



CECOP – CICOPA EUROPE

THEMATIC DOSSIER:

**2007-2013
Cohesion Policy
The Structural funds**



With the support of the European Commission

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1) Introduction

"More growth and jobs for all regions and cities of the European Union – this message will be at the heart of cohesion policy and its instruments between 2007 and 2013. During that period, the greatest investment ever made by the EU through cohesion instruments will be worth € 308 billion (in 2004 prices) to support regional growth agendas and to stimulate job creation. 82% of the total amount will be concentrated on the "Convergence" objective, under which the poorest Member States and regions are eligible. In the remaining regions, about 16% of the Structural Funds will be concentrated to support innovation, sustainable development, better accessibility and training projects under the "Regional Competitiveness and Employment" objective. Another 2.5% finally are available for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation under the "European Territorial Cooperation" objective¹.

The objective of "harmonious development and the reduction of the disparities between the different regions" was already included in the Treaty of Rome that established the European Communities on 25 March 1957.

Articles 158-162 of the Treaty establishing the European Union remind us that, "the Union must promote the harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of the Community and strengthen its economic and social cohesion by reducing the disparities between the levels of development of the different regions". ²

Indeed, this cohesion policy should be included, in the future (2007-2013), in the economic competitiveness objective set out in Lisbon³.

"The action taken under the Funds shall incorporate, at national and regional level, the Community's priorities in favour of sustainable development by strengthening growth, competitiveness, employment and social inclusion and by protecting and improving the quality of the environment."

[art.3.1 of Council Regulation 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006]⁴

Is this better or worse?

"The future of the cohesion policy is generating a lively debate", was the Euractiv headline on 05.02.2008.

Are the cohesion policy and the objectives of the Lisbon strategy (to make Europe "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world") truly compatible?

Many reputable people do not consider this to be the case.

¹ Regional Policy – Inforegio :

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/regulation/newregl0713_en.htm

² Chapter XVII of the Treaty – Economic and Social Cohesion.

It should be noted that, within the context of the "eligible regions", the entirety of the territory of the 8 new Member States - Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Rumania and Slovenia – is covered by this objective

³ To become the most competitive and most dynamic economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic development accompanied by a quantitative and qualitative improvement of employment and greater social cohesion.

⁴ This is the instrument that is the most relevant for us since it is the general instrument that is applicable to the regulations 1080/2006 (ERDF) - 1081/2006 (European Social Fund) and 1082/2006 (Cohesion Fund)

<http://www.euractiv.fr/collectivites-locales-europe/article/avenir-politique-cohesion-suscite-vifs-debats-00656>

"In this way, Mr Delebarre, President of the Committee of the Regions, has said that he is concerned about the excessive use of the cohesion policy to meet with the objectives of the Lisbon Treaty."

The European Parliament is also concerned about this refocusing of the cohesion policy on competitiveness, since it believes that there is a danger of some regions becoming marginalised.

*Similarly, in an opinion published on 13 December 2007, the Economic and Social Committee (ESC) said that it believed that the cohesion policy should be distanced somewhat from the Lisbon strategy so that it is able to focus its efforts on a strategy aimed at the sustainable and more harmonious development of the European space. In fact, according to the ESC, "in the long term, the Lisbon strategy will lead us into an impasse, since it serves to reinforce the traditionally powerful areas to the detriment of the lesser-favoured regions."*⁵

CECODHAS, the European Liaison Committee for Social Housing, which is a fellow member of Cooperatives Europe, considers that, "the orientation taken by the cohesion policy in the direction of the promotion of the Lisbon Agenda is not adequate in the face of the challenge of sustainable and integrated development." It also draws attention to the need to devise a cohesion policy that gives due consideration to diversity.

