Cohesion Policy

Preparation for the Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union

(draft)

01.07.2011 - 31.12.2011





MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT EUROPEAN UNION EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND



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Cohesion Policy

Preparation for the Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union *information brochure*

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MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Pear Seeder,

The Polish Presidency in the Council of the European Union comes in a particular moment of the European agenda. The new shape of EU policies will be formally negotiated by **the Council and the European Parliament** after the official presentations of those policies by the European Commission. The negotiations will be especially challenging in the light of the economic, social and political effects of the crisis and of its vastly diversified impact on EU Regions. The Presidency Trio: Poland-Denmark-Cyprus will ensure continuity in the EU proceedings in order to provide a smooth transition into the next programming period.

Poland, as a country rapidly closing the gap in economic and social development through efficient implementation of Cohesion Policy, has a special role to play at a time when post-crisis negotiations of the new programming period begin. The aim of Cohesion Policy is to support **comprehensive actions for the well-being of future generations** and to invest in human and intellectual capital in order to allow the whole Europe to reach its potential and face the challenges in the national, European and global scale. Therefore, the Polish government has supported the Europe 2020 Strategy from the very beginning. The same vision will dominate our programme regarding the shape of Cohesion Policy.

As the Polish Presidency motto states - "Cohesion Policy as an efficient, effective and territorially differentiated response to EU development challenges" – I believe that for the successful take up of the European challenges we should reform Cohesion Policy and focus on its attributes as the European regional policy.

Our intention during the Presidency is to promote Cohesion Policy as a pro-development policy for all European Union regions. As such, it should cover many sectors, be based on the multi-level governance system and address specific territorial characteristics. This integrated approach to development is fully consistent with the traditional objective of this policy, namely to reduce developmental disparities by unlocking development capacities through elimination of various barriers.

After almost 4 years of discussion, I am convinced that all EU partners will be able to find a workable agreement on the future shape of Cohesion Policy, that would make it both more effective and less burdensome for the beneficiaries.

I do hope that our strong commitment to advancing the debate on the future Cohesion Policy will be appreciated by our European partners. We are determined to take a strong and balanced leadership in the Council and, at the same time, to meet the diverse expectations of all 27 Member States.

> Elżbieta Bieńkowska Minister of Regional Development of the Republic of Poland

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Poland will assume the role of the Presidency in a special time of the debate on the future shape of Cohesion Policy after 2013. The potential role of Cohesion Policy as a development policy is perceived both in terms of financial resources and the desired directions of their allocation, which have an essential impact on the growth performance of European regions. Therefore it is essential to begin the negotiations on the future shape of the policy at the earliest possible date. Taking into account the time necessary for good preparation of the future programming documents, Poland expects that the draft regulations concerning Cohesion Policy will be presented by the Commission in July at the latest. Poland is convinced that Cohesion Policy, as one of the most important European policies, deserves more attention at a political level. Therefore, the Presidency will raise the profile of the policy by involving the political level early in the negotiation process and organizing several meetings with the participation of ministers, high-level officials from European institutions and representatives of regional and local authorities.

The Polish Presidency sets out three objectives:

- I. Ensuring both an efficient management of the negotiations of the regulations for Cohesion Policy after 2013 and achievement of as far-reaching consensus as possible in selected areas
- II. Strengthening the attributes of Cohesion Policy (integrated approach to development and results orientation) as the territorial development policy, under the new EU economic governance system and Europe 2020 Strategy

III. Raising the political profile of Cohesion Policy.

The objectives will be achieved simultaneously - through formal negotiations concerning the new Cohesion Policy's regulations at the meetings of the Structural Actions Working Party - B.05 in the Council and through an informal debate conducted both at the expert and political level. The informal debate will be used to advance and complement the official negotiations.

The results of these two paths will be summarized respectively in the Presidency document following the strategic debate of ministers in the General Affairs Council and the Presidency conclusions adopted during the informal meeting of ministers.



MAIN EVENTS PLANNED DURING THE POLISH PRESIDENCY

2011

The Polish Presidency will organize conferences, seminars and meetings at political level, which will demonstrate the role of Cohesion Policy as a regional/territorial policy based on results and on integrated approach to development.

The following timeline illustrates the most important events planned by the Polish Presidency in relation to Cohesion Policy.



