

Translation

Romanian Parliament

Chamber of Deputies

OPINION

on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1084/2006

COM(2011)612

Having regard to the Treaty of Lisbon, and in particular Articles 5 and 12 TEU and Protocols 1 and 2 annexed to the Treaty,

Having regard to the Romanian Constitution, republished, and in particular Article 148 thereof,

Having regard to Decision of the Chamber of Deputies No 11/2011,

Taking into account the draft opinion presented by the Committee for Employment and Social Protection at its meeting of 30 November 2011,

Taking into account the draft opinion presented by the Committee for Industry and Services at its meeting of 29 November 2011,

Taking into account the draft opinion presented by the Committee for Budget, Finance and Banking at its meeting of 22 November 2011,

Taking into account the opinion presented by the Committee for Economic Policy, Reform and Privatisation at its meeting of 6 December 2011,

Taking into account the final draft opinion presented by the Committee for European Affairs at its meeting of 19 December 2011,

Having regard to the approval given by the Permanent Office of the Chamber of Deputies on 22 December 2011,

The Chamber of Deputies, acting in accordance with Article 40 of Decision No 11/2011 of the Chamber of Deputies of 27 April 2011, hereby adopts this opinion:

1. The Chamber of Deputies appreciates the general approach of the proposal. Concentrating funding on a smaller number of priorities better linked to the Europe 2020 Strategy, focusing on results, monitoring progress towards agreed objectives, increasing the use of conditionalities and simplifying financing procedures are among the major hallmarks of the proposal.

2. The Chamber of Deputies appreciates the fact that the Cohesion Fund is able to support projects in the energy sphere, on condition that these are clearly for the

benefit of the environment, for example by promoting energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources.

3. The Chamber of Deputies considers that the Regulation would be more efficient and more in keeping with socio-economic needs if it were address the following:

a) As regards “addressing the significant needs for investment in the waste sector to meet the requirements of the Union’s environmental acquis”, it would be advisable for financial investments as far as possible to meet the needs of citizens, as expressed through the local and regional authorities, and for operations to be maintained at the level (for example, the local level) most appropriate for guaranteeing transparency and accountability on the part of the respective operators. An indication to that effect in the wording of the Regulation would be welcome.

b) As regards “addressing the significant needs for investment in the water sector to meet the requirements of the Union's environmental acquis”, we are of the view that, in addition to the considerations expressed in the previous paragraph, account needs to be taken of all investments relevant to the environment and not only those that exceed a certain magnitude in terms of their value or dimension.

c) As regards “protecting and restoring biodiversity, including through green infrastructures”, the Chamber of Deputies considers that the option of funding green infrastructure represents real and beneficial progress, but in view of the unfamiliarity of this type of infrastructure and of the difficulty in setting it up, it believes that a portion of the available funds would need to be set aside for this priority. It would thus be ensured that a minimum number of measures would be taken in connection with the area concerned, in conditions of competition with more familiar types of environmental investment that are simpler to implement.

d) As regards the indicators allocated to evaluation of the “risk prevention and management” area, you would have to explain these in the context of new knowledge of the environment, according to which both floods and forest fires are natural phenomena inherent in the maintenance of long-term ecological balance, as a result of which it is not recommended that the impact of such events be combated exclusively through measures such as dams. As regards the “risk management and prevention” priority, you would need, in general, more urgently to consult the main stakeholders in the academic world and at the European Commission (DG Environment).

e) As regards the “nature and biodiversity” priority, the “surface area of habitats in better conservation status” indicator represents the result of efforts to gain an understanding of both sustained and long-term management. In order to ensure that the indicators designed for monitoring the “nature and biodiversity” priority are representative in the medium term, the Chamber of Deputies considers it necessary to introduce indicators that cost very little to obtain and that would offer more precise estimates; indicators such as: “the number of species maintained in a state of good conservation in the areas funded”. Such an indicator would offer a much more useful picture of the funding’s impact, especially in conditions in which account was taken of the full range of species and not only of those important to the EU.

f) As regards the “soil remediation” priority, the Chamber of Deputies considers that indicators connected with safeguarding soil biodiversity need to be introduced as a bridge between this priority and the “nature and biodiversity” priority.

The proposed Regulation does not affect any aspects of national substantive law and respects the national legal framework.

This opinion shall be sent to the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission.

President,

Roberta Alma ANASTASE

[Signature]