

Conference on Good Governance for Cohesion Policy

On 24 May 2018, the European Commission's DG Regional and Urban Policy organised a conference in Brussels on "Good Governance for Cohesion Policy". The event was held under the political leadership of the Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu and featured a number of high-level speakers from Member States, EU institutions and other international organisations.



Agenda

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Background: EU cohesion policy, good governance and administrative capacity

30 years after its creation, EU cohesion policy stands as both the embodiment of European solidarity and the most important investment tool of the EU. €325 billion will be invested in Europe's regions over the period 2014-2020.

One element that plays a particularly important role in the success of these investments is the quality of public administrations. As emphasised in the [7th Cohesion Report](#), improvements in the quality of institutions have been among the most consistent factors underlying economic growth and resilience across the EU.

Boosting administrative capacity has been identified as one of the key priorities by Commissioner for Regional Policy Corina Crețu. A number of initiatives have been launched to support Member States' authorities to make the best use of cohesion policy funds and address implementation challenges.

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The conference fulfilled the following objectives

- Showcase selected capacity building initiatives undertaken by the Commission and Member States in this programming period, with a special focus on the strengthening of institutions delivering cohesion policy;
- Discuss how good governance and administrative capacity should be promoted through the European Structural and Investment Funds post-2020;
- Exchange experience with and gather inspiration from the relevant work of other international organisations, academia and civil society representatives.

Structure and main themes

The keynote address was given by Deputy Secretary-General of OECD Mari Kiviniemi. The Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries Karmenu Vella opened the conference. Speakers and participants, coming from all over Europe, included Tomislav Donchev, Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister, Richard Raši, Slovak Deputy Prime Minister for Investments and Information, Pedro Marques, Portuguese Minister of Planning and Infrastructure, Jerzy Kwieciński, Polish Minister for Investment and Development, as well as President of the Committee of the Regions Karl-Heinz Lambertz and MEP Constanze Krehl.

Opening session – 9.45

[Recording](#)

In the **3 parallel sessions from 11.30 to 13.00**, concrete capacity building initiatives was presented and served as inspiration for debate.

- **Parallel session A** - how to increase transparency and citizen engagement as part

of good governance in public spending.

Recording

- **Parallel session B** - how to build up a professional and efficient EU funds administration; special attention on staff skills and administrative simplification.

Recording

- **Parallel session C** - how to develop a comprehensive and pro-active approach to administrative reinforcement, in view of cohesion policy post-2020.

Recording

Afternoon plenary session started at 14.30 with a keynote presentation from London School of Economics Professor Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, followed by a **high-level political debate** on good governance and administrative capacity building for cohesion policy post-2020.

Key messages from the conference



1. **Administrative capacity building and good governance matter!** Good governance is of key importance to get the best possible value for our money, it contributes to growth and jobs, and will have spill over effects that go wider than the management of EU funds. Enhancing administrative capacity is important in all regions, but even more in regions with low growth and low income.
2. **There are no quick fixes or easy solutions;** administrative capacity building is long-term work to promote and facilitate good governance. But: change is possible, it doesn't necessarily require a lot of money, but rather will, conviction and guidance. One size does not fit all; actions must depend on the country and region. All levels and all stakeholders must be involved.
3. **Need for knowledge and support.** During the conference, five programmes selected to take part in a new pilot project on administrative capacity building were announced. The five programmes in Greece, Poland, Spain, Croatia and Bulgaria will receive tailored support from the Commission and the OECD to improve their management of EU funded programmes. In addition to support from the commission, also peer learning and sharing of experiences are important for improving performance. More strategic and comprehensive use of existing tools and technical assistance, which should be made available to other actors such as beneficiaries, partners, civil society etc.
4. **Keep it simple.** Simpler rules will reduce the administrative burden on the member states and make it easier to implement and manage the funds. This is strongly reflected in the newly proposed framework for cohesion policy post 2020. The aim is less focus on processes and procedures, and more focus on strategic priorities and

results.

