Procedure file

Basic information

INI - Own-initiative procedure	2016/2303(INI)	Procedure completed
Future perspectives for technical assistance in cohesion policy Subject 4.70.02 Cohesion policy, Cohesion Fund (CF)		

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
REGI Regional Development		08/09/2016
	ECR TOMAŠIĆ Ruža	
	Shadow rapporteur	
	epp SPYRAKI Maria	
	S&D COZZOLINO Andrea	
	MIHAYLOVA Iskra	
	ROPĖ Bronis	
	EFD D'AMATO Rosa	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Key events

24/11/2016	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
25/04/2017	Vote in committee		
04/05/2017	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0180/2017	Summary
18/05/2017	Results of vote in Parliament		
18/05/2017	Debate in Parliament		
18/05/2017	Decision by Parliament	T8-0223/2017	Summary
18/05/2017	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2016/2303(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/8/08466

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE597.486	17/01/2017	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE602.727	24/03/2017	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0180/2017	04/05/2017	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0223/2017	18/05/2017	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2017)511	26/09/2017	EC	

Future perspectives for technical assistance in cohesion policy

The Committee on Regional Development adopted the initiative report by Rua TOMAI? (ECR, HR) on future perspectives for Technical Assistance in Cohesion Policy.

Technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission (Article 58 of the Common Provisions Regulation - CPR)

Members welcomed the Commissions activities funded by technical assistance, in particular its work on the TAIEX REGIO PEER 2 PEER instrument, the Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool, the Integrity Pacts, the Guide for practitioners on how to avoid the 25 most common errors on public procurement and the Study on stocktaking administrative capacity on public procurement in all Member States.

They stressed that technical assistance instruments should have a greater role in the post-2020 cohesion policy and urged the Commission to raise awareness at local and regional level regarding their use.

Members recommended that the scope of the TAIEX REGIO PEER 2 PEER instrument be extended to all partners to ensure the broad exchange of experience, to contribute to capacity building, and to facilitate capitalising on good practices.

They stressed the need to continue and improve the work of the Task Force for Better Implementation in order to support Member States experiencing difficulties in implementing cohesion policy.

Members pointed out that the extension of the Structural Reforms Support Programme (SRSP) should not detract from cohesion policy thematic objectives and that resources should not be taken away from ESI Funds technical assistance.

They suggested the development of a broader technical assistance strategy to ensure more effective coordination covering all DGs that deal with the ESI as well as the activities of the Structural Reform Support Service related to cohesion policy so as to streamline the support provided, avoid duplication and maximise synergies and complementarities. They also stressed the need for complementarity with technical assistance measures carried out downstream at national and regional level.

Members stressed the need to analyse how Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions (JASPERS) activity for the period 2007-2013 has improved project quality and cut the time taken for Commission approval of major projects.

They noted that since technical assistance was first used in the area of cohesion policy no global analysis has been done to establish its actual contribution. This has its contribution to administrative capacity-building and institutional strengthening hard to assess and thus to ensure the effective management of ESI Funds.

Members called on the Commission to:

- invest in improving the reporting and evaluation system by developing more appropriate indicators ready for use in the next programming period;
- prepare measures and resources to set up technical assistance for the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies, having taken into account the varied experiences and rates of success of implementing such strategies, as well as the fact that the strategies' participants include non-Member States and countries with limited funds and insufficient human resources.

Lastly, Members stressed the importance of implementing specific technical assistance measures to promote re-industrialisation in depressed areas so as to attract investments in high-tech and innovative sectors with a low environmental impact

Technical assistance at the initiative of the Member States (Article 59 of the CPR): Members emphasised that technical assistance is different from other actions financed by the ESI Funds and that it is hard to measure its results. There is a need for a strategic and transparent approach, coordinated at the various levels of governance, as well as for flexibility to meet needs identified by managing authorities in the Member States.

Members were concerned that:

- in certain Member States technical assistance does not sufficiently and effectively reach the local and regional authorities, which usually have the lowest administrative capacity. Sound and transparent communication channels need to be established between the different levels of governance in order to successfully implement the ESI Funds and to achieve cohesion policy goals, while restoring trust in the effective functioning of the EU and its policies;
- in the implementation of integrated actions for sustainable urban development, although tasks are delegated to urban authorities which act as intermediate bodies, they often do not receive the necessary technical assistance for building up their capacity;
- many Member States are not applying the European code of conduct on partnership which defines the need to help the relevant partners strengthen their institutional capacity in regard to programme preparation and implementation.

Members highlighted that increased communication on and the visibility of the results and successes achieved with the support of ESI Funds can contribute to regaining citizens' trust in the EU. They called for the creation of a separate budget for communication within the technical assistance at the initiative of the Member State.