<http://www.euractiv.fr/collectivites-locales-europe/article/avenir-politique-cohesion-suscite-vifs-debats-00656>⁶

We should also remember that the Commission published a Communication, on 12 June 2006, on "The Growth and Jobs Strategy and the Reform of European cohesion - Fourth progress report on cohesion policy [COM (2006) 281] - Not published in the Official Journal

It is available in all EU languages on the following website:
<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/g24238.htm>

2) The action's instruments

Whilst the principle of the development of a cohesion policy was established in 1957, it was not until 1988 that the European Union developed a genuine regional structural policy on the basis of the Community texts.

In this context, regulations were drafted to cover the periods 1994-1999 and 2000-2006.

The current texts, which take the form of five new regulations, cover the period 2007-2013.

They have been drawn up with a view to simplifying the procedures, thereby making them more effective.

⁵ <http://www.euractiv.fr/collectivites-locales-europe/article/avenir-politique-cohesion-suscite-vifs-debats-00656>

⁶ Euractiv. Ibidem.

We refer here to the following five (EC) Regulations:

1. No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999
2. N° 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999
3. N° 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999
4. N° 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC)
5. N° 1084/2006 of the Council of 11 July 2006 establishing a Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1164/94

3) Implementation

The first requirement for the implementation of such a policy is that the objectives to be achieved are perfectly defined, that the financial means are made available and that operating rules are established.

3.1. The objectives

Three objectives have been defined:

➤ 3.1.1. The "Convergence" Objective

This is by far the most important objective, since it represents the priority of the Funds [art 3.2.a]⁷: it is financed by the ERDF (**E**uropean **R**egional **D**evelopment **F**und), the ESF (**E**uropean **S**ocial **F**und) and the Cohesion Fund (see section 3.2 below).

The aim is to stimulate growth and employment in the less-developed regions, "by *improving the conditions for growth and employment through an increase and improvement in the quality of investments in human and physical capital, the development of innovation and of the knowledge-based society, adaptability to economic and social, the protection and the improvement of the quality of the environment, as well as administrative efficiency*".

The main priorities are: the prevention of unemployment – inclusion and the fight against all forms of discrimination – the promotion of partnerships and networking in favour of employment and social inclusion.

This objective encompasses the missions and tasks of former "Objective 1 – less developed regions" and the former Community initiatives URBAN II and Equal.

Urban II covered:

The renovation of buildings with a view to job creation, the integration of the local population, respect for the environment and the general improvement of urban life,

⁷ 82 % of the €308 billion allocated to the cohesion policy for the period 2007 to 2013!

- Local initiatives for employment that are able to create jobs related to the environment, culture and community services. In this context, particular attention is focussed on gender equality,
- The improvement of education and training systems for the excluded,
- The improvement of public transport systems that are more environmentally friendly,
- The stimulation of the creation of more efficient energy management systems and the use of renewable forms of energy,
- The development of potential related to information society technologies in the economic, social and environmental sectors.

The mission entrusted to Equal was to promote a more inclusive professional life by combating discrimination and exclusion based on gender, race and ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Equal has disappeared, but it will be transversally integrated in the programmes.

➤ **3.1.2. The regional competitiveness and employment objective**

The aim of this objective is, "to increase, outside the less developed regions, the competitiveness and attractiveness of the regions, as well as employment, by anticipating economic and social changes, including those related to measures designed to open up trade, by increasing and improving the quality of investments in human capital, innovation and the promotion of the knowledge-based society, entrepreneurship, the protection and improvement of the accessibility and adaptability of the workers and of the enterprises, as well as the development of inclusive employment markets." (The underlining is ours).

It is financed by the ERDF and the ESF (see section 3.2 above).

This objective encompasses the tasks and missions of former "objective 2: – zones undergoing economic and social renewal" and "objective 3: - systems in favour of training and job creation", as well as Urban II and Equal

➤ **3.1.3. The European territorial cooperation objective**

This objective is designed to reinforce cooperation at the cross-border, transnational and inter-regional level through joint local and regional initiatives, to strengthen transnational cooperation through actions that promote integrated territorial development in relation to the Community's priorities and to bolster inter-regional cooperation and the exchange of experiences at the appropriate territorial level.

