



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 1 December 2011

17990/11

RECH 416

NOTE

From: General Secretariat
To: Delegations
Subject: Cohesion Policy
- Information from the Commission

Delegations will find, in annex, a note from the Commission on the above-mentioned topic.

Cohesion Policy *Information from the Commission*

Introduction

Cohesion policy has been identified as a key delivery mechanism for Europe 2020 and the Innovation Union. The Commission presented the new cohesion policy regulatory package on 6 October. The key drivers of the proposal are to enhance effectiveness and align cohesion policy with Europe 2020 objectives. The package was presented to the General Affairs Council of 11 October and negotiations are taking place in the Structural Actions Working Party in the Council. The package was also presented to the Council's Research Working Party on 21 November. The General Affairs Council of 16 December will be entirely dedicated to cohesion policy.

Thematic objectives, investment priorities and thematic concentration

The draft Regulations identify a list of thematic objectives developed around the Europe 2020 headline targets and flagship initiatives. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation is the first out of the 11 thematic objectives to be supported by all the funds included in this package. The draft Regulation for the European Regional Development Fund introduces specific provisions for concentrating funding on specific thematic objectives. More developed and transition regions need to allocate at least 80 % and less developed regions at least 50 % of their total ERDF resources at national level to research, innovation, SME competitiveness and the low carbon economy.

Consistency and complementarity with other EU policies and instruments

A number of measures will ensure consistency and complementarity with other EU policies and instruments of the Union:

- a Common Strategic Framework (CSF) at EU level covering all five funds with structural aims (ERDF, Cohesion Fund, European Social Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Fisheries Instrument. The CSF is currently under elaboration and will be presented early next year. It will ensure coherence and consistency with the Horizon 2020,
- a Partnership Contract (PC), prepared by each Member State, setting out arrangements to ensure alignment with the Europe 2020 strategy,
- Operational Programmes (OP), drawn up by Member States or any authorities designated by them, define specific objectives in line with the PC

The existence of national or regional innovation strategies for smart specialisation is proposed as one of the ex-ante conditionalities for approving PCs and OPs submitted by the Member States. Commission has set up a Smart Specialisation Platform for assisting Member States and regions in developing innovation strategies for smart specialisation.

Synergies will be ensured with other EU funding programmes, in particular the "Horizon 2020" programme for research and innovation, the Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs and "Erasmus for All".