

# Structural policy 2014-2020 – proposed Regulation covering all EU structural instruments

## Citizens' summary

### WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

In its [proposals for the 2014-2020 financial framework](#) (tabled in June 2011) the European Commission:

- decided that cohesion policy, rural development and maritime and fisheries policies should remain essential elements of the 2014-20 financial package because of their pivotal role in delivering the [Europe 2020 strategy](#)
- proposed that structural policies should concentrate funding on a smaller number of priorities strongly linked to the Europe 2020 strategy, focusing on results, monitoring progress towards agreed objectives and simplifying delivery.

The Commission is now proposing a Regulation covering all structural policy funding instruments.

- The first part of the proposal sets out common rules governing the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). It will increase coherence amongst the instruments for better synergies and greater impact.
- The second part sets out common rules governing the three main funds delivering the objectives of cohesion policy: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF).

### WHO WILL BENEFIT AND HOW?

- All EU countries and regions will benefit from structural policy interventions. The amount of support will depend on a region's level of economic development (per capita GDP)

### WHY DOES ACTION HAVE TO BE TAKEN BY THE EU?

- Structural programmes translate priorities fixed at EU level into practical action in EU countries and regions. The involvement of all administrative levels across Europe in the pursuit of European objectives is key to ensuring these objectives become reality.
- Cohesion policy provides essential EU public goods that enable EU countries and regions to concentrate resources on improving economic, social and territorial cohesion and meeting [Europe 2020 targets](#).
- There are strong cross-border interdependencies in the Union. Cohesion policy reinforces linkages between leading and lagging areas and maximises spill-over effects from growth centres to neighbouring areas.

### WHAT EXACTLY WILL CHANGE?

- The proposal seeks to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of structural instruments – particularly important in the current economic and fiscal climate.
- It will establish a common strategic framework for the ERDF, ESF, CF, the EAFRD and EMFF which will ensure an integrated use of the funds to deliver common objectives.

- A Partnership Contract will be agreed between the Commission and each EU country, bringing together all the country's commitments to delivering European objectives and targets.
- Before funds are paid out, authorities will have to demonstrate that satisfactory strategic, regulatory and institutional frameworks are in place to ensure the funds are used effectively. The release of additional funds will be dependent on performance. Steps will be taken to ensure that funds' effectiveness is not undermined by unsound macro-fiscal policies.
- Procedures will be simplified and computerised where possible. Eligibility rules for EU funding instruments will be harmonised. This will help cut costs.

#### WHEN IS THE PROPOSAL LIKELY TO COME INTO EFFECT?

- The Commission's proposal will be discussed with EU governments and the European Parliament. It should enter into force in 2013.

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