Three main areas:

- Cross-border cooperation – former Interreg III A
- Transnational cooperation – former Interreg III B
- Inter-regional cooperation – former Interreg III C

This objective replaces the current Community initiative programme Interreg III and is financed by the ERDF.

A new instrument has been established: The European cross-border cooperation groupings (EGCC).

"The EGCC is a new European legal instrument designed to facilitate and promote cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. Unlike the structures which governed this kind of cooperation before 2007, the EGCC is a legal entity and

as such, will enable regional and local authorities and other public bodies from different member states, to set up cooperation groupings with a legal personality.

For example, an EGCC or EGCC members can be:

- Member States
- Regional or local authorities
- Associations
- Any other public body

The EGTC is unique in the sense that it enables public authorities of various Member States to team up and deliver joint services, without requiring a prior international agreement to be signed and ratified by national parliaments. Member States must however agree to the participation of potential members in their respective countries. The law applicable for the interpretation and application of the convention is that of the Member State in which the official EGCC headquarters are located".⁸

Regulation N° 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGCC)

Note: Community initiatives⁹

Outside of these three broad objectives, part of the structural funds may also be used to promote actions undertaken at the initiative of the European Commission that are known as "Community initiatives". These initiatives may not exceed 5.5% of the Structural Funds and must take the form of innovative projects.

The actors involved in these projects must be enterprises, associations, local authorities or state services. The aim of the co-financed actions is to accelerate the economic renewal of labour market areas, the modernisation of industrial facilities and cooperation between local authorities.

Three new Community initiatives have been planned for the 2007-2013 period:

- **JASPERS** (Joint Assistance in Supporting Projects in European Regions) will help national and regional authorities to devise large infrastructure projects.
- **JEREMIE** (Joint European Resources for Micro to Medium Enterprises) will improve access to financing for micro and medium enterprises¹⁰
- **JESSICA** (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas) is designed to provide solutions to the problems encountered in the financing of urban planning and development projects (subsidies and loans)]

3.2. Three financial instruments

As already mentioned, the three financial instruments that underpin this cohesion policy are the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund.

The regulation, in fact, only applies the label of "structural funds" to the first two of these instruments.

⁸ In Regional Policy InfoREGIO: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/gect/index_en.htm

⁹ In Euractiv - <http://www.euractiv.fr/collectivites-locales-europe/dossier/2007-2013-quelle-evolution-fonds-structurels-00048>

¹⁰ It was in this context that, on 9 July 2008, the Commissioner for regional policy, Danuta Hübner, declared that €27 billion worth of Community investments were available to small and medium sized enterprises for the period 2007-2013.

The total amount of financial resources available is €347,410 billion, with 81.5% allocated to the convergence objective, 16% to the competitiveness and employment objective and 2.5% to the European territorial cooperation objective.

➤ **3.2.1. ERDF: The European Regional Development Fund covers the three objectives**

Regulation n° 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Regional Development Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1783/1999

➤ **3.2.2. ESF: The European Social Fund covers the first two objectives: convergence and regional competitiveness and employment.**

This was established in 1957 and even then its aim was to promote employment and to increase opportunities for workers.

Regulation n° 1081/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1784/1999

➤ **3.2.3. The Cohesion Fund covers the convergence objective in the Member States in which the gross national income is lower than 90% of the Community average.**

Regulation n° 1084/2006 of the Council of 11 July 2006 establishing a Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1164/94

Note: two long-standing funds exist alongside the abovementioned funds: the FIFG (fisheries) and the EAGGF (rural development). They continue to pursue their activities, although they have undergone a name change: the FIFG has become the EFF – European Fund for Fisheries and the EAGGF has become EAFRA, which continues the work of the Leader programme to provide support for rural communities. They are mentioned here for information only.

3.3. The principles of intervention

The principles of intervention are the same as they were for the period 2000-2006: complementarity, coherence, coordination, conformity and additionality. However, new principles, or guidelines, have been introduced: proportionality, gender equality and non-discrimination, sustainable development and the concentration of the funds on the Lisbon priorities.¹¹

4) The procedure – the implementation of the operational programmes

Under the terms of the regulations, the Commission has proposed Community strategic guidelines for cohesion. These guidelines were adopted by the European Council on 6 October 2006, once the Parliament had expressed a favourable opinion.

