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Reform of the Cohesion and Structural Funds 2014-2020

Greens are against sanction mechanism

The Permanent Representations of the Member States (COREPER) yesterday approved the negotiation results on the outstanding chapters of the Structural and Cohesion Funds regulations for 2014-2020. This agreement includes the European Council's demand for EU structural and cohesion fund commitments to a Member State to be subject to the Member State complying with strict fiscal discipline known as macroeconomic conditionality. However, the Parliament had rejected this condition in its negotiating position.

Commenting on the COREPER decision, **Elisabeth Schroedter**, regional spokesperson for the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament and member of the negotiating team, declared:

"Macroeconomic conditionality contradicts the objective of cohesion policy to create social, economic and territorial cohesion between EU regions. The current result of negotiations for macroeconomic conditionality is only a 'light' version but has the same effects as the original proposal. What this means in practice is that funding and reimbursement may be withheld as a sanction for Member State deficits or budgetary policies. We know that for regions in the most crisis-hit Member States, the Structural and Cohesion Funds are the only funds that enable them to invest and fight the crisis. The possibility of these sanctions hangs over these regions like the sword of Damocles. Although sanctions have not yet been applied, faced with the threat of suspension of EU payments and guarantees, banks will pull back from their participation in the regional financial instruments that support such projects. Consequently, crisis-hit Member States will lose the last investment aid that still remains. This cannot be the aim of EU cohesion policy! Even regions in comparatively prosperous Germany feel threatened and have, in a decision by the federal assembly (Bundesrat), disapproved of macroeconomic conditionality."

Greens strongly reject macroeconomic conditionality in EU cohesion policy and demand that it be voted on separately. We are aware that our position may delay the publication of the regulation and therefore the date of legislation coming into force, if a second reading is necessary. But we are convinced that Parliament should keep up its resistance against macroeconomic conditionality, in the interest of all regions and their

citizens."

Further information on the upcoming votes:

The European Parliament's Regional development committee will vote on the latest results of the negotiations at an extraordinary meeting on November 7. The plenary vote is scheduled for 21 November.

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