



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
 DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
 REGIONAL AND URBAN POLICY AND
 EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND INCLUSION
 The Directors-General

Brussels
 DG REGIO/DG EMPL

Subject: Programming arrangements for the 2021-2027 period

Your Excellency,

The preparations for the 2021-2027 programming period are actively ongoing and we would like to use this opportunity to highlight several key points for our cooperation in the coming months.

In this year's European Semester exercise, the Commission presented a more effective policy link between the European Semester and EU Cohesion Policy funding for the 2021-2027 period, following the Commission's proposals for the next EU multiannual financial framework. The objective is to ensure greater coherence between the coordination of economic, employment and social policies and the use of EU funds which are a significant part of public investment in Greece. To that end, the respective country reports identify priority areas for public and private investment in the Member States. Further to that, the June 2019 country-specific recommendations will include recommendations on investment for the Member States. Both the country-specific recommendations and the underlying analysis are expected to serve as a basis for programming of the Cohesion Policy funds in 2021-2027 that addresses the relevant policy challenges in order to ensure the highest added value of EU funding support.

We would like to express our great appreciation of the outcomes of the launch event, which took place in Athens on 1st March 2019. It was the first formal occasion for the Commission to present its views on the future Cohesion Policy investments, as laid out in the annex D to the country report. The event marked a starting point for our dialogue on the future programming leading up to the adoption of the new round of programming documents.

As announced during the launch event, we would ask you to share with the Commission by the end of June 2019 your programming plans. These plans could be presented in the form of a roadmap including (a) a target date for the submission of the programming documents with a view to their adoption by the end of 2020, and (b) an intermediate date for the submission of draft programming documents. In addition, the roadmap can include any other milestones to facilitate bilateral discussions between the Member State and the Commission (e.g. related to administrative capacity and preparation of project pipelines).

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The Commission is ready to start the informal dialogue on the 2021-2027 programming documents. Respectively, we would welcome a strong involvement and commitment from your side as soon as possible. It would be of mutual interest and benefit to make as much progress as possible in 2019 and 2020 in parallel with the legislative process on the regulatory framework, in order to avoid any delays in the approval of programming documents once the regulatory framework is in place.

As a first step, we would like to engage in a dialogue with you as regards the overall strategic approach, the intervention logic and other related aspects.

As already announced at the launch event, your managing and coordinating authorities will be shortly invited to a technical seminar where information will be shared on details regarding the preparation of the programming documents.

We would also like to stress that the relevant stakeholders at national, regional and local level have a major part to play in how the Cohesion policy funds are spent in the Member States and regions. Already for the 2014-2020 programming period, the partnership principle was strengthened: regional, local, and urban public authorities, trade unions, employers, NGOs, and other civil society bodies promoting issues such as social inclusion, gender equality, and non-discrimination were required to be involved in all stages of the planning, implementation and monitoring of projects financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds.

The Code of Conduct on Partnership¹ requires Member States to be transparent in the selection of partners, provide sufficient information to partners and give them sufficient time to make their voice heard in the consultation process. It also asks to ensure that partners are involved in all stages of the process, from planning to evaluation, as well as that support to capacity building of partners is provided including through establishing platforms for mutual learning and exchange of good practice.

In that respect, we would like to highlight the importance of each Member State's engagement in a regular, strategic dialogue with all relevant stakeholders during the upcoming programming cycle, in line with the Code.

To this end, we ask you to share with us, together with the roadmap, your planning with regard to stakeholder involvement, as well as the stakeholder organisations identified as relevant to the process. We look forward to our joint work towards the future programming period with a view to further enhancing the impact of Cohesion Policy investments on growth and social convergence in Greece.

Yours faithfully,

(e-signed)

Marc Lemaître

(e-signed)

Joost Korte

¹ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014.

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