

Presentation Lambert Van Nistelrooij
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(5 min.)

The aim of my presentation as rapporteur of the European Parliament for the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion, is to bring forward initial ideas in response to this important policy paper. In my paper I underline some points:

1) Analysing the new concept: I believe that territorial cohesion is a distinct concept that should provide tangible added value to economic and social cohesion. The three component parts of cohesion (economic, social and territorial) should be complementary and mutually reinforcing, maintaining however their own separate mission in a single integrated concept.

2) Rejecting the prospect of an asymmetric Europe: I feel that the harmonious development of the Union will effectively contribute to raising the competitive advantage of the EU economy. Therefore, territorial cohesion can only be interpreted as a horizontal concept that underpins the development of the Union as a whole. The challenge is to focus on more efficient instruments that can achieve this goal.

3) Making the most of the potential of each region: There is no "one-size-fits-all development" model for the European Union. It is important to determine the assets of each European region and build on those, in order to increase their competitiveness and guarantee growth and prosperity. For instance, it is a fact that resources are focussed in regional development clusters. This tendency is getting stronger in the world wide competition and globalisation. In other words, not every region has the potential or the resources to become a centre of excellence; this is not the objective that we should try to achieve. EU should limit its approach in that respect.

Territorial governance: The Green Paper looks at an improved territorial governance as the key for the successful future implementation of cohesion policy. In my report, I will focus on the need to promote a system of multi-level governance and to determine the appropriate territorial level to which intervention would be more effective at the different stages of programme planning and implementation.

With the Commission, I focus on the need to ensure a balanced urban-rural development and suggests means to avoid depopulation and urban sprawl. I support the three key concepts presented in the Greenbook, on the basis of which specific policy actions need to be developed:

-Concentration: territorial cohesion is about getting a right balance between gains stemming from concentration and the need to realise territorial potential at a wider scale, in order to maximise its contribution to prosperity of the Union as a whole.

- Connection highlights the need to move toward an integrated Europe which offers fast and efficient access to markets, services and people.
- Cooperation has always been an important pillar for cohesion policy. Even more needs to be done in that respect, in order to address issues that are cross-border by nature and range from commuting to environment. This cooperation should occur at many levels and involve new partners.

Thank you,

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