Members stressed that, to reduce excessive procedural complications, technical assistance should be increasingly focused on the beneficiary/project level regardless of whether it relates to the public, private or civil society sector. This would ensure the supply of innovative and well-designed projects fitting in with already existing strategies and avoid a one-size-fits-all approach. Technical assistance must be seen as a simple, flexible instrument that can be adjusted to suit changing circumstances.

They called for:

- better reporting by Member States in the post-2020 period of the types of actions financed by technical assistance, as well as the results achieved;
- increased use of technical assistance in European Territorial Cooperation and related programmes as those areas have their own specificities and require support in all phases of implementation, so as to enhance that cooperation and increase the stability of the programmes concerned;
- the Commission to implement an ex-post evaluation of both centrally managed technical assistance and technical assistance under shared management.

Future perspectives for technical assistance in cohesion policy

The European Parliament adopted by 580 votes to 45, with 3 abstentions, a resolution on future perspectives for Technical Assistance in Cohesion Policy.

Members recalled that technical assistance plays an important role in all phases of implementation of cohesion policy. However, local, regional and national authorities often lack the necessary capacity to efficiently and effectively implement the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds).

Technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission: Parliament welcomed the Commissions activities funded by technical assistance, in particular its work on: (i) the TAIEX REGIO PEER 2 PEER instrument, (ii) the Competency Framework, (iii) the Self-Assessment Tool, (iv) the Integrity Pacts, (v) the Guide for practitioners on how to avoid the 25 most common errors on public procurement and the Study on stocktaking administrative capacity on public procurement in all Member States.

Technical assistance instruments should have a greater role in the post-2020 cohesion policy and urged the Commission to raise awareness at local and regional level regarding their use.

Parliament recommended:

- the scope of the TAIEX REGIO PEER 2 PEER instrument to be extended to all partners to ensure the broad exchange of experience, to contribute to capacity building, and to facilitate capitalising on good practices. They stressed the need to continue and improve the work of the Task Force for Better Implementation in order to support Member States experiencing difficulties in implementing cohesion policy;
- ensure consistency with the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) while stressing that any possible prolongation of the programme should not detract from cohesion policy thematic objectives and that resources should not be taken away from ESI Funds technical assistance;
- develop a broader technical assistance strategy to ensure more effective coordination covering all DGs that deal with the ESI so as to streamline the support provided and maximise synergies and complementarities;
- better streamline the technical assistance in order to cover areas where managing authorities and beneficiaries encounter most challenges;
- analyse how JASPERS activity for the period 2007-2013 providing independent quality review (IQR) has improved project quality and cut the time taken for approval of major projects by the Commission;
- prepare measures and resources to set up technical assistance for the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies, having taken into account the varied experiences and rates of success of implementing such strategies, as well as the fact that the strategies' participants include non-Member States and countries with limited funds.

Noting that since technical assistance was first used in the area of cohesion policy, no global analysis has been done to establish its actual contribution, Members called on the Commission to invest in improving the reporting and evaluation system by developing more appropriate indicators ready for use in the next programming period.

The resolution stressed the importance of implementing specific technical assistance measures to promote re-industrialisation in depressed areas so as to attract investments in high-tech and innovative sectors with a low environmental impact.

Technical assistance at the initiative of the Member States: Parliament emphasised that technical assistance is different from other actions financed by the ESI Funds and that it is hard to measure its results. There is a need for a strategic and transparent approach, coordinated at the various levels of governance, as well as for flexibility to meet needs identified by managing authorities in the Member States.

Members were concerned that:

- in certain Member States technical assistance does not sufficiently and effectively reach the local and regional authorities, which usually have the lowest administrative capacity. Sound and transparent communication channels need to be established between the different levels of governance in order to successfully implement the ESI Funds and to achieve cohesion policy goals, while restoring trust in the effective functioning of the EU and its policies;
- in the implementation of integrated actions for sustainable urban development, although tasks are delegated to urban authorities which act as intermediate bodies, they often do not receive the necessary technical assistance for building up their capacity;
- many Member States are not applying the European code of conduct on partnership which defines the need to help the relevant partners strengthen their institutional capacity in regard to programme preparation and implementation.

Parliament highlighted that increased communication on and the visibility of the results and successes achieved with the support of ESI Funds can contribute to regaining citizens' trust in the EU. It called for the creation of a separate budget for communication within the technical assistance at the initiative of the Member State.

In order to reduce excessive procedural complications, Member States called for technical assistance to be increasingly focused on the beneficiary/project level regardless of whether it relates to the public, private or civil society sector. This would ensure the supply of innovative and well-designed projects fitting in with already existing strategies and avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.

Technical assistance must be seen as a simple, flexible instrument that can be adjusted to suit changing circumstances.

Members called for:

- better reporting by Member States in the post-2020 period of the types of actions financed by technical assistance, as well as the results achieved;
- increased use of technical assistance in European Territorial Cooperation and related programmes and in the field of cross-border relations;
- the Commission to implement an ex-post evaluation of both centrally managed technical assistance and technical assistance under shared management.