

Macro-regional strategies and ESIF



27 March 2019

Macro-regional strategies as strategic frameworks for ESIF post-2020

[SQUARE](#), 3 Coudenberg 1000 Brussels, Belgium





Macro-regional strategies – strategic frameworks for ESIF

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Outline

In the Commission's regulatory proposals, the objective of facilitating and increasing cooperation between regions and Member States within the 'mainstream' EU Cohesion policy programmes is underlined as a cross-cutting feature of the EU Cohesion policy post-2020. It means, actions and investments which have a higher EU added value when implemented jointly, should be promoted. The objective can be reached through, for instance, building synergies and supporting relevant priorities of the macro-regional strategies (MRS) and sea-basin strategies/initiatives (together herewith referred as Strategies) by European Structural and Investment funds programmes, increased funding for inter-regional innovation initiatives and investments in cross-border services or infrastructures. Moreover, it gives a strong and positive signal to key implementers of the Strategies to identify and communicate common core priorities.

While the present Strategies are not covering the whole Europe, they have a potential to model future transnational collaboration of the EU and its neighbouring countries at all governance levels, in search of impactful solutions to common challenges. The potential to encourage and to boost cooperation measures within programmes implemented under the Investment for jobs and growth goal is necessary. Therefore, existing strategic frameworks (like Strategies mentioned above) should not be underestimated or diminished.

Until the emergence of the Strategies, the role of the Cohesion Policy 'implementer' was played by projects of various sizes and scopes. Judging by the fact that the lion share of the EU Cohesion Policy funding is allocated at national and regional levels, cohesion was assumed to be assured through raising living standards within national borders and by implementing sizeable projects. In reality, most of the challenges pressing development of Europe today are broader in geography and more complex in scope and impact than any nation alone can manage.

The MRS and sea-basin strategies/ initiatives address cross-country wide common challenges, by working at two levels simultaneously:

- at a policy level – by sustaining and deepening generative, multi-stakeholder policy dialogues across the wider territory, and
- at implementation level – where existing and new policies get enacted and produce tangible impact 'on the ground'; by efforts of various actors gathered through the multi-level governance (MLG) principle inherent to the MRS.

Seen as strategic frameworks, the Strategies become the implementer of actions of appropriate size, scope and character – to match the level of cohesion challenge in Europe.

The link between the European Semester and EU Cohesion Policy is strengthened in the EC regulatory proposals for 2021-2027 period. The 2019 European Semester Country Reports will include an annex in which the Commission presents its view of the investment priorities, including cooperation, for each Member State.

In the Report on the implementation of MRS, the Commission emphasises the importance of a dialogue between EU programme authorities and key implementers the MRS. The Report says '...for each MRS, national authorities responsible for EU funds should jointly agree – in cooperation with MRS national coordinators – on main macro-regional priorities, measures, projects and governance mechanisms to be included in their respective



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partnership agreements (EU Member States) and multi-annual programming (framework) documents (non-EU countries)¹. This meeting will contribute to continue discussion at MRS level.

The preparation phase of the post-2020 programming offers a unique opportunity to all EU Cohesion Policy programmes to address territorial challenges more strategically, through more coordinated and synergised actions stressing European added value of funding, and encouraging a dialogue between those involved in the EU Cohesion Policy programming and the Strategies.

Objectives

This meeting is aiming at exchanging experiences and views between EU programme authorities on how to build synergies and embed cooperation activities in the ESIF programmes, where relevant. The MRS framework will be used for illustration on how cooperation between the ESIF programmes and MRS'/sea-basin strategies'/other initiatives' stakeholders can be built at national and transnational (macro-regional/sea-basin) levels for a mutual benefit of both. Participants will be invited to discuss and identify opportunities existing strategic frameworks can provide to the ESIF programmes' post-2020. We will focus on practical concerns regarding how to establish, facilitate and increase cooperation in a functional territory contributing to shared priorities.

The primary target group for this event are Managing Authorities of the ESIF (mainstream) programmes.

