

Regional

Studies

Association

THE GLOBAL FORUM FOR CITY
AND REGIONAL RESEARCH,
DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY

The RSA Research Network on

Effectiveness, Added Value and Future of EU Cohesion Policy



Call for papers

First Workshop

“Multi-level governance and partnership in EU cohesion policy”

29-30 November 2011

Institute for European Integration Research (EIF)

Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, Austria

Deadline for submission of abstracts: 31 August 2011

THE RESEARCH NETWORK

EU cohesion policy, arguably one of the most visible and most debated EU policies, provides assistance to disadvantaged regions and localities through an innovative multi-level and partnership-based approach. It has also been credited for generating 'added value' in terms of improvement of administrative capacity and triggering modernisation processes within territorial administration across the Member States. This is accomplished by diffusion of standards of 'good governance' and policy practices such as partnership, multi-annual programming, place-based approach to development policy, evaluation, cross-border cooperation, etc.

Nevertheless, given the current pressures on cutting public spending, it is increasingly difficult to justify EU cohesion's policy prominent position in the EU budget and the policy has come under close scrutiny. It is thus critically important to deliver a more effective and results-oriented EU cohesion policy, capable of achieving its aims, creating more added value and providing innovative policy instruments to tackle the new global economic challenges.

The rationale for establishment of this [Regional Studies Association](#) (RSA) Research Network is the need to bring together academics investigating the issues effectiveness, impacts, and added value of EU cohesion policy, as well as practitioners working with this policy. This will allow for promoting dialogue and synergies between the two communities, exploring new exciting research avenues and contributing to the policy debate. The network addresses the following key issues for EU cohesion policy:

- Governance and partnership for delivering effective place-based interventions,
- Territorial cooperation and macro-regional approaches,
- Delivering a more results-oriented policy, which considers issues such as conditionalities, enhancing programming and evaluation practice,
- EU cohesion policy and its role in achieving the aims of Europe 2020 strategy,
- Budgetary politics in the wake of a new programming period 2014-2020,
- New financial instruments.

The activities of the Network will be structured around three international workshops to be held in Vienna (November 2011 - [Institute for European Integration Research](#)), Paris (March 2012 - [CERI Sciences Po](#) / [CoesioNet](#)), and Glasgow (Autumn 2012 - [European Policies Research Centre](#)). Each workshop will have a particular focus: “Multi-level governance and partnership” (Vienna), “Macro-regions and cross-border cooperation” (Paris), “Delivering a more results-oriented EU Cohesion policy” (Glasgow). The aim of the workshops will be to provide a platform for exchanging knowledge and debating the latest research on the above topics. The workshops will encourage open discussion and understanding between academics specialising in EU cohesion policy, while at the same time engaging with, and learning from, practitioners and policy-makers.

Research network organisers:

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WORKSHOP FOCUS

The first workshop organised as part of the Research Network will be hosted by the Institute for [European Integration Research \(EIF\)](#) in Vienna and take place on 29-30 November 2011. It will tackle the issues of multi-level governance and partnership in EU cohesion policy. The imposition of multi-level and horizontal cooperation in implementation of cohesion funding challenged the established patterns of interaction between the levels of government and the actors involved in regional policy delivery. The partnership principle has also been praised for its positive impact in terms of improvement of administrative capacity and favouring learning across organisational boundaries. In addition, effective multi-level governance mechanisms and horizontal partnership are also considered as crucial for purposeful and strategic use of the Structural Funds. Thus, EU cohesion policy is expected to become more results-oriented in 2014-2020 thanks to, among other measures, an emphasis on a place-based approach, a concept closely linked with multi-level governance and partnership. However, there are major barriers for the functioning of multi-level governance, such as reluctance of some national governments to allow the sub-national actors to play a more important role; or lack of capacity at the regional level to actively take part in shaping and implementation of EU cohesion policy, particularly in countries with centralised and hierarchical administration systems. Likewise, as

the ex-post evaluations of 2000-2006 period and the academic research to date suggest, the application of horizontal partnership varies considerably across the Member States and can remain superficial and 'formal.' Against this background we propose to address the following issues during the workshop:

1. Application of the multi-level governance and EU cohesion policy's partnership principle in the Member States:

- Assessment of the functioning of multi-level governance, horizontal partnership and project-level partnership on the ground
- Is there capacity to put the partnership principle into practice, particularly in Member States with traditionally centralised territorial administration and top-down policy making? Are the Managing Authorities capable of coordinating partnership and using it to draw on local knowledge and inform their policy choices? What is the involvement of regional actors in implementation of cohesion policy?
- Issues of power, interests and politics: To what extent does the EU cohesion policy's partnership principle empower local actors and enable them to influence the implementation of regional development policy? Who takes part in horizontal partnership and what groups of stakeholders are represented in partnership institutions? How democratic and representative are partnership bodies involved in implementation of EU funds? What is the role of the regional parliaments and what is their ability to intervene in cohesion policy?

