

EU budget: Commission helps prepare new Cohesion programmes with Regional Competitiveness Index and Eurobarometer

Today the Commission publishes the [2019 Regional Competitiveness Index](#) and a [Eurobarometer on Regional Policy](#). This will help authorities in the Member States in charge of designing the future Cohesion Policy programmes for the 2021-2027 EU budget period to evaluate public opinion, identify regional assets and better focus investments.

Negotiations on the [next EU budget for 2021-2027](#) and [the future Cohesion Policy](#) are ongoing with the European Parliament and the Member States. In parallel, [the Commission has started a discussion](#) with all EU countries on the priorities of the future Cohesion Policy programmes. This is so EU investments can reach the ground as soon as possible. The Competitiveness Index and the Eurobarometer aim to feed into this programming process.

Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy, Enlargement Negotiations and Regional Policy, Johannes **Hahn** said: *“The sooner the new Cohesion Policy programmes are ready, the sooner EU funds can deliver on the ground. The Commission is actively helping Member States design their programmes and both the Regional Competitiveness Index and Eurobarometer published today provide useful insight on where to direct EU and public investments.”*

The Regional Competitiveness Index 2019

Updated every three years, the [Regional Competitiveness Index](#) allows regions to monitor and assess their development over time and in comparison with other regions.

With its interactive web tool, policy-makers and citizens alike can see how their region scores in terms of innovation, governance, transport, digital infrastructure, health or human capital. By helping regions to identify their strengths and their weaknesses and to target public investments, the index can be a powerful tool in the preparation of the new programmes.

The Eurobarometer on citizens' awareness and perception of Regional Policy

The [Eurobarometer Flash survey](#) on citizens' awareness and perception of Regional Policy shows that the vast majority of Europeans (81%) believe EU-funded projects have a positive impact on their life – when they are actually aware of those projects (only 40%).

The Commission has stressed the need for more communication from programme authorities and beneficiaries on EU-funded projects and laid out new requirements in its proposal for the next Cohesion Policy. This includes a

communication plan for all programmes, social media activities and the organisation of events around important projects.

According to the Eurobarometer, most respondents said that EU should invest more in education, health or social infrastructures (91%), the environment (90%) and should focus on regions with high unemployment (69%), deprived urban areas (54%) and remote and mountain areas (52%).

This is in line with the policy priorities that the Commission proposed for the next Cohesion Policy and it provides insights on citizens' priorities at country level; breakdown of answers by country are available [here](#).

Background

Following [its proposal for the future Cohesion Policy](#) tabled on 29 May 2018, the Commission has been supporting Member States in the programming exercise, to allow for a swift start of investments on the ground.

In particular, the Commission has issued a large [simplification package](#), country-specific investment guidance as part of the [European Semester](#) and such tools as the Regional Competitiveness Index or the Eurobarometer on Regional Policy.

They are presented in the context of the [2019 European Week of Cities and Regions](#), which kick-starts in Brussels today.

For More Information

[EU Regional Competitiveness Index 2019](#)

[Flash Eurobarometer 480 on citizens' awareness and perceptions of Regional Policy](#)