

Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget

Recommendations for the successful design of regional development strategies beyond 2020

Rapporteur: Adam STRUZIK(PL/EPP)
President of Mazovia Region

20.05.2019

Objectives of the opinion

The opinion should constitute a platform for exchange of good practices related to development strategies, taking into account various constitutional powers of EU regions in their relations with national authorities.

Recommendations for the successful design of regional development strategies beyond 2020 should also form the basis for a debate on the **strategy to replace the Europe 2020 strategy.**

DRAFT OPINION – selected issues

Policy recommendations

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Presents recommendations for the successful design of regional development strategies beyond 2020, based on the context analyses of the strategic situation of the regions, taking into account the challenges faced by regions, and also using experiences of the cohesion policy.
- Emphasizes that in the light of actual needs local and regional authorities must have clearly defined medium- and long-term development strategies based on both predicted trends and specific characteristics of their territories.

European budget in the discussion on Europe's vision

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Indicates the necessity to continue work on supplementary indicators to GDP that are a more precise measure of progress in sustainably achieving social, economic and environmental goals and to include them in allocating the European Union's budget.
- Appeals for developing clear and measurable indicators which will reflect climate changes, biodiversity, resource efficiency and social inclusion.
- Reminds that the Common Financing Framework should be a tool which serves to achieve objectives of the new strategy rather than just be an indicator for these goals.

Strategic planning as a basis for the development policy

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Indicates the need to develop a framework for long-term policy at the European Union's level to replace the Europe 2020 strategy and enable the development of national and regional/local strategies which contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development objectives expressed in this strategy.
- Appeals to the European Commission to rapidly start work on such a strategy that should specify strategic and ambitious but at the same time realistic targets to be achieved in order to better adapt future EU and national policies using available tools and financial resources.
- Remarks that, due to the above, they need to focus on medium- and long-term vision that enables concrete results, including intended development indicators.

Strategic planning as a basis for the development policy

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Emphasizes that national, regional and local strategies must be integrated and contribute to sustainable development objectives, and also spring up at grass-root level, i.e. with substantial contribution by citizens. To this end, local and regional authorities are required to openly approach initiatives and ideas of citizens, enterprises, scientific and educational centres and civil society organizations. It must be realized that public authorities are not the only entities that can find solutions to many of today's problems.
- Reminds that medium- and long-term development strategies must be implemented at the local and regional level, taking into account the most recent scientific knowledge and ideas about regional development strategies, including forecasts, climate change and resource depletion.
- Appeals for reinforcement of the feasibility aspect in regional and local strategies, also with the use of developed systems for monitoring the effectiveness of implementation.

Territorial dimension in strategic planning

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Points out the necessity to reinforce the territorial aspect in the development policy of the European Union and its Member States, and in particular to pay attention to its regional identity.
- Points out that there is also a need to include functional areas/regions which often go beyond administrative borders. To this end, new and better adapted territorial instruments should be used more intensively for regional development and improved cohesion of the functional areas, while maintaining the regional approach of the cohesion policy.
- Emphasizes the high importance of territorial and international cooperation for territorial development, as well as its role in preparing development programmes and strategies.

Territorial dimension in strategic planning

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Emphasizes that regional and local identity must be definitely and in the first place taken into account in the territorial approach.
- Indicates that in order to ensure the success at the Community's level regional development strategies beyond 2020 must be linked to the new Territorial Agenda.
- Appeals to put particularly strong emphasis on revitalization of urban centres in the development strategies in order to increase their functionality and accessibility.
- Encourages regions and cities from different Member States of the European Union to cooperate and draw knowledge from each other as part of common programmes, projects and networks which have practical impact on each aspect of the social and economic life, including innovations, accessibility, education, enterprises, employment and the environment.

Decentralization – the key element of strategic planning

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Emphasizes that an appropriate involvement of local and regional authorities must be ensured in shaping and distributing the Common Financing Framework so as to avoid their excessive centralization.
- Indicates that the issue of local and regional authorities' inability to make independent decisions, which is the key barrier hindering the effective implementation of ESI programmes, must be urgently addressed.

Decentralization – the key element of strategic planning

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Points out that both the Union and its cities and regions need strong leaders who are not afraid to make bold and often controversial decisions. And who can also clearly set out a vision for the development of their areas, presenting it in the development strategies.
- Considers it appropriate to strengthen civil rights in the context of globalization. Thus, it emphasizes that compliance with the rule of law should be ensured also at local and regional levels because it makes citizens acknowledge its value.

Social policy as a pillar of development

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Points out that relationships between the cohesion policy and the implementation of the European social rights pillar should still be strengthened.
- Indicates the continued need to eliminate the remaining economic, social and territorial disproportions.
- Recommends continued efforts to develop a comprehensive migration policy and a common asylum system of the European Union.
- Points out that it is particularly important to include the issues of fight against terrorism and security – mostly in public places – and civil protection in the European, national and regional strategies.
- Appeals to Member States, regions and cities to accelerate integration of migrants and asylum seekers in the labour market, to use their abilities and language skills, and to develop those skills through appropriate training.

Strategic planning given climate change

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Recommends strengthening the environmental policy in regional and local development strategies.
- Emphasizes the necessity to carry out effective activities in response to the growing pressure connected with climate change and environmental burden - circular economy.
- Proposes that Member States and their regional governments include in their strategic and programming documents the promotion of energy efficiency, greener mobility, electricity production from renewable energy sources, carbon sinks and sustainable production and consumption.
- Indicates the necessity to strengthen the cohesion of land use with aspects of adaptation to climate change. Also reminds that land use is the key to limit the hazards.

Strategic planning given climate change

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS:

- Reminds of the enormous significance of cooperation in improving the competitiveness of agriculture in the global market and in the sustainable development of rural areas, supported by the Common Agricultural Policy. The Common Agricultural Policy is one of the oldest and most comprehensive policies of the European Union and one of the pillars of the European integration.
- Emphasizes the necessity to use agricultural practices that are beneficial for the climate and the environment and go beyond the mandatory requirements.
- Appeals to Member States to include the economic value of biodiversity in their decision-making processes and strategic documents.

Summary and conclusions in the Cohesion Policy area

- A strong Cohesion Policy beyond 2020 is necessary.
- The cohesion policy must quickly and effectively respond to crisis and enable the maintenance of necessary flexibility.
- The ability to provide the synergy effect and mutual complementarity of the cohesion policy and industry strategies, as well as their role in the overall territorial development must be guaranteed.
- It is extremely important for financial and strategic decisions to be based on current indicators of social and economic development. The aforementioned involves the need to include current statistical divisions in shaping the future development policy.

Summary and conclusions

- When implementing the above assumptions, one must remember about compliance with the **principles of subsidiarity and proportionality**, so that decisions made at the European level were implemented at the appropriate governance level in a way as close to the citizens as possible.
- The presented opinion should constitute a platform for exchange of good practices related to development strategies, taking into account various constitutional powers of EU regions in their relations with national authorities. Recommendations for the successful design of regional development strategies beyond 2020 should also form the basis for a debate on the **strategy to replace the Europe 2020 strategy**.
- Bearing in mind the above-mentioned conditions, local and regional authorities should immediately set about working on their local and regional development strategies.

Thank you for your attention

Adam Struzik
Marshall of the Mazovian Region

tel. 22 590 78 04

fax 22 590 78 75

email: adam.struzik@mazovia.pl