

SENATE OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC
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RESOLUTION OF STANDING COMMITTEE 14

(European Union Policies)

(Rapporteur CANDIANI)

adopted at the sitting of 11 December 2013

CONCERNING

THE PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL AMENDING COUNCIL
REGULATION (EC) NO 1083/2006 AS REGARDS CERTAIN
PROVISIONS RELATING TO FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR
CERTAIN MEMBER STATES EXPERIENCING OR THREATENED
WITH SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES WITH RESPECT TO THEIR
FINANCIAL STABILITY AND TO THE DECOMMITMENT RULES
FOR CERTAIN MEMBER STATES
(COM(2013) 301 FINAL)

pursuant to Article 144(1), (5) and (6) of the Rules of Procedure

Communicated to the President's Office on 13 December 2013

The Committee, having examined document COM(2013) 301 final,

whereas the purpose of this document is to ensure that Member States that have received financial assistance under an adjustment programme can continue to implement cohesion policy programmes on the ground and continue to disburse funds to projects;

whereas the European Council on 8 February 2013 (paragraph 87 of the conclusions) invited the Commission to explore practical solutions to reduce the risk of automatic decommitment of funds from the 2007-2013 national envelopes for two Member States in particular (Romania and Slovakia);

whereas the European Commission has, to this end, identified two measures to reduce the risk of automatic decommitment, namely an increase in the co-financing rate for Member States threatened with serious difficulties (with respect to their financial stability) and the extension of the deadlines for submitting expenditure claims for 2011 and 2012 commitments;

whereas it is therefore necessary to amend Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of the Council of 11 July 2006 (laying down general provisions on Structural Funds) to allow the European Commission to increase the co-financing rate by a maximum of ten percentage points compared with the percentage set when the operational programmes were approved, and to allow Romania and Slovakia to submit expenditure claims for 2011 and 2012 commitments up to the end of 2014 and up to the closure of the programme respectively;

whereas, moreover, these proposals have no impact on commitment appropriations, since no modification is proposed to the maximum amounts of Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund financing provided for in the operational programmes for the 2007-2013 programming period;

issues a favourable opinion, within its area of competence, with the following comments:

the legal basis for the proposal is rightly identified as Article 177 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), on the basis of which the European Parliament and the Council, acting by means of regulations in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, define the tasks, priority objectives and the organisation of the Structural Funds and the general rules applicable to them;

the proposal complies:

with the subsidiarity principle, since a temporary mechanism allowing the European Commission to increase reimbursements to Member States facing difficulties can be established only at Union level;

with the proportionality principle, since the scale of the measures is appropriate to the sustained economic crisis and to the other efforts undertaken to help Member States facing difficulties.

As regards the substance of the proposal, the Committee, having confirmed that the measures proposed by the European Commission are appropriate, recommends that they should not be limited merely to meeting a negative need arising from the specific

difficulties faced by Member States receiving assistance under an adjustment programme or Member States experiencing serious and justified delays in using funds, but that these measures could also form part of a positive new partnership between the Commission and the Member States.

The Committee also recommends that the Structural Funds and cohesion policy mechanisms be used to their full potential as an additional engine for economic recovery and employment in all EU Member States, not least by means of agreeing flexibility clauses where appropriate.