SCOPE OF THE DEBATE

The following motto will guide all activities of the Polish Presidency:

Cohesion Policy as an efficient, effective and territorially differentiated response to EU development challenges

The programme aiming at advancing the debate focuses on two main leading themes:

INTEGRATED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT with the topics such as strategic programming, conditionality (pre-conditions), territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy, multi-level governance system and instruments for territorial development, as well as relations between various instruments

and

RESULT-ORIENTED COHESION POLICY including such thematic blocks as thematic concentration, evaluation, conditionality (performance-based) and indicators.

The incoming Polish Presidency expects that other important aspects of Cohesion Policy system e.g.: architecture of objectives (possible changes in the current architecture of objectives, strategic, financial and operational consequences of these changes), system of implementation and financial management (institutional system, reduction of administrative burden, financial management and control) and general principles (additionality, proportionality, etc.) can also constitute a significant element of the programme. The Polish Presidency programme could be complemented to include those items depending on the progress of the debate in the 1st half of 2011, on the scope of the draft regulations governing the functioning of Cohesion Policy in the future as well as on the date of their publication by the European Commission.



Potential issues which could be elaborated on during the Polish Presidency as regards the *Integrated approach to development* include:

Strategic Programming

Strategic programming covers the issues related to the structure and linkages between strategic documents concerning Cohesion Policy, such as Common Strategic Framework (CSF), Development and Investment Partnership Contract, as well as operational programmes and other related documents. Coordination with other policies and the possible multi-fund approach, as well as the capacity to use the full potential of the European Social Fund without introducing barriers that would decrease efficiency of integrated approach, will also be of major significance.

Instruments for territorial development

The debate on the instruments supporting the territorial dimension would cover issues related to special arrangements for cities (within the meaning of functional areas) and rural areas, as well as urban-rural linkages. The debate will also cover future mechanisms - of the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC), incl. European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC), as well as macro-regional strategies. The Polish Presidency will be responsible, *inter alia*, for the review of EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. It will also continue the debate on territorial dimension of the European Social Fund.

In order to assure the integrated approach to development at border areas, an important issue will be also the inclusion of cross-border cooperation programmes of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument in the future objective of Cohesion Policy - European Territorial Cooperation (the harmonization of principles of implementation and procedures of the ENPI programmes with those of the ETC is needed).



Territorial Agenda 2020 as a useful tool for implementing Cohesion Policy

The efficiency of Cohesion Policy could be improved through proper application of integrated approach and its more pronounced orientation on results. This approach requires special consideration of the territorial dimension in the further development of Cohesion Policy. In this context the Territorial Agenda has an important role to play: it could be operationalized as a useful tool for Cohesion Policy implementation, further strengthening of the Cohesion Policy's territorial dimension. The Territorial Agenda was agreed on by the European Union Ministers competent for spatial development during the Informal Ministerial Meeting held in Leipzig in May 2007. It aims at mobilizing the potential of European regions and cities and using their territorial diversity for the benefit of sustainable economic growth and jobs through integrated spatial development.

New challenges to the multi-level governance system

Multi-level governance underlying the Cohesion Policy will have to be consistent with the arrangements concerning strategic programming, conditionality or instruments supporting territorial development. Discussion on the issues related to the division of competences between the central, regional and local level should lead to effective solutions dependent on the specific situation in individual Member States. Contribution of European Commission, European Parliament, Committee of the Regions, European Economic and Social Committee, European Investment Bank, European Investment Fund and European Central Bank to the discussion on the most effective implementation of the integrated approach is welcome and would be used by the Polish Presidency to ensure that Cohesion Policy makes the use of that principle in practice.

Conditionality (preconditions)

The proposals to increase the effectiveness of Cohesion Policy by adopting regulatory, strategic, projectrelated or institutional conditions will require that both the Commission and the Member States show real commitment to the principle. The discussion should be based on a thorough and honest assessment of the effectiveness of the proposed tools for Cohesion Policy, their feasibility and their impact on administrative burden. The incoming Polish Presidency welcomes the openness in which the Commission discusses the issue with Member States and other partners and counts on the Commission to present a well-justified proposal which is fully consistent with the subsidiarity principle, proportional and takes into account the discussion and concerns raised. Achieving substantial progress in this area during the Polish Presidency would make it possible to start negotiations between the European Commission and the Member State and the regions at the Member State level.



Potential issues which could be elaborated on during the Polish Presidency as regards *result-oriented approach* include:

Conditionality (performance-based)

The second type of conditionality covers the proposals of rewards for meeting the previously set objectives or penalties for policy intervention failure. The future discussion will cover issues of the possible European performance reserve, national performance reserve, modulation of the levels of co-financing decommitment or suspension of the entire allocation or part thereof. These issues are strongly related to Cohesion Policy implementation system and the future work would have to find a balance between the procedural and efficiency requirements. Furthermore, the debate on conditionality at the implementation level, which concerns not only the institutions, but also specific operations and projects, should be deepened during the Polish Presidency.

