



European Commission

9TH COHESION REPORT

March 2024

COHESION POLICY CONTINUES TO NARROW THE GAPS IN EU REGIONS AND MEMBER STATES

Driving sustainable economic development



- **Fostering economic and social convergence:** In Central and Eastern Member States, the GDP per head increased from 45% of the EU average in 1995 to nearly 80% in 2023



- **Promoting Europe's competitiveness:** In the 2014-2020 period, Cohesion Policy has supported 4.4 million businesses and created 370,000 new jobs in these firms



- **Supporting employment:** over the last 20 years, the unemployment rate in the newer Member States has decreased from an average of 13% to 4%



- **Enhancing the Single Market:** Cohesion Policy benefits all regions and expands the opportunities of the Single Market. In 2030, the EU's GDP is expected to be 1% higher due to Cohesion Policy investment. Each euro invested through Cohesion Policy generates 3 euros of additional GDP by 2043



- **Driving public investment:** Cohesion Policy funding corresponded to around 13% of the total public investment in the EU in 2014-2020, and up to 51% for less developed countries



Implementing the digital and green transitions on the ground



Over €100 billion to support green action in 2021-2027: renewable energy infrastructures, sustainable transport networks, nature conservation



€69 billion already invested in 2014-2020: 550,000 households enjoy better energy performance, 6,000 megawatts of renewable energy capacity created



€40 billion for digitalisation in 2021-2027: digital skills and technologies



€14 billion invested in 2014-2020: performance for fixed networks has improved across all Member States, 7.8 million households have better broadband connection



1.3 million additional jobs will be created by 2027, with a large share related to the green and digital sectors.



Delivering in times of crises



Resilience in the face of unprecedented crises: Cohesion Policy contributed to most regions returning to their 2019 GDP level just two years after the contraction caused by COVID-19 health crisis



€23 billion redirected from Cohesion Policy to fight the pandemic for the purchase of ventilators and vaccines, to support SMEs, and to protect workers



Funding and flexibilities made available to help regions welcome people fleeing Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine

A need for a strong Cohesion Policy

Taking stock of challenges

- **Sub-national disparities** among large metropolitan regions and other regions are growing and regions risk falling into the 'development trap'
- **Climate change exacerbates regional inequalities**, notably in coastal, Mediterranean, and South-Eastern EU regions, risking to lose 1% of GDP annually

Lessons for the future

- **Support more tailored to regional needs**, faster implementation, simplification, and stronger linkage to reforms and performance while enhancing territorial dimension



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