2. Added value and spillover effects:

- What are the aspects of added value of the EU cohesion policy's multi-level governance approach and horizontal partnership in different Member States?
- Partnership and learning dynamics: what are the benefits of application of the partnership principle? Is partnership capacity something that can be built over time through learning processes? What factors affect the capacity to successfully apply the partnership principle?
- Does the cooperative mode of governance of EU cohesion policy generate spillover effects for the Member States' domestic policies?

3. Enhancing multi-level governance and partnership:

- What measures can be put forward to maximise the added value of the multi-level governance approach and make it deliver?
- Conditionality as solutions to deficiencies of MLG: what kinds of conditionalities can enhance the functioning of multi-level governance in the field of EU cohesion policy? Negative sanctions or positive incentives?
- Evaluating partnership: what tools can be used for assessing compliance with the partnership principle?

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

We invite paper proposals addressing the above issues. However, we would also welcome contributions investigating other aspects of multi-level governance and partnership in EU cohesion policy. We would particularly encourage submitting papers examining the topic from an East-West or Old- / New Member States comparative perspective.

All interested researchers, PhD students, and practitioners are invited to submit, by email, an abstract of around 1,000 words to following email address: rsanet.cohesion.policy@gmail.com

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS: 31 AUGUST 2011.

Abstracts must be in English and include full contact details. Acceptance of abstracts will be confirmed by mid-September 2011.

WORKSHOP FORMAT AND OUTCOMES

The participants will be asked to submit full papers by the 15 November 2011. The papers will be circulated before the event and the participants will be invited to read them in order to ensure lively discussions and provide the paper givers with an in-depth feedback.

The workshop will start on Tuesday 29 of November at 1pm and end by 1 pm on Wednesday 30 of November. It will include four sessions. Each of the sessions will include two paper presentations and have one or two discussants (academics and practitioners) leading the debates. There will also be a closing session allowing for a summary of debates and conclusions. Moreover, thanks to the funding provided by the RSA, the participants will be invited for an informal dinner on 29 November, which will offer opportunities for further debates and networking.

The authors of the best papers in the workshop will be invited to contribute to a proposal for a special issue in a journal.. In addition, all of the papers presented at the workshop will be published online on a dedicated website hosted by the Regional Studies Association.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

- Participation in the event is free of charge.
- The workshop will take place at the headquarters of the Austrian Academy of Sciences at Doktor-Ignaz-Seipel-Platz 2, in the historic centre of Vienna.
- The participants will be invited to participate in an informal dinner on 29 of November. Light refreshments and beverages will be provided in between the sessions.
- The working language of the workshop is English.
- Thanks to the financial support from the RSA we will be able to offer several modest travel bursaries (up to 150 Euro per person) for attending the workshop. Bursaries can only be offered to participants who are members of the RSA and fulfill one of the following eligibility criteria:
 - are student or early career members of RSA,
 - are associate (retired) members of RSA,
 - are RSA member working in a Band B, C or D country.

For the purposes of clarity, only student and early career members in Band A may make a claim for expenses, while members in any other category of Band A are not eligible. Any claim for expenses being made by a corporate member (Bands B, C and D only) should note that their expenses can only be refunded to the organisation holding the corporate membership. Bursaries can be used towards travel and accommodation expenses only. The bursary is redeemable on presentation of receipts for eligible expenses. Applicants are encouraged to minimise their costs by using economy fairs, budget airlines, sharing accommodation, booking economy hotels/hostels. Priority will be given to PhD students and early-career researchers as well as the participants having difficulties in securing their own travel funding. Bursaries will be offered on a first come, first served basis. Please contact [Marcin Dabrowski](#) (local organiser for the Vienna workshop) if you have any questions regarding your eligibility for the bursary.