Thematic concentration and the Europe 2020 Strategy

A balance is sought between the pursuit of greater concentration and keeping the relevant level of flexibility which makes it possible to adjust the priorities of the Europe 2020 Strategy to the territorial, economic and social conditions of individual regions. The theme will also focus on the issue of having an effective link to objectives of Europe 2020 Strategy and ensuring that sectoral goals especially in the field of energy, transport, environment and counteracting the climate change are well incorporated into the existing policies. This should be done without losing the flexibility to allocate at appropriate level the funds necessary to achieve full effectiveness of the policy. It this context the issue of optimizing the architecture of existing instruments and integration of their objectives will also be touched upon in this context (the European Social Fund and the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund – EGAF).

With regard to cross-border cooperation programmes the discussions will be also about setting up a formal requirement for development of transnational strategies that would both analyse the development challenges of the cooperation area and suggest its key priorities. Such strategies would establish political commitment from stakeholders to effectively implement objectives of the future programmes.

Evaluation as a tool for strategic management

Greater reliance of Cohesion Policy on results will be possible only if the evaluation tools are strengthened at various levels of European system. The evaluation results should be better used in order to make strategic decisions concerning instruments and directions of intervention (thematic concentration). Another significant aspect will include the discussion on the possibilities of using the evaluation to strengthen the strategic debate on Cohesion Policy effects.

RESULT-ORIENTED APPROACH

Common system of indicators

Cohesion Policy needs to be evidence-based and result-oriented, which requires the elaboration of a functional and consistent system of indicators. The debate will concern methods of preparing indicators and their links with strategic objectives as well as with the Europe 2020 Strategy.



Depending on the scope of the debate and the progress in the negotiations concerning the future shape of Cohesion Policy other possible topics which could be discussed during the Polish Presidency include:

Architecture of Cohesion Policy Objectives

The topics under this item will be discussed, to a certain point, simultaneously in a group responsible for Cohesion Policy package and in the group responsible for the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework. The key issues discussed in this field will cover *inter alia*: architecture of Cohesion Policy Objectives, support for the transition regions, application of the so-called Berlin methodology, allocations for the Cohesion Fund and European Social Fund as well as additional allocations.

System of implementation and financial management

Most Member States expect the European Commission to present proposals that reduce the burden of procedural compliance to the advantage of concentration of efforts on monitoring and assessment of the results of Cohesion Policy actions. This will be a very difficult task which will encompass a number of detailed, sometimes technical, but politically significant proposals concerning first of all audit and control system, automatic decommitment rule, revolving instruments, revenue generating projects, eligibility rules and others.

General principles

The principles underlying Cohesion Policy operation are a horizontal issue, which will appear in many discussions. Depending on the progress in other issues, the Polish Presidency may start the negotiations on the articles devoted to these principles during the meetings of the Structural Actions Working Party. The most important principles cover: subsidiarity, proportionality, additionality, shared management, complementarity, cohesion, coordination, partnership or territorial delivery level.

OTHER CO-RELATED ISSUES DURING THE POLISH PRESIDENCY

- Negotiation of the Multiannual Financial Framework
- **Future of sectoral EU policies: innovation, transport, etc.**
- **Future of the 2nd pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy**
- Review of the Financial Regulation
- Review of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
- **Review of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund**
- **Review of the Regulation for European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation**
- Review of the Solidarity Fund
- Review of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism, the Norwegian Mechanism and the Swiss Fund



POLITICAL EVENTS DURING THE POLISH PRESIDENCY

December Brussels

Formal Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Cohesion Policy within General Affairs Council

Objective: to summarize the progress made in negotiations of the new legislative package for the next programming period of Cohesion Policy during the Polish Presidency and to identify potential areas of compromise, clarify most controversial issues and point out directions of the debate in its next stages

Level of the meeting: Ministers competent for Cohesion Policy

Participants: 100 (Ministers + delegations)

Contact: monika.dolowiec@msz.gov.pl

25.11. Poznań

Informal Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Regional Policy, Territorial Cohesion and Urban Development