Target audience

The event brought together decision-makers and experts involved in cohesion policy from national, regional and EU levels, representatives of international organisations and academia

Agenda and Presentation

09:45– 11:15	
	<p>OPENING SESSION</p> <p>Moderator: Vittoria Alliata di Villafranca, Director, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission</p>
	<p>Opening speeches</p> <p>Corina Crețu, Commissioner for Regional Policy</p> <p>Tomislav Donchev, Deputy Prime Minister, Republic of Bulgaria</p>
	<p>Keynote speech</p> <p>Mari Kiviniemi, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD - Presentation </p>
	<p>Role of institutions: insights from the 7th Cohesion Report - Presentation </p> <p>Lewis Dijkstra, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission</p>

11:30 –
13:00

PARALLEL SESSIONS

(A) INVESTING IN TRANSPARENCY, ENGAGING CITIZENS

Moderator: Walter Deffaa, Special Advisor of Corina Crețu,
Commissioner for Regional Policy

Integrity pacts in EU co-funded projects - [Presentation](#)

Carl Dolan, Director, Transparency International EU

EU funds, open data and citizen engagement: OpenCoesione in Italy - [Presentation](#)

Carlo Amati and Simona de Luca, Department for Cohesion Policy,
Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Italy

Reinforcing good governance and civil society: the approach of the EEA and Norway grants - [Presentation](#)

Ingrid Schulerud, Norwegian Ambassador to Belgium and Deputy
Ambassador to the EU


11:30 –
13:00

(B) PROFESSIONAL AND EFFICIENT EU FUNDS MANAGEMENT

Room:

Mansholt

Moderator: Andriana Sukova, Deputy Director-General, DG
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission

**What have we learned about administrative capacity-building in
EU cohesion policy? - [Presentation](#)** 

John Bachtler, Director of the European Policies Research Centre

Skills for a high performing civil service - [Presentation](#) 

Zsuzsanna Lonti, Head of *Government at a Glance* project, Public
Governance Directorate, OECD

**Towards a simpler cohesion policy: experience from the Île-de-
France region - [Presentation](#)** 

Stéphanie von Euw, Vice-president in charge of European Affairs,
Île-de-France Regional Council, France

Simplified management of ESI funds

Håkan Forsberg, Deputy Director General, ESF-Council, Sweden

**(C) BUILDING ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY FOR POST-2020 –
CAN WE START NOW?**

Moderator: Vittoria Alliata di Villafranca, Director, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

Cohesion, growth and administrative capacity in Europe – reflections from the World Bank - [Presentation](#) 

Andrea Liverani, Programme Leader, World Bank

Italian experience with Plans for Administrative Reinforcement

Maria Ludovica Agrò, Director General of the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, Italy

Preparing for the future: boosting administrative capacity for new investments beyond 2020 - [Presentation](#) 

Pascal Boijmans, Head of Unit, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

Good governance for the European project

Daniele Dotto, Head of Unit, Structural Reform Support Service, Secretariat General, European Commission

Increasing capacities of national, regional and local actors for better policy-making and better governance: contribution of ESPON


Ilona Raugze, Director, ESPON EGTC

14:30 –
17:00

AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSION

Moderator: Eric von Breska, Director, DG Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

Keynote speech

Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, Professor, London School of Economics -
[Presentation](#) 

Political panel debate "Good governance and administrative capacity for cohesion policy post-2020"

- Richard Raši, Deputy Prime Minister for Investments and Informatization, Slovakia
- Pedro Marques, Minister of Planning and Infrastructure, Portugal
- Jerzy Kwieciński, Minister for Investment and Development, Poland
- Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the European Committee of the Regions
- Constanze Angela Krehl, Member of the European Parliament
- Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, Professor, London School of Economics

Closing speech
Marc Lemaître, Director-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

Contact

If you have questions, please contact the conference secretariat at SCIC-CONF-GOVERNANCE-FUNDS@ec.europa.eu

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