



Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2006/2086(INI)	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		Appointed 12/09/2005
			PSE KREHL Constanze
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		Appointed 05/10/2005
			PPE-DE MATO ADROVER Ana
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	TRAN Transport and Tourism		30/08/2005
			PPE-DE BECSEY Zsolt László
	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			
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	Results of vote in Parliament		
18/05/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0216/2006	Summary
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 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/6/32951

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2005)0299	05/07/2005	EC	Summary
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE367.818	07/03/2006	EP	
Committee draft report		PE370.296	07/03/2006	EP	
Committee opinion	TRAN	PE368.023	04/04/2006	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE371.896	19/04/2006	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0175/2006	10/05/2006	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0216/2006	18/05/2006	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2006)2902	22/06/2006	EC	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2006)3065-2	01/08/2006	EC	
Follow-up document		COM(2007)0798	11/12/2007	EC	Summary

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

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.

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

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

- 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),
e n v i r o n m e n t a l l a w ,
the Commission must demand improvements or the repayment of monies already disbursed.

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.