Objective: to engage Ministers and high representatives of European institutions in the political debate on strategic aspects of Cohesion Policy and in particular on integrating key territorial policies for smart, inclusive and sustainable growth and to present the key outcomes of the discussions carried out at all meetings held during the Polish Presidency in the area of Cohesion Policy (in the form of Presidency conclusions) **Level of the meeting:** Ministers competent for regional policy, territorial cohesion and urban development **Participants:** 360 (Ministers + delegations) **Contact:** kamila.wadecka@mrr.gov.pl

03-04.11. Warsaw

Meeting of Directors General Responsible for Regional Policy, Cohesion Policy and Urban Development

Objective: to present the results of actions undertaken during the Polish Presidency in the area of territorial and urban dimension of Cohesion Policy after 2013 in order to prepare the Informal Meeting of Ministers

Level of the meeting: Directors General competent for regional policy, territorial cohesion and urban development **Participants:** 120

Contact: ewa.malik-kapler@mrr.gov.pl

MAIN CONFERENCES DURING THE POLISH PRESIDENCY

07-08.07. Gdańsk

Evidence Based Cohesion Policy

Objective: to demonstrate how to use evidence from evaluation for programming and more performance-oriented management of Cohesion Policy, in the fields of thematic concentration, monitoring, indicators (07.07); to develop a platform for joined discussion between representatives of two DG Regio and DG Employment evaluation working groups (08.07) **Level of the meeting:** high level decision-makers, practitioners from EU Member States, experts, evaluators; representatives of DG Regio Evaluation Network and DG Employment Partnership Meeting **Participants:** 400

Contact: stanislaw.bienias@mrr.gov.pl



MAIN CONFERENCES DURING THE POLISH PRESIDENCY

29-30.09. Warsaw

Territorial dimension of the European Social Fund

Objective: to carry out the discussion on the territorial dimension of the ESF and mechanisms of teritorialization, especially in the context of Europe 2020 Strategy

Level of the meeting: decision-makers, practitioners

Participants: 300

Contact: piotr.krasuski@mrr.gov.pl, monika.gawron@mrr.gov.pl

24-25.10. Warsaw

Effective Instruments for Territorial Development

Objective: to discuss instruments for territorial development (for cities, rural areas, urban-rural linkages) within Cohesion Policy after 2013 in order to improve their effectiveness

Level of the meeting: practitioners, regional and local authorities, decision-makers responsible for regional policy, urban development, agriculture and rural development, employment, social affairs and inclusion **Participants:** 400

Contact: daniel.balinski@mrr.gov.pl



MAIN CONFERENCES DURING THE POLISH PRESIDENCY

24.11. Poznań

Integrated Approach to Development – a Key to Smart, Inclusive and Sustainable Europe

Objective: to stimulate the high-level debate on the future of Europe, the shape of Cohesion Policy after 2013 and territorial dimension of Europe 2020 Strategy in relation to strategic programming, multi-level governance, territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy and its integrated approach **Level of the meeting:** Ministers, Commissioners, high-level experts in policy making representing different portfolios of regional, territorial development, urban matters and Cohesion Policy, practitioners from EU Member States, experts, decision-makers at central and regional levels **Participants:** 400

Contact: sabina.kason@mrr.gov.pl, patrycja.artymowska@mrr.gov.pl



OTHER EVENTS

18-19.07. Mazury region

Seminar on Territorial Dimension in Development Policies

Objective: to discuss different roles of territorial dimension in public policies in EU and non-EU countries and provide a comparison of their experiences and practices taking into account new theories in the area of regional policy

Level of the meeting: high-level experts representing the academic community, Member States, international organizations (OECD, World Bank, the European Commission)

Participants: 60

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15-16.09. Katowice

Joint Conference of ETC Transnational Cooperation Programmes

Objective: to provide a platform for stakeholders to exchange views on the design of transnational cooperation after 2013 in the framework of the EU 2020 Strategy

Level of the meeting: EU decision-makers, Member States, regional decision-makers, programme-level decision-makers, project partners

Participants: 500-600

Contact: teresa.marcinow@mrr.gov.pl

19-20.10. Warsaw

Catalysing reforms - European Social Fund Support for Better Governance

Objective: to summarize the effects of good governance supported by the ESF and to deepen the discussion on its future within Cohesion Policy

Level of the meeting: public administration officials from different Member States, experts Participants: 150-200

Contact: piotr.krasuski@mrr.gov.pl, monika.gawron@mrr.gov.pl

OTHER EVENTS

17-18.11. Lublin

Cohesion Policy and Catching-up Regions

Objective: to discuss ways of accelerating growth dynamics of problem areas using most effective support mechanisms available within the framework of the EU Cohesion Policy **Level of the meeting:** experts, decision-makers, practitioners from EU Member States and EU regions **Participants:** 200