Within five months of the adoption of the Community's strategic guidelines for cohesion, each Member State was required to present its own Strategic National Reference Framework (NSRF) that would fit within these guidelines.

¹¹ The cohesion policy 2007-2013 - Guide edited by the European Union – Regional Policy – January 2007: Commentary and official texts. ISBN 92-79-03809-5

The Commission then had three months to formulate any observations it may have had, after which the Member State or the region could propose their operational programmes.

It was then possible to begin work on these programmes once they had been agreed (to date, 450 operational programmes have been agreed).

5) Strategic monitoring

As already mentioned above, the cohesion policy must fit within the Lisbon strategy. The Member States have adopted national reform programmes within this framework. Henceforward, the annual reports on these strategies must include a section that explains the contribution made by the operational programmes to the implementation of the national reform plan.¹²

6) In practice

What are the first steps that should be taken by the national cooperative organisations that wish to take part in an action within the framework of the cohesion policy?

- First of all consult the Strategic National Reference Framework for their country.
- Check that you are in an eligible geographical region.
- Find out about the operational programmes and check if it is possible to include an action within these programmes.
- Keep a close eye on the calls for tender.

All of the relevant information regarding this cohesion policy may be obtained from the appropriate national ministries.

For a more active involvement of the national cooperative organisations in the cohesion policy

- **As has already been mentioned, the funds' objectives are determined within the framework of a partnership between the Commission and each Member State, which creates, where appropriate, a partnership with the authorities and bodies such as:**
1. The relevant local, regional, urban and other public authorities,
 2. The economic and social partners,
 3. All other appropriate bodies that represent civil society, environmental partners, non-governmental organisations and bodies that are responsible for the promotion of gender equality.

These partners, who are also required to formulate their own opinions, are selected in accordance with national rules and practices! Therefore, they vary from one country to the next and this means that it is not possible to establish a general rule

¹² The cohesion policy 2007-2013 - Guide edited by the European Union – Regional policy – January 2007: Commentary and official texts. ISBN 92-79-03809-5
For several examples, see: http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/key/nrp2005-2008_en.htm

to guide these actions. Each organisation must therefore acquire this information at their own level.

Each year the Commission consults with the organisations that represent the economic and social partners at the European level about the areas in which the funds should intervene.

Articles 10 and 11 of the regulation

Is this still topical?

Note:

Last year, Cecop organised a workshop on the structural funds and a questionnaire was sent out to the members organisations. This focussed on asking them if they had ever been involved in the discussions to define the national structural funds guidelines and whether they had a seat on the monitoring committees for the programmes.

The following countries answered YES to the first question: Estonia, England, the Czech Republic, Italy, Sweden, Poland and Denmark and that they had either been involved directly (as was the case for Poland and England, notably as a result of their participation in other bodies) or indirectly (through NGOs for Estonia and through the trade unions for Denmark).

The responses received for the second question show that only in England, the Czech Republic, Sweden, Italy and Poland are our member organisations involved in the monitoring committees.

This suggests that a great deal of work still needs to be done at this level.

- **Another level of representation at which the presence of our members may be useful is that of the Monitoring Committee. A management, certification and audit authority monitors each operational programme.**

A Monitoring Committee is created by the Member State for each operational programme. It is chaired by a member of this committee or of the management authority, the Member State determines its composition and it must include representatives from the economic and social partners. It must be established within three months of the operational programme being approved.

However, here, once again, everything is decided at the national level.

Articles 63 to 66 of the regulation.