¹ Report on the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies, COM/2019/21 final, 29.1.2019



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Day one

Wednesday, 27 March 2019

09.30 – 10.00

Registration and Welcome Coffee / Tea

10.00 – 10.30

Opening of the meeting

Andriana Sukova, Deputy Director General, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission

Lena Andersson-Pench, Director, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

10.30 – 11.00

Macro-regional strategies – laboratories for a new Europe

Anders Bergström, Horizontal Action 'Capacity' Coordinator, EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

11.00 – 11.45

Panel discussion 1 'Building synergies across funding programmes for strategic added value'

Andreja Jerina, National Coordinator for the EU strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region; the EU strategy for the Danube Region and the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region

Caroline Meyers, Expert on transnational cooperation, Operational Programme for the implementation of the European Social Fund (ESF) in Flanders in the 2014-2020, Flemish Government, Belgium

Marta Marin, Interreg Europe project 'Enhancing policies through interregional cooperation: New industrial value chains for growth' (S34Growth) partner, Basque Government, Spain

Jean-Pierre Halkin, Head of unit 'Competence Centre Macro-regions and Territorial Co-operation', Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission

Jader Canè, Senior expert, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission

Dr. Peter Eggenberger, AlpGov project Leadpartner, member of the Executive Board of the EU strategy for the Alpine Region

Questions and Answers

Objective of the session: Sharing views on importance of building synergies and coordinating across ESIF funding programmes and projects in the current programming period and in post-2020. Current experiences and lessons learnt on cooperating across programmes and projects for strategic added value will be presented. Speakers will also refer on how coordination could be improved in post-2020 period contributing to common priorities agreed among the countries of the macro-regional strategies, sea basin strategies/initiatives and/or other strategic frameworks.



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11.45 – 12.30

Panel discussion 2 ‘Embedding cooperation in 2014-2020: experiences and lessons learnt’

Madelen Nilsson, Assignment manager for the EUSBSR, Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (ERDF MA)

*Tereza Vilén, National coordinator, Swedish ESF Council
Gunnar Anderzon, Project manager, flagship leader, “School to Work”, Swedish Association for Local Authorities and Regions*

Niclas Forsling, representing the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region policy area ‘Innovation’

Questions and Answers

Objective of the session: Sharing experiences and lessons learnt on how cooperation dimension is embedded in the ESIF programmes (ERDF and ESF) in the current programming period based on experiences from one macro-region. The panellists will address the embedding experiences from both - the ESIF programmes’ and EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region flagship perspective. Moreover, the discussion will focus on how the ESIF programmes respond to shared challenges of the particular functional area.

12.30 – 13.30

Lunch

13.30 – 15.30

Discussion in groups ‘Macro-regional strategies and ESIF 2021-2027: opportunities and practical challenges’

Objective of the session: Discussing in smaller groups opportunities and practical advantages MRS/sea-basin strategies/other initiatives or frameworks can provide for the ESIF operational programmes. The participants will discuss how to build synergies and embed shared territorial priorities in the ESIF programmes post-2020. Existing and potential challenges to embedding cooperation in the ESIF will be highlighted.

Coffee/tea will be served during the group discussions.

15.30 – 16.15

Wrap-up the group discussions, next steps and the way forward

Rapporteurs of the groups

Baiba Liepa, Interact

Anders Bergstrom, Horizontal Action ‘Capacity’ coordinator, EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region

16.15 – 16.30

Concluding remarks

Radu Gorincioi, National Coordinator for the EU Strategy of the Danube Region, Romania



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Practicalities

Venue

The meeting is held in [SQUARE](#), 3 Coudenberg 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

Travel

Every participant is responsible to take care of his/her travel.

Accommodation

Every participant is responsible for his/her accommodation arrangements.

Other information

Only registered participants will be accepted for the meeting. To register, please follow the link [here](#). The registration is open until 21 March 2019 latest!

Any questions and uncertainties regarding the event should be addressed to Baiba Liepa, (baiba.liepa@interact-eu.net, +358 40 159 9430) and to Anders Bergström (anders.bergstrom@norden.se, +46 70 567 0584).