

CECICN CONTRIBUTION TO THE: QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE EXECUTION OF THE EU BUDGET

March 2014

Consultation of local and regional authorities to feed into the Committee of the Regions' own-initiative opinion being drawn up by the rapporteur Adam Struzik (PL/EPP), Marshal of the Mazovia region.

The following answers are given by CECICN (Conference of European Cross-border and Interregional City Networks), representing more the 500 cities all over Europe. CECICN offers the vision and position of cities involved in Territorial Cooperation in Europe.

QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. Do you think that the new EU regulations governing the European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020¹ (ESIF Regulations) (introducing, inter alia, simplification of procedures, a stronger results-orientation and a new performance reserve) will accelerate absorption at the level of local and regional authorities as compared to the previous period? (please select only 1 option)

- A) yes, significantly
- B) yes, but it is difficult to estimate to what extent
- C) no, there will be no significant change
- D) no, they will actually have a negative impact
- E) don't know

¹ Common Provisions Regulation and regulations for specific funds.

2. Which of the following institutions and bodies has the greatest impact on the speed and quality of spending/absorption of EU funds at the level of local authorities and government? (please select only 1 option)

- A) the Member States: e.g. by simplifying national legal frameworks
- B) the EU institutions (Commission, Parliament, Council): e.g. by simplifying EU legislation
- C) the European Court of Auditors, through its reports
- D) the local and regional authorities themselves

3. Which of the following factors have the greatest impact on the speed and quality of absorption of EU funds at the local and regional levels? (please select no more than 2 options)

- A) the effectiveness of management systems in the individual Member States
- B) differences in the internal rules of individual funds and their level of complexity
- C) the quality of national legal frameworks (transposition of EU legislation)
- D) the availability of funds at local and regional levels for co-financing
- E) local and regional administrative capacity
- F) efficiency of coordination, multilevel governance and partnership systems
- G) other factors

4. Which of the following factors is the most important in terms of improving the quality and effectiveness of financial planning/management at the level of local and regional authorities? (please select only 1 option)

- A) greater clarity on how to use financial advances (pre-financing payments) at the level of beneficiaries in the new regulations
(Advances are made available by the Commission to the Member States.)
- B) introduction in the new ESIF Regulations of the 90 day limit for reimbursement of payment claims to the beneficiaries
- C) improved cooperation between local and regional authorities, Member States and the European Commission
- D) other factors

5. Which of the following factors is the most important in the context of ensuring stable funding of EU co-financed projects? (please select only 1 option)

- A) reduced reimbursement delays
- B) the disciplining effect of the automatic decommitment rule (n + 3)
- C) reducing the amount of unpaid commitments (RAL) at the level of the EU budget
- D) the quality of financial planning and management at all levels of governance
- E) a higher level of private co-financing

6. An increased focus in the new ESIF Regulations on results and the introduction of the mandatory performance framework² will have a beneficial impact on: (please select only 1 option)

- * A) the effectiveness of EU budget spending
- B) the timeliness of EU budget execution
- C) none of the above, they will impact neither the efficiency nor the time-frame

7. Do you think that the new ESIF Regulations will facilitate multi-fund operations between ESIF Funds?

- A) yes
- B) no
- C) don't know

8. Do you think that the new ESIF Regulations will facilitate the coordination of ESIF with centrally managed EU funds, such as Horizon 2020?

- A) yes
- B) no
- C) don't know

² The performance framework consists of selected financial, output and results indicators as well as key implementation steps for each priority. It is intended to ensure the programmes deliver what is under their control. See: Common Provisions Regulation (No 1303/2013), Article 22.

9. In your opinion, what would be the most effective way of improving the role of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) in the discussion on the implementation of the budget and other related strategic debates taking place in the EU? (please select only 1 option)

- A) by drawing up CoR opinions on related strategic subjects
- B) through more frequent meetings and conferences between CoR members and representatives of other EU institutions
- C) by increased CoR participation in the work carried out by other EU institutions (e.g. reports, studies, policy papers)

* Remarque from CECICN concerning question 6: Answer A is correct, except concerning cross-border cooperation where integrated territorial approaches become more difficult to be realized.