ANSWERS FROM CECOP MEMBERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE ON STRUCTURAL FUNDS – SEPTEMBER 2008

		1.1. Have you been involved in the discussions to define the national guidelines on structural funds? If yes, can you provide details? If not, can you say whether there are chances that your organisation can be involved in annual discussions for the readjustment of the guidelines?	1.2. Are you on any of the follow-up committees of the programmes? If yes, can you list down which committees? If not, can you say whether there are chances that your organisation can be admitted in any such committees?	Additional Comments:
BG	NUWPC	No	No	
CZ	SCMVD	Yes, we were involved in the national discussion about the National Strategic Reference Framework. We have taken part at negotiations about operational programmes as well. We have amended documents related to this topic	Management and Coordination Committee, Monitoring Committees, Evaluation Committees, Round tables aimed at the preparation of different programmes	
EE	ESTCOOP	No. The structural funds steering committee members have been appointed.	No. Presumably not, as the committees members are admitted for the whole period up to 2013.	
FI	Coop Finland	No	No, but it's possible in the future	

IT	ANCPL	<p>Our sectorial association has been involved in the definition of the guidelines on the European structural funds through Legacoop. Because the structural funds concern several sectors, the choice - even on demand of the Government - is to have as representative an intersectoral organization. In Italy, the social parties are the confederal organizations, both at the national level and regional level. The process for the definition of the guidelines for 2007-2013 funds began about 2 years ago, during which have been addressed both the general topics and specific ones, in numerous meetings in which Legacoop has always been present.</p>	<p>Legacoop is member of the Forum of the economic and social partners, the organisation that meets to check the functioning of the programs at the national level. Every 6 months there is a Committee of Surveillance and, a few days before, preparatory meetings. In some regions Legacoop is a member of the Forum but also active member-with one its representative at the regional level - of the Surveillance committee, (there is a Committee of Surveillance for every fund for regional development).</p>	<p>In our country, this kind of organization has allowed to widen the involvement of the economic and social partners, and even to surpass the restricted number foreseen for the committees of surveillance. Inside Legacoop, especially at the regional level, a system of information has been constituted that allows to follow the evolution of the work on the structural funds. The next programming should improve this system, especially to allow the sectoral associations interested to follow sectoral development programmes</p>
IT	Confcooperative	<p>The Concooperative, in its territorial and sectoral articulations, is recognized as socio-economic partner representing the interest of the cooperative enterprises operating in all economic sectors and as such has been involved - with varying levels of intensity at territorial and sectoral levels.</p> <p>First of all on the whole decisional process in the elaboration of the "National Strategic Framework", of the "National Strategic Plan for Rural Development" and of the Italian "Operational Program" for the fishing sector for the use of both FESR and FSI structural Funds and other two community funds, FESR and FEP, for the 2007-2013 seven year period, and, subsequently, in the several Operational Programs that correspond to the strategic priorities of territories and sectors.</p> <p>In particular, the central Confcooperative entity has followed the guidelines of the national OP related to the three Objectives of the 2007-2013 cohesion policy, as well as the strategic programs of the two sectors of rural development and fishing, while the territorial structures have been involved in the definition of the priorities to which the resources of the various Programs will be earmarked.</p> <p>It should be underlined that in the construction of the national strategic framework, after the denunciations of all social partners that in the previous 2000-2006 planning in the phase of implementation of the Programs the principle of partnership has often been interpreted by the central and local Administrations in a purely formal fashion, it has been possible to insert a special chapter "Involvement of the socio-economic partners" in which, during the whole 2007-2013 period, our role</p>	<p>Confcooperative has played a particularly active part in the preparation of the national OP "Safety for development- Convergence Objective". Advocating the principle of the full involvement of the social partners inserted in the national strategic framework, and willing to capitalize the experiences of cooperatives on the national territory to oppose the phenomena of illegality, a special Objective n° 5 has been inserted, "to Improve the management of the goods confiscated to the organized crime".</p> <p>It intends to use part of the financial resources attributed to this national OP to co-financing plans of restructuring of fixed assets confiscated to the organized crime, for the purpose of their reinsertion in the production cycle, also through the involvement of associations of social promotion and social cooperatives for the implementation of initiatives for the benefit of disadvantaged strata of the population.</p>	

