



PARTNERSHIP IN COHESION POLICY

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European Civil Meeting
Budapest, 7 June 2011

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Outline of today's presentation

- I. Partnership in the current cohesion policy
- II. Good practices in the current programming period
- III. Simplification and partnership
- IV. Partnership in the future cohesion policy – initial considerations

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I. PARTNERSHIP IN CURRENT COHESION POLICY (1)

Actors and principles

- European Union Cohesion Policy is implemented through shared management, involving European, National, regional and local authorities. The partnership principle is at the heart of Cohesion policy.
- **Article 11 of the General Regulation:** Each Member State will organise a partnership with authorities and bodies such as Regional and Local Authorities, Social Partners and NGOs and organisations representing civil society in accordance with national rules.

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I. PARTNERSHIP IN CURRENT COHESION POLICY (2)

Phases

The purposes of partnership are twofold:

- better transparency and consensus on the conception of cohesion policy
- better results from the preparation and execution of the policy.

Partnership shall cover the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of operational programmes. The involvement of partners at all phases is essential to the effectiveness of partnership.

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I. PARTNERSHIP IN CURRENT COHESION POLICY (3)

Partnership at EU level – current practice

Article 11.3 General Regulation: The Commission will conduct an annual consultation with the main EU social partners.

- DG REGIO has organised as well **two Round tables for social partners and civil society organisations**. In November 2010, a Round Table was organised to present and debate the 5th Cohesion report and the first orientations on future cohesion policy.
- This year, 40 NGOs have been participating at the Cohesion Forum organised by DG REGIO.
- Structured dialogue with Civil Society Organisations . A contact person in the DG REGIO manages this dialogue, while it is a joint effort of all departments concerned (policy, thematic issues, etc..).

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II. GOOD PRACTICES IN THE CURRENT PROGRAMMING PERIOD (1)

1. Growth Forums, Denmark: 6 regional growth forums were created in 2007 to formulate strategic regional development policies.

- They depend on and are nominated by the elected regional councils.
- Forums can be seen as the institutionalisation of the partnership of the ERDF and play a decisive role in determining how funds are used.
- Forum members: politicians, persons from business organisations, trade unions, educational institutions and employment agencies.
- Decisions based on consensus.
- Relevant NGOs are not fully involved in the forums.

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II. GOOD PRACTICES IN THE CURRENT PROGRAMMING PERIOD (2)

2. Polish Partnership to implement ERDF

Organised civil society plays an increasing and interesting role.

- The Ministry of Regional Development has issued guidelines on governance and monitoring. Civil society organisations have strongly encouraged this process.
- A coordination committee of the NSRF and its 6 working groups performs a key function. Two of these are chaired by private partners. One example is the WG on civil society, which was an initiative from the sector itself in 2008. OFOP, the Polish Federation of NGOs is chairing it. This WG acts as a catalyst with the aim to strengthen partnerships, intervenes where there is an insufficient level of partnership and follows up on equal opportunities and sustainable development.

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III. SIMPLIFICATION (I): AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT FOR PARTNERSHIP

Simplification in the use of Structural Funds is considered by the Commission as an important element for improving partnership and allowing better access to SF for NGOs and small organisations. Important efforts have been undertaken in this regard by the Commission jointly with Member States. A High-Level Group has been set up with the objective of reducing by 25% of administrative burdens by 2012.

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III. SIMPLIFICATION(II): Simplified costs

- Provisions already in place in ERDF and ESF allow MS to implement **3 types of simplified costs**:
 - Indirect costs, declared on a flat rate basis of up to 20% of direct costs
 - Standard scale of unit cost (SSUC) as defined by MS
 - Lump sums to cover all or part of the costs of an operation (max. EUR 50.00)
- Approval and guidance Commission for flat rate proposals not mandatory, but advisable.
- SSUC and lump sum handled by MS.

Efforts still necessary in a number of MS to implement these provisions.

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III. PARTNERSHIP IN THE FUTURE COHESION POLICY (1)

- European Commission to propose future Cohesion policy legislative texts by summer-autumn 2011.
- The **5th Cohesion report** acknowledges the importance of the partnership principle and proposes to reinforce it in future Cohesion policy: « *In order to mobilise fully all involved, representation of local and regional stakeholders, social partners and civil society in both the policy dialogue and implementation of cohesion policy should be strengthened. With this in mind, support for the dialogue between public and private entities, including socio-economic partners and non-governmental organisations should be maintained* ».
- In this context, the role of **local development approaches under cohesion policy should be reinforced**, for example by supporting active inclusion, fostering social innovation, developing innovation strategies or designing schemes for regeneration of deprived areas.

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III. PARTNERSHIP IN THE FUTURE COHESION POLICY (2)

Open questions and possible options for improvement – Olsson report

- The European Economic and Social Committee has issued several recommendations for reinforcing partnership in the future programming period in an Exploratory opinion requested by the Commission (**Olsson report**). Main ideas of this report:
 - to make the partnership principle mandatory;
 - to reinforce the role of the Commission by issuing clear guidelines;
 - to make possible the use of technical assistance to improve administrative capacity in MS.

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III. PARTNERSHIP IN THE FUTURE COHESION POLICY (2)

Open questions and possible options for improvement – Olsson report

- This opinion was presented to the European Parliament as well as to Member States at the Committee for the management of Structural Funds (COCOF) and at the ESF Committee.
- Findings essentially shared by Commission and Member States.

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III. PARTNERSHIP IN THE FUTURE COHESION POLICY (3) **Issues for debate:**

- Identification of the most suitable level of implementation of the Partnership principle.
- Identification of the relevant partners at national and regional level.
- Reinforcing of the role of the European Commission by issuing clear guidelines. Ensuring that the principle is respected by Member states.
- Increase capacity building in partnership and use of Technical assistance. Continued support (as today from the ESF) to institutional and administrative capacity building, including to social partners and NGOs, to be extended as an option to all MS.
- Regular consultation process at EU level with all partners – CSO representatives.

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Thank you for your attention!

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