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Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2020/2074(INI)	Procedure completed
Cohesion Policy and regional environment strategies in the fight against climate change		
Subject		
3.70.03 Climate policy, climate change, ozone layer		
3.70.18 International and regional environment protection measures and agreements		
4.70.02 Cohesion policy, Cohesion Fund (CF)		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Regional Development	 PICULA Tonino	05/07/2020
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 HAVA Mircea-Gheorghe	
		 BIJOUX Stéphane	
		 ROOSE Caroline	
		 ROUGÉ André	
		 KLOC Izabela-Helena	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	 SOLÍS PÉREZ Susana	14/05/2020
 Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
 Transport and Tourism		11/05/2020	
	 FALCĂ Gheorghe		
 Agriculture and Rural Development		11/05/2020	
	 GUERREIRO Francisco		

Key events			
27/05/2020	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
24/02/2021	Vote in committee		
04/03/2021	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0034/2021	Summary
24/03/2021	Debate in Parliament		
25/03/2021	Results of vote in Parliament		
25/03/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0097/2021	Summary
25/03/2021	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2020/2074(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/9/02935

Documentation gateway					
Committee draft report		PE660.259	13/11/2020	EP	
Committee opinion	ENVI	PE653.872	10/12/2020	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE663.150	13/01/2021	EP	
Committee opinion	TRAN	PE655.927	28/01/2021	EP	
Committee opinion	AGRI	PE660.319	01/02/2021	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0034/2021	04/03/2021	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0097/2021	25/03/2021	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2021)345	03/08/2021	EC	

Cohesion Policy and regional environment strategies in the fight against climate change

The Committee on Regional Development adopted an own-initiative report by Tonino PICULA (S&D, HR) on cohesion policy and regional environmental strategies in the fight against climate change.

Cohesion policy and the fight against climate change

Members recalled that the economic, social and territorial disparities that cohesion policy is primarily designed to address can also be affected by climate change and its long-term consequences, and that EU climate policy measures should also support the objectives of EU cohesion policy.

While welcoming the Commission's proposal on the European climate law that includes the objective of climate neutrality by 2050, the report stressed the importance of tackling climate change in line with the EU's commitments under the European Green Deal, taking into account social, economic and territorial aspects to ensure a just transition for all territories and their people. All investments should respect the

do no significant harm principle of the Taxonomy Regulation for all investments.

The report called for greater coherence and coordination between cohesion policy and other EU policies in order to improve policy integration of climate aspects, to design more effective policies, to provide targeted EU funding and thus to improve the implementation of climate policies on the ground.

The key role of local and regional authorities

Members called on all local and regional authorities to adopt local and regional climate strategies translating EU-level targets into concrete local targets. They stressed the need to intensify the multi-level dialogue between national, regional and local authorities on the planning and implementation of national climate measures, direct access to funding for local authorities and monitoring the progress of adopted measures.

Local and regional authorities are key actors in the implementation of cohesion policy as they are responsible for one third of public spending and two thirds of public investment. Members therefore called for the creation of mechanisms such as the Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, aimed at bringing together local and regional authorities responsible for implementing the EUs climate and energy objectives.

Sustainable growth and green jobs

Members called for economic cohesion with sustainable growth and green and blue jobs, respecting the needs of different sectors. In this context, Member States should prioritise the fight against climate change along with the fight for inclusive and sustainable development and social justice and the fight against poverty, energy poverty and policies that burden vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Regional environmental strategies should also support renewable energy production and resource efficiency in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors while taking into account the competitiveness of these sectors.

Members insisted that Member States should include the smart villages approach in their programmes for implementing EU cohesion policy at national and regional level, as well as in their national strategic plans for the CAP. In addition, environmental and social criteria and preservation of the natural heritage to be given the same consideration as economic criteria when calculating project eligibility in the case of projects involving cultural and natural heritage.

Taking account of the specificities of all regions

Members reaffirmed that the specificities of all regions, as defined in Article 174 TFEU, should be fully reflected in the transition process so that no region is left behind, in particular by focusing on rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps.

The report called for the necessary financial resources to be allocated to the outermost regions so that they can achieve an ecological transition and adapt to the effects of climate change, from which they particularly suffer.

Cohesion Policy and regional environment strategies in the fight against climate change

The European Parliament adopted by 572 votes to 79, with 37 abstentions, a resolution on cohesion policy and regional environmental strategies in the fight against climate change.

Cohesion policy and the fight against climate change

Parliament stressed the key role of cohesion policy, in synergy with other policies, in combating climate change and achieving climate neutrality by 2050 and the intermediate target by 2030 and 2040.

The resolution stressed the need to translate the European Green Deal into concrete local actions that take into account the constraints and assets of each territory and to ensure a just transition for all territories and their populations. The do no harm principle should guide all investments.

Members called for an increase in the use of green and blue investments in the framework of cohesion policy. They called for greater synergies between different sources of funding at EU, national and regional level and closer links between public and private funding to increase the effectiveness of regional strategies to combat climate change.

The key role of local and regional authorities

Members called on all local and regional authorities to adopt local and regional climate strategies translating EU-level targets into concrete local targets based on a holistic place-based or area-oriented approach that would provide a long-term vision for climate transition and the better use of financial resources under the cohesion policy.

The resolution stressed the need to intensify the multi-level dialogue between national, regional and local authorities on the planning and implementation of national climate measures, direct access to funding for local authorities and monitoring the progress of adopted measures. Regional strategies should support citizen participation and locally initiated and led projects and should stimulate cooperation between regions, also through cross-border projects.

Local and regional authorities are key actors in the implementation of cohesion policy as they are responsible for one third of public spending and two thirds of public investment. Members therefore called for the creation of mechanisms such as the Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, aimed at bringing together local and regional authorities responsible for implementing the EUs climate and energy objectives.

Sustainable growth and green jobs

Parliament called for economic cohesion with sustainable growth and green and blue jobs, respecting the needs of different sectors. In this context, Member States should prioritise the fight against climate change along with the fight for inclusive and sustainable development and social justice and the fight against poverty, energy poverty and policies that burden vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Members reaffirmed that the needs of all regions should be fully taken into account in the transition process so that no region is left behind, focusing in particular on rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition and regions suffering from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps.

Regional environmental strategies should also support renewable energy production and resource efficiency in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors while taking into account the competitiveness of these sectors.

The reduction of land use, in particular soil sealing, should be taken into account as an important and key criterion for the implementation of the cohesion policy, in addition to regional environment strategies.

Members insisted that Member States should include the smart villages approach in their programmes for implementing EU cohesion policy at national and regional level, as well as in their national strategic plans for the CAP. In addition, environmental and social criteria and preservation of the natural heritage to be given the same consideration as economic criteria when calculating project eligibility in the case of projects involving cultural and natural heritage.

Taking account of the specificities of all regions

Members reaffirmed that the specificities of all regions, as defined in Article 174 TFEU, should be fully reflected in the transition process so that no region is left behind, in particular by focusing on rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps.

The resolution emphasised the potential of peripheral and outermost regions for renewable energy, due to their geographical and climatic characteristics. It called for the necessary financial resources to be allocated to the outermost regions so that they can achieve an ecological transition and adapt to the effects of climate change, from which they are particularly suffering.