		<p>as representatives of interests of a specific economic partner must be fully effective and fully integrated in the whole of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation cycle of the interventions.</p> <p>This principle has then been reformulated in the Italian Programs implementing the national strategic framework, thus giving to the representative organisations of the cooperative enterprises the possibility of a greater involvement in all the phases of the utilisation of the Structural Funds.</p>		
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PL	NAUWC	<p>As mentioned last year we tried as an organisation to be an active partner in the process of preparing guidelines and operational programmes in our country, on the country and regional basis. We have organised meeting in all regions of Poland, inviting representatives of local authorities preparing the operational programmes as well as inviting representatives of co-operative enterprises, trying to higher their awareness about importance of being active in the process of preparing the programming documents. At the same time we have also co-operated with partner – organisations, like Polish Standing Social Economy Conference. The results of those co-operations were reports concerning the place of the social economy sector in the programming documents as well as the recommendations where the social economy should be present there. Those activities combined with efforts of other institutions and individuals resulted with a very good recognition of the sector in the polish documents.</p>	<p>A representative of the National Auditing Union of Worker's Co-operative, Joanna Brzozowska, is a member of the Monitoring Committee of the Operational Programme Human Capital (ESF), as a representative of the Polish Standing Social Economy Conference. Polish co-operative sector is not present in any other Monitoring Committees.</p>	
RO	UCECOM	<p>We have not been involved in the discussions to define the national guidelines on structural funds. We have only been consulted for the finalisation of the " guides for the applicant " for one the sectoral operational programs-" Growth of Economic Competitiveness " because the Intermediate Organisation (Ministry for SME, Trade, Tourism and Liberal occupations) also has some attributions on the line of cooperation. Also, we mention that, to UCECOM's request, some of the management authorities have was receptive to the clarification of a few problems of eligibility of the artisanal and production cooperative societies.</p>	<p>We are not part of any of the follow-up committees of the programs and we do not believe that the present structure of the aforesaid committees could to be widened in such a way that they contain representative organizations of the cooperative sectors.</p>	<p>The make up of those committees is: 1/3 of representatives of the relevant national authorities (usually ministries), 1/3 of the representatives of the regional and local authorities and 1/3 of the representatives of the socio-economic partners (employers' organisations / trade unions), but the artisanal and production cooperative organizations do not count as socio-economic partners.</p>
SV	Coompanion	<p>Yes. Back in 2006 we met the responsible minister and had regular contacts with her ministry all along the preparations also with the first propositions on the national strategy programme that were made by an independent expert. After the national strategy programme was adopted we had continuous discussions with the people preparing the operational programmes for the Social and the Regional Fund</p> <p>The Swedish model for adjustment will be based on a follow-up to make corrections when needed and not on annual base. The competent national authorities and the management committees are responsible. We are taking part, see below.</p>	<p>It would be better if you used the EU vocabulary. I think you mean the "monitoring committees". In that case all. On the "management committees" (which in the Swedish case is a public-private partnership that take decisions on the projects) we are taking part in half of them (4 out of 8), but have close contacts with them all through our network.</p>	

