removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures (IG5 and 6)
Inclusive growth	§ Promoting employment	§ 75% employment rate (women and men) including greater participation of young people, older workers, low-skilled workers and better integration of legal migrants	An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs Youth on the move Innovation Union An Industrial Policy in the era of globalisation	§ Increasing labour market participation of women and men, reducing structural unemployment and promoting job quality (EGL 7) § Developing a skilled workforce responding to labour market needs and promoting lifelong learning (EGL 8)
	§ Promoting social inclusion and reducing poverty	§ Lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and exclusion (measured by material deprivation and jobless households) § ... in addition to national targets “taking into account national circumstances and priorities”	European Platform Against Poverty	§ Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty (EGL 10)

p.m. Horizontal priority: Strengthening institutional and administrative capacity (IGL 6)