ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

From the outset, a key EU objective has been to reduce the economic and social disparities between its very diverse regions by means of its cohesion policy. It uses its Structural Funds to deliver the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy. These funds address the problems of:

- regions with severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps (for example, very low population density, island, cross-border and mountain regions,
- areas affected by industrial transition, and
- rural areas.

The Lisbon Treaty added a third dimension: territorial cohesion. This means making the most of each territory’s strengths so as to contribute to the EU’s overall sustainable and balanced development. It involves a territory and its neighbours jointly planning and implementing optimal solutions to issues such as transport, internet, etc. Funding for cohesion purposes is available from:

- European Regional Development Fund
- European Social Fund
- European Cohesion Fund
- European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development
- European Investment Bank.

Articles 174-178 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU provide the legal basis for EU cohesion policy. To coincide with the adoption of the EU’s multiannual financial framework, the EU adopted a series of new regulations governing the above-mentioned funds for the 2014-2020 period.

SEE ALSO

- Committee of the Regions (CoR)
- Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)
- European Investment Bank (EIB)
- European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs)
- Subsidiarity
- Sustainable development
- Trans-European Networks (TENs)
- European Parliament Fact Sheet on Economic, social and territorial cohesion