		<p>1.3 On the basis on the nationals programmes (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/atlas2007/index_en), could you tell if you or some of your member organisations are involved in the financial projects on structural funds? If yes, which ones?</p>	<p>1.4 (new) If not, which are the difficulties that you encounter?</p>	<p>1.5 (new) «27 billion Euros as community investment is available for the small and medium-size enterprises in the programme 2007-2013 within the framework of the cohesion policy. Thus it is the moment to prepare dossiers in order to be able to benefit from these aids». Have you introduced any dossiers? If yes, which ones? If not, what are the main obstacles that you encounter?</p>	<p>1.6 (new) In a more general way, which is the position of the co-operatives within the framework of this cohesion policy 2007-2013?</p>
BG	NUWPC	<p>Yes, in the following Operational Programmes: Technical Assistance; Development of the Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy. In the future we would like to participate and in the Operational Programme Regional Development.</p>		<p>NUWPC supports the cooperatives in their participation in projects under European programs - training of the personnel, expert studies, preparation of documents. Expert groups have been formed, visiting the cooperatives and making clear the opportunities and parameters for participation in such projects. Some of our member – co-operatives have filed documents and are all ready beneficiaries under programmes as follows: OP “Human Resources”, OP “Competitiveness”, OP “Technical Assistance”, OP “Development of Competitiveness of the Bulgarian Economy”. NUWPC has applied for OP “Administrative Capacity” and is already beneficiary of that programme.</p>	<p>Positive position and willing to participate.</p>
CZ	SCMVD	<p>Our members are involved especially in the hard projects, it means investment projects. Cca 10% of our members have been involved.</p>		<p>We have shared on creating dossiers dealing entrepreneurs, especially on the base of experiences from the previous period 2004 – 2006, and then we have tried to introduce any dossiers for social cooperatives.</p>	<p>In the Czech Republic the position of cooperatives within the framework of this cohesion policy 2007-2013 is based on The Commercial Code where a cooperative is embedded between other entrepreneurial companies.</p>

EE	ESTCOOP	According to the current information any of our members are not involved in these projects.	Lack of financial resources for preparing a project and for self-financing. Lack of human resources with specific know-how.	No. The dossiers on these topics have been prepared by the Association of small and medium-sized enterprises.	There are not specific advantages for co-operatives. co-operatives can apply on equal basis with enterprises, non-governmental and public bodies.
FI	Coop Finland	Not at the moment. We had some projects until last year.	Nothing in particular	No, but we're promoting this issue e.g. through magazine or newspaper articles	Co-operatives are not in special position compared to other forms of enterprises.
IT	ANCPL	Some of our cooperatives presented projects in the field of product innovation, industrial research, communication networks, etc. The regions especially interested by the 2006-2007 programmes were: Emilia-Romagna, Tuscany, Friuli. With regard to Calabria and Basilicata, the field is innovation aimed to encourage enterprises to come out of the local dimension.		The dossiers prepared by our cooperatives concern mostly the policies in favour of the internationalisation activities of the enterprises and the technological innovation.	It would be necessary to use to structural funds resources as well as possible, being aware that, henceforth, the European dimension should be considered as being the domestic dimension. It is also necessary to take into account the - more and more frequent- interaction between regions that belong to different nations and that are interested in development projects in communications (roads/railways, etc) but also of development of virtual communication networks (internet, etc).
IT	Conf-cooperative	In the framework of the Italian territorial programs reported on the Inforegio website, all our territorial, regional and provincial structures are busy identifying on which regional OP of the Convergence and regional Competitiveness and occupation objectives they could support projects for the development of cooperative enterprises. This is especially the case within the framework of two of the 10 priorities foreseen in the national strategic framework the NSF and in which the experiences of cooperative enterprises are very meaningful: priority 7, "Competitiveness of the productive systems and occupation 2, and priority 4, "social Inclusion and services for the quality of life and the territorial attractiveness". At the national level		Being aware of the opportunities that the new the structural Funds programming - but also of those coming from the programming of other Funds under the general EU Budget for the new 2007-2013 phase for SMEs, among which cooperatives are a very representative part, Confcooperative is preparing an information hub - accessible through its own portal "Confcooperative.it" and updatable on line in real time- with the main purpose to introduce, intuitively and with hypertext, the results of the surveys that we have undertaken on the topic of community financing to the enterprises.	Confcooperative's position is to actively participate in the utilisation of the new structural Funds for the financing of the cohesion policy for this new 7 year period, but also in the utilisation of the financial resources made available to SMEs from the BEI and the FEI, in partnership with the European Commission, through innovative financial tools such as the financing tool in risk sharing regime and the operations that facilitate their access to credit, complementary to the tools foreseen by the cohesion policy.