Contact: anna.szymborska@mrr.gov.pl

12.12. Warsaw

Impact Evaluation Seminar

Objective: to promote using rigorous evaluation methods for gathering evidence on effectiveness and efficiency of EU Cohesion Policy followed by a discussion on lessons learned and policy implications (organized by DG Regio)

Level of the meeting: high-level experts, decision-makers, practitioners from EU Member States Participants: 100

Contact: daniel.mouque@ec.europa.eu, stanislaw.bienias@mrr.gov.pl

date to be confirmed Warsaw

Annual Conference on financial instruments (JEREMIE, JESSICA)

Objective: to present the results of the implemention of the financial engineering instruments (JEREMIE and JESSICA), including case studies presented by national and regional authorities and financial institutions, to develop discussion on financial engineering instruments within Cohesion Policy after 2013 (organized by DG Regio)

Level of the meeting: high-level experts, decision-makers, policy-makers, experts of the European Investment Bank, experts of the European Investment Fund, practitioners from EU Member States, representatives of the public and private sectors

Participants: 500

Contact: magdalena.piotrowska@mrr.gov.pl

24-26.10. Gdańsk

Baltic Development Forum and 2nd Annual Stakeholder Forum

Objective: to discuss the progress in terms of EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region implementation, incl. Commission's Progress Report as well as all experiences of bodies and institutions directly involved in the implementation of Priority Areas and Flagship Projects (organized by the Commission in cooperation with Polish partners)

Level of the meeting: high-level experts, decision-makers, practitioners from EU Member States and relevant third countries

Participants: 350

Contact: joanna.wojtkowska@msz.gov.pl, k.wroblewska@woj-pomorskie.pl

MAIN WORKING GROUPS, COMMITTEES



CALENDAR

Political events	2011			
Meeting of Directors General	3 Nov – 4 Nov	Warsaw		
Informal Meeting of Ministers	25 Nov	Poznań		
Formal Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Cohesion Policy within General Affairs Council	December	Brussels		
Main conferences				
Evidence Based Cohesion Policy	7 Jul – 8 Jul	Gdańsk		
Territorial Dimension of the European Social Fund	29 Sep – 30 Sep	Warsaw		
Effective Instruments for Territorial Development	24 Oct – 25 Oct	Warsaw		
Integrated Approach to Development – a Key to Smart, Inclusive and Sustainable Europe	24 Nov	Poznań		
Other events				
Seminar on Territorial Dimension in Development Policies	18 Jul – 19 Jul	Mazury region		
Joint Conference of ETC Transnational Cooperation Programmes	15 Sep – 16 Sep	Katowice		
OPEN DAYS	10 Oct – 13 Oct	Brussels		
Catalysing reforms – ESF Support for Better Governance	19 Oct – 20 Oct	Warsaw		
Baltic Development Forum and II Annual Stakeholder Forum	24-26 Oct	Gdańsk		
Cohesion Policy and Catching-up Regions	17 Nov – 18 Nov	Lublin		
ESPON Week: ESPON 2013 Seminar	29 Nov – 30 Nov	Cracow		
Regional Policy Attache Meeting on Cohesion Policy Regulations after 2013	7 Dec – 9 Dec	Cracow		
Impact Evaluation Seminar	12 Dec	Warsaw		
Annual Conference on financial instruments (JEREMIE, JESSICA)	tbc	Warsaw		
Working groups, committees				
Joint Meeting of the Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points (NTCCP) & Urban Development Group (UDG)	12 Jul	Warsaw		
Joint Meeting of the Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points (NTCCP) & Urban Development Group (UDG)	26 Sep- 27 Sep Warsaw			
Technical Working Group ESF	25 Oct – 26 Oct	Brussels		
Coordination Committee of the Funds (COCOF)	27 Oct – 28 Oct	Warsaw		
Working Group on Territorial Cohesion & Urban Matters (TCUM)	21.09, 15.12	Brussels		
Monitoring Committee URBACT II	14 Nov	Warsaw		
ESPON Week: ESPON Contact Point Meeting	28 Nov	Cracow		
Technical Working Group ESF	29 Nov – 30 Nov	Cracow		
ESF Committee	1 Dec	Cracow		
ESPON week: Monitoring Committee of ESPON 2013 Programme	1 Dec – 2 Dec	Cracow		



WHO IS WHO

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WHO IS WHO

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Evaluation	Presidency Programme	Regional policy at national level
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