



REGIONAL POLICY POST-2014

KEY MESSAGES

- 1** EU's cohesion funds can play a positive role in alleviating the impact of the crisis. Regional policy also contributes to stronger cohesion between European regions, promotes development and incentivises entrepreneurship.
- 2** Cohesion policy must be modernised and further oriented towards competitiveness to develop internal factors of success in the regions. Increased simplification is also a must. SMEs' use of structural funds is held back by heavy bureaucracy and time-consuming procedures.

BACKGROUND

The future of cohesion policy has been under discussion for a long time, due to awareness about its shortcomings. While producing concrete positive results, however, there are also important shortcomings. There is the need to refocus its priorities, increase its leverage and improve the efficiency of its governance through a major simplification effort.

Structural funds should be concentrated on a few selected priorities, earmarked towards innovation and competitiveness objectives where the EU added value is clearly recognised.

The leverage effect of the structural funds must be amplified by developing innovative financial instruments in cooperation with the EIB Group. In addition, private involvement in the different initiatives should be intensified (for instance, companies are not eligible for interregional and transnational cooperation programmes). Greater consistency and more effective consultation of the business community are also needed.

The governance of EU cohesion policy must be enhanced. This implies further progress in cutting back administrative burdens and more simplification in the management procedures of funds. It is particularly important to take into consideration the reality of European SMEs that currently see structural funds as a last resort. In addition, effective and independent evaluations are needed to allow reallocation of funds to most efficient programmes.

Finally, regarding territorial cohesion, we believe the main purpose of territorial cohesion should be to improve the territorial competitiveness of the internal market through the development of TEN projects; promoting the attractiveness of European regions; and strengthening cross-border cooperation.

WHAT DOES BUSINESSEUROPE AIM FOR?

- Structural funds to focus on priority areas conducive to increased competitiveness
- Improved leverage of the funds
- Improved governance and particular attention to continuous simplification of procedures

BUSINESSEUROPE



MEMBERS ARE 40 LEADING
NATIONAL BUSINESS FEDERATIONS
IN 34 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

 Austria	 Belgium	 Bulgaria	 Croatia	 Cyprus	 Czech Republic
 Denmark	 Denmark	 Estonia	 Finland	 France	 Germany
 Germany	 Greece	 Hungary	 Iceland	 Iceland	 Ireland
 Italy	 Latvia	 Lithuania	 Luxembourg	 Malta	 Montenegro
 Norway	 Poland	 Portugal	 Portugal	 Rep. of San Marino	 Romania
 Slovak Republic	 Slovenia	 Spain	 Sweden	 Switzerland	 Switzerland
 The Netherlands	 Turkey	 Turkey	 United Kingdom		