		Confcooperative is having an active role both in the national OP "Safety" (see 1.2), and on the OP "cultural and natural attractors, and tourism."			
PL	NAUWC	<p>National Auditing Union of Worker's Co-operatives is involved in some of the projects financed from the EU programmes. The main one to finance the activities of NAUWC is the European Social Fund in the framework of the Operational Programme Human Capital. According to the policy adopted by the Management Board of NAUWC, our organization will realize projects concentrated in two areas: a) direct support for co-operative enterprises (trainings, new technologies), b) support to the social economy sector (social co-operatives, social entrepreneurship, SCR, TSR).</p> <p>There are quite big delays in introduction of the structural funds in the new programming period. This caused the situation, that there is a huge competition between applicants. To give an example, one of the priorities – the only one where you can finance the after-diploma studies and trainings for enterprises, there was 170 of applications in the FIRST day of gathering them, 650 applicants after one week of gathering them. The amount of money that applicants applied for in those 650 applications it was: 1,5 blion PLN when the allocation was 360 mln PLN!!! It shows the competition between organisations.</p>		<p>The main obstacle is that the co-operatives are not always treated as enterprises. We are trying to fight with this but at the same time it takes much energy and time.</p> <p>The second obstacle is that the co-operatives are in quite bad shape, many times they have problems with debts and so on and it is quite difficult for them to apply for the investment funds. The next thing is also that they do not have trust that they can really apply for the EU funds. It is more the mentality obstacle and this is the reason that we are trying to share best practices that can better awareness and hope for co-operatives to successfully apply for them.</p>	<p>For sure the cohesion policy is a big chance for the co-operatives and co-operative movement. One aspect is that it can strengthen our co-operative organizations in the context of delivering services to co-operative enterprises, in the context of internal actions etc. It is also a big chance to improve the attitude to the co-operative movement "in eyes" of society and different institutions. One the other hand it is also a big chance to finance investments (hard investments as well as investments in the human capital) in the co-operative enterprises.</p>

RO	UCECOM	<p>At the moment of the filling in the questionnaire, some of the entities of the artisanal and production cooperative sector applied for the Sectoral operational program Growth of the Economic Competitiveness 2007-2013 and the Sectoral operational program - Development of the Human Resources.</p> <p>See response to point 1.5, where some examples are provided</p>	<p>The main difficulties encountered by our organizations are the limited experience in project management, insufficient capital for co-financing and, from the viewpoint of eligibility to some programs, the condition of the ownership of the land (in the biggest part, in the sector, the land is under state ownership, the artisanal and production cooperative societies only having a right of usage.</p>	<p>some projects for the operational programme - "Growth of the Economic Competitiveness 2007-2013" have been introduced by some of the artisanal and production cooperative societies; under priority Axis 1-"Investments ' up to 920.000 lei"; Main domain of intervention 1.1-"Productive investments and preparation of the enterprises to market competition, especially SME";- Operation a) "Support for the financial strengthening ' up to 920.000 lei for the modernization of the productive sector by tangible and intangible investments, and Operation d) - "Support to implement the international standards." Also, in the framework of the OP - "Development of Human Resources " - the Foundation of the Pre-university teaching of the Artisanal and Production Cooperation - "Spiru Haret" Bucharest (whose only unique founder is UCECOM) have presented dossiers for the Main field of intervention 2.1-"Transition from school to active life"</p>	<p>Since the Law 346/2004 on the stimulation of the creation and the development of the SME recognized, in an explicit manner, the SME character of cooperative societies, cohesion policy, reflected in the programs in progress, ensures for cooperative societies the same treatment as for the other SME. At the same time, at the national level, the projects of the Post adhesion National Strategy and the one of Sustainable Development are under finalisation, on which UCECOM formulated concrete proposals to express the position of cooperatives.</p>
SV	Cooperation	<p>We are also taking part in a national "follow-up" committee of the ESF programme.</p>	<p>Work load in drafting of projects, some bureaucratic procedure, liquidity in order to finance activities before getting paid, finding public funding for co-financing</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Cooperative enterprises are among the target groups as well as "social economy and social enterprises".</p>