

Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the ‘Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 concerning general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund as regards simplification of certain requirements and as regards certain provisions relating to financial management’

COM(2009) 384 final — 2009/0107 (AVC)
(2010/C 128/17)

Rapporteur-General: **Mr CEDRONE**

On 11 September 2009 the Council decided to consult the European Economic and Social Committee, under Article 262 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the

Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 concerning general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund as regards simplification of certain requirements and as regards certain provisions relating to financial management

COM (2009) 384 final – 2009/0107 (AVC).

On 29 September 2009 the Committee Bureau instructed the Section for Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion to prepare the Committee’s work on the subject.

Given the urgent nature of the work, the European Economic and Social Committee appointed Mr Cedrone as rapporteur-general at its 457th plenary session, held on 4 and 5 November 2009 (meeting of 5 November), and adopted the following opinion with 82 votes in favour and one abstention.

1. Conclusions and recommendations

1.1. The EESC takes note of the Commission proposal referred to above.

1.2. The EESC broadly welcomes the proposal, subject to the comments set out below.

2. Reasons

2.1. *The simplification of certain provisions*

2.1.1. Like the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions, the EESC has for a number of years called for Community texts to be simplified and adapted to reflect the reality on the ground ⁽¹⁾. The EESC fully accepts the amendments aimed at simplifying provisions, as proposed by the Commission in Article 39, Article 41(1) and (2), Article 44, Article 48(3), Article 55(3) and (4), Article 65(3), Article 57(1) and (5), Article 67(2) of Regulation (EC) No. 1083/2006.

⁽¹⁾ See the EESC Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the results of the negotiations concerning cohesion policy strategies and programmes for the programming period 2007-2013, OJ C 228/141, 22.9.2009, and the Opinion on the Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund concerning certain provisions relating to financial management, OJ C 218/107, 11.9.2009.

2.1.2. The EESC wishes to point out, however, that these changes must not be allowed to create administrative uncertainty for the bodies and individuals concerned, who too often see the rules in force changed during the same programming period.

2.1.3. The EESC considers that these proposals represent the absolute minimum needed to help solve the economic and employment crisis that Europe is experiencing in the wake of the financial crisis.

2.1.4. The EESC therefore calls on the Commission to be more ambitious in developing the process of simplification that is already under way. The next stage should see a radically modified regulation, to ensure that procedures are more straightforward, clear and more effective.

2.2. *Provisions on financial management*

2.2.1. The EESC welcomes the changes proposed by the Commission with regard to Article 77, Article 78, Article 88(3) and Article 94(1) of Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.

2.2.2. The EESC strongly advocates that Member States do not oppose the Commission’s proposal on co-financing.

2.2.3. The EESC considers, nevertheless, that the proposed changes to Article 77 should not apply across the board, but should be confined to special projects (e.g. for innovation or sustainable development) and projects that are particularly relevant to solving the crisis.

Brussels, 5 November 2009.

The President
of the European Economic and Social Committee
Mario SEPI
