Exercise 1.3.: How does the climate change affect the European Kohäsionspolitik?

Basically I think that climatic change nowadays has to be considered in every political strategy, especially if it concerns regional planning and development matters, such as Kohäsionspolitik. As for Kohäsionspolitik financial aid seems to be the most important political instrument to reach the goals, either as direct money flow or as benefits. So far I think that this is quite the only way to support Kohäsion in between Europe, but I barely see any consideration of climate change involved in those financial aid decisions yet. For example, often economical development of peripheral regions is supported no matter how the natural potentials of those regions are used or not. Good soil for agriculture is misused as developed sites for industries just because it is cheap to get, or agriculture is supported even though the soil is bad, just because there has been agriculture since hundred of years. Shouldn’t we be more flexible in our thinking considering that nature is always changing and always will be? Instead of keeping traditions no matter what, Kohäsionspolitik should try to force adapted use of every region in Europe. It shouldn’t be the goal to have everything everywhere and to maximize the regional profits, but there should be much stronger interactions between the European regions with their different natural potentials.

But not only should the interactions strengthen but also the inner-regional cooperation. Rural areas and nearby towns and cities should do much more networking. There should be a more flexible public transportation from the rural areas to town according to the demand (schedules at school and at work, opening ours of public authorities and doctors).
This could be made possible by using smaller busses and let them instead drive more often during the day, or involving taxi enterprises which can be called by a group of people, when needed. So the individual traffic could be minimized. Generally public transportation should get more support to reach highest possible environment technical standards.

On the other hand, products from rural areas (agriculture, crafts, industry and energy) should be more supported to be able to compete especially on the market of the nearby towns and cities. So transportation of goods could be minimized, too. The support of course should not focus on traditional economics but lead the rural areas to create innovative projects, such as eco-farming, combined agriculture with forestry and livestock farming, energy production from domestic and farming waste, or centres of environmental learning, always according to their natural potentials. Mostly those projects won't seem profitable on the short hand but thinking in long terms it will be lucrative for the whole region and the environment. To reach such kind of adapted use of environmental resources it might be necessary to not just include support but also penalties for misuse of regional potentials into Kohäsionspolitik.

Not only the economical use of soil has to be controlled, but also the spread of new build houses or streets, because this always means new surface sealing and thereby less space for nature. Instead, especially inner city restorations according to modern environment technical standards should be more supported.

All those ideas are not new, but still hardly found realized anywhere. One of the key problems dealing with climate change is the awareness of the people. As long as owning a house surrounded by green and a big car are symbols of welfare and individualism and profit are the ideals of the European society, there will be no real consideration of climate change in any part of life. So according to the climate change question it might not be the
biggest task to reach Kohäsion of economic welfare, or infrastructure availability but to get all Europeans to the point of thinking ecological and not economical.