



Special Session Proposal

Future of EU Cohesion Policy post-2027. In search of an effective response to major challenges of our time

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Abstract

Europe is facing mounting challenges on the path to becoming more resilient, sustainable and inclusive. The war in Ukraine and the energy and climate crises have triggered serious consequences for the European competitiveness and sustainability. The challenges have asymmetric territorial impacts that call for differentiated policy interventions and better place-based solutions.

The debate about Cohesion Policy post 2027 has already started. There is plenty of evidence to prove that the past and current programs under the Cohesion Policy had succeeded in stimulating growth and employment and in promoting the catch-up process in the least developed regions. Yet, with the new priorities and demands on the EU budget, the need to decide on the future objectives of Cohesion Policy emerged in discussions. Concerns arise in relation to the many goals the Cohesion Policy is expected to address simultaneously, while supporting both the long-term, structural objectives and the short-term, immediate responses to urgent crises. With a view to the post-2027 programming period, there is urgent need to clarify the future direction of the Cohesion Policy, the synergies with other policies and the optimal policy design.

In relation to this background, based on a starting point that acknowledges the diversity of regional contexts, this Special Session addresses, but is not restricted to, the following questions:

- *How should the future path of EU Cohesion Policy look like in a changing environment?*
- *What should be the right balance between short-term reactivity and the long-term objectives?*
- *How could the trade-offs between efficiency and equity could be further addressed?*
- *What is the right mix of place-based policies needed to navigate the current territorial challenges?*
- *How can the EU Cohesion Policy better fulfill the mission to close the regional divides?*

Submissions covering conceptual, empirical and methodological contributions to the topic are welcome.

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