

**THE ABRUZZO REGION SUPPORTS THE COMMISSION'S
PROPOSAL CONCERNING THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW
CATEGORY CALLED REGIONS "IN TRANSITION" IN THE FUTURE
COHESION POLICY**

The Abruzzo region, as well as Molise, Basilicata and Sardinia for Italy and fifteen other Administrations in the rest of Europe, support the Commission's proposal about the introduction of a new category called "transition regions", within the framework of the future Cohesion Policy 2014/2020.

That is why, today, an article/manifesto of support approved by each of the participating regions' presidents, will be published in the famous magazine EUROPOLITICS (in english and in french).

The initiative is also supported by Michel Delebarre (president of the Commission COTER – Territorial Cohesion of the Committee of the Regions and former president of the Committee of the Regions). From the month of July 2012, the outgoing president of the Committee, the Italian Mercedes Bresso, will be replaced by the president of Murcia's Region (ES), effective member of the Committee of the Regions.

There are 19 signatory Administrations which are all potentially recipients of the new proposal regarding the regions "in transition".

- 1) Regions Committee – Michel Delebarre (president of the COTER Commission of the Committee of the Regions)
- 2) Murcia (ES) – Ramon Luis Valcárcel de Siso (president of the Autonomous Community of Murcia)
- 3) Wallonie (BE) – Rudy Demotte (minister-president of Wallonia and of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation)
- 4) Abruzzo (IT) – Giovanni Chiodi (president of Abruzzo Region)
- 5) Molise (IT) – Angelo Michele Iorio (president of Molise Region)
- 6) Basilicata (IT) – Vito De Filippo (president of Basilicata Region)
- 7) Sardinia (IT) – Ugo Cappellacci (president of the Autonomous Region of Sardinia)
- 8) Basse-Normandie (FR) – Laurent Beauvais (president of the Basse-Normandie Regional Council)
- 9) Picardie – Claude Gewerc (president of the Picardie Regional Council)
- 10) Languedoc-Roussillon (FR) – Christian Bourquin (president of the Languedoc-Roussillon Regional Council)
- 11) Franche-Comté (FR) – Marie-Guite Dufay
- 12) Corse (FR) – Paul Giacobbi (president of the Executive Council of Corsica)
- 13) Lorraine (FR) – Jean-Pierre Masseret (president of the Lorraine Regional Council)
- 14) Nord – Pas de Calais (FR) – Daniel Percheron (president of the Nord-Pas de Calais Regional Council)
- 15) Auvergne – René Souchon (president of the Auvergne Regional Council)
- 16) Liverpool (UK) – Joe Anderson (leader of Liverpool City Council)
- 17) Staffordshire (UK) – Philip Atkins (leader of Staffordshire County Council)
- 18) Devon (UK) – Will Mumford (councillor of Devon County Council)
- 19) Highlands & Islands (UK/Scotland) – Sandy Park (convener of the Highland Council)

In its communication on the next multiannual financial framework, the European Commission proposed, on 29 June 2011 the recognition of regions “in transition” in the future Cohesion Policy. For the period 2014-2020, €39 billion would be shared between 51 European regions where the GDP/inhabitant is between 75-90% of the Community average.

However, such proposal will be submitted to the Council. It will be discussed in general terms, referring to to global budget of the future Cohesion Policy, and also more in details about the regions “in transition”.

In the article setting the common position and called: “Cohesion Policy 2014-2020: for a genuinely fair category for transition regions”, we learn that: “The socio-economic situation of our regions illustrates the need for this new category. Their profiles show continuing structural difficulties which are often characterised by a higher unemployment rate than the national average, low wages, and a narrow economic basis. They are also still dominated by sectors with little added value, often very exposed to globalisation and hit hard by the recent economic downturn (closure of factories, relocations...) with dramatic consequences for the local labour force. In addition, the predominantly rural regions are suffering from land abandonment and the loss of public services in remote parts of the areas.”

The signatory Administrations argue that : “Our territories share social characteristics that give cause for concern, in particular in terms of demography: for certain regions the aging of their population leads to difficulties in the employment market (difficulties in succession and taking over of businesses; recruitment difficulties in certain sectors...), for other regions, young people often lack academic and vocational qualifications, which is translated into a higher unemployment rate for this section of society. In parallel, many of our young graduates are forced, due to under developed labour markets, to leave our regions to start their professional lives, thereby aggravating regional demography even further.”

Thus, starting from the observation that : “An analysis of the latest figures from Eurostat clearly shows that certain of our regions currently eligible to the “regional Competitiveness and Employment” objective can already see themselves over-taken, in terms of GDP/inhabitant, by some Convergence regions.” And that: “This situation will increase, if we judge by the inverted economic trends of these two “sub-categories’ of regions, as observed these last years. We therefore call for a fairer treatment of our regions within the transition regions category. This does not translate as an increase in the EU budget - we are fully aware of the constraints on public finance- but calls for a relaxing of certain constraints proposed by the European Commission. As regards the thematic concentration approach dictated for the use of the funds, we deplore the fact that our regions continue to be treated in the same manner as the most developed regions, even though all the structural conditions for intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth are not yet in place. The weakness of our regional GDP’s in comparison to the EU average is in no way due to the poor use of structural funds in our areas. On the contrary, we have all, during the current programming period, made considerable efforts to concentrate our projects on the priority themes identified as contributing to the future of Europe within the framework of the ‘Lisbon Strategy’ and are dedicated to following this route with the EU 2020 strategy. Even though we could subscribe to the Commission’s approach on thematic concentration, we consider that more flexibility is

necessary to enable regional needs and specificities to be better taken into account, in particular for transition regions.

Lastly, the article concludes with: “Cohesion policy must remain in the eyes of the citizen the most visible demonstration of Europe’s contribution to the development of our territories. Now is the time to make sure that it is even fairer. At the time when the negotiations on the legislative proposals of the European Commission are beginning, we call on the Council and the European Parliament, in the name of the tens of millions of inhabitants that we represent, to support the creation of this category of transition regions, which will constitute, no doubt, one of the major innovations of the future cohesion policy. The future of our areas depends on this. »

[Link to the website of the magazine EUROPOLITICS \(EN/FR\)](http://www.europolitics.info/)

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