



Members of the Regional Development Committee
European Parliament
Bât. Altiero Spinelli
60, rue Wiertz
1000 Bruxelles

2 July 2012

Dear Member of the Regional Development Committee,

Ahead of your upcoming vote on the regulations concerning cohesion policy 2014-2020, I would like to praise the work being developed by the members of the REGI Committee on this very important topic. In such a complex context, we believe discussions are progressing in the right direction.

However, BUSINESSEUROPE would like to reiterate a number of points that are of fundamental importance for European companies:

- It is of utmost importance that article 3 of the ERDF regulation remains open to large enterprises, while maintaining a primary focus on SMEs. Evidence shows that large enterprises act as a crucial anchor in local and regional economic development, often forming important value chains with SMEs. Excluding large enterprises from funding under the ERDF could impede innovation and cut European companies off from vital global partnerships. Narrowing the scope of the legislation therefore risks having an adverse effect, including for SMEs. Access to the ERDF should be evaluated on the quality of the investment and its economic impact, and not on the size of the company.
- It is also important to find the right balance between thematic concentration of funds and respecting the specific needs of regions. We therefore believe it is important to enhance flexibility for instance by opening article 4 of the ERDF regulation to a fourth thematic objective that should be chosen according to regional needs. However, it should be ensured that thematic objectives aim primarily for growth and employment in the region.
- Moreover, it must be ensured that the political goals of the future Cohesion Policy will be reflected in the EU legal framework, particularly in light of the upcoming revision of EU regional aid rules.
- More generally, given the difficult challenges Europe will face in the years ahead, it is important that the new regulations help improve the competitiveness of European regions. It is therefore fundamental to analyse the impact of the new rules against the objectives of growth, job creation and competitiveness.



We count on you to find a good compromise on the proposals on the future of cohesion policy bearing in mind its strong impact at regional and local level, where companies are important stakeholders, and the real drivers for growth.

Yours sincerely,

Philippe de Buck