



CEMR's key political messages on the future of EU Cohesion Policy



Conseil des Communes
et Régions d'Europe
Council of European
Municipalities and Regions

European Policy on Cohesion

Context

The EU cohesion policy aims to promote regional development across the EU and to reduce disparities between the levels of development of the EU regions. Member States agree at European level on the financial and legal framework, and set common strategies and objectives, whereas the responsibility for setting and delivering results lies at national, regional and local level.

The European cohesion policy is currently agreed within a 7-year framework (2007-2013). Reflections about the future EU cohesion policy have started and will impact on the European Commission's proposal for the post-2013 cohesion policy, which is expected towards the end of the year or in early 2011. At the heart of the debate are principal questions concerning the following aspects:

- The concept: what areas, what selection criteria for eligibility
- The aims: identifying the main challenges that should be targeted
- The management: partnership between levels of government and good governance in practice, improving the administration of the programmes

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions wants to contribute to the debate and hopes that the outcome will help the European Commission to achieve its objectives, to make Cohesion Policy "more flexible and capable of adapting to the appropriate territorial scale, to make it more responsive to local needs and to better coordinate with other policies and all levels of governance".

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CEMR position papers on this item:

(available on CEMR's website www.ccre.org)

- Policy Paper on the Future of EU Cohesion Policy (December 2009)
- Response to the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (February 2009)

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CEMR Policy Paper on the Future of EU Cohesion Policy

1. The local level is closest to the citizens

Local and regional authorities play a decisive role in economic and social development of all territories in the European Union and in implementing EU policies and achieving cohesion.

2. Cohesion Policy must serve all regions throughout Europe

The future EU Cohesion Policy must continue to support all EU's localities in their social and economic development, with a special focus on the regions lagging behind. It needs to be ensured that the territorial dimension of cohesion, added through the Lisbon Treaty, is seriously reflected in the future Cohesion Policy.

3. Cohesion Policy must be decentralised and the partnership principle respected

More responsibilities, accompanied with appropriate resources, should be allocated to local and regional authorities. Member States should be obliged to involve the local and regional level in planning, decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

4. Full support for a European Cohesion Policy and strong rejection of renationalisation

EU Cohesion Policy is the visible expression of European solidarity; it helps to create a sense of European citizenship and fosters regional development within a common economic and social framework.

5. Simplification of funds and concentration on results

Funding programmes must be made more simple and consolidated in order to lower the administrative burden for local and regional authorities and to make it easier for the actors on the ground to mobilise funding.

6. Rural development is not an appendix of agricultural policy

Current EU rural development programmes within the Common Agricultural Policy do not sufficiently serve rural development in a comprehensive sense. They should be appropriately funded and integrated into the future territorial Cohesion Policy.

7. Sustainable development as the guiding principle of Cohesion Policy

Funding should support the integration of economic, social and environmental development and be designed in a mid- and long-term perspective. Therefore, local and regional authorities, in their capacity to reconcile the sometimes contradictory effects of sustainable development at the relevant territorial level, should play a major role in the implementation of programmes.

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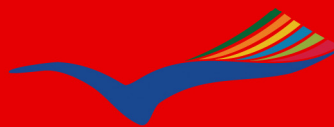
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