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Event | 16.11.2009

Climate change: Incoherent cohesion policy?

EU structural and cohesion funds

With €347bn set aside for 2007-2013, structural and cohesion funds represent more than one third of the EU's budget. Just over half of the total € €177bn € is available for the ten new member states in central and eastern Europe. These countries have been receiving EU funds since 2000, but the annual volume has more than doubled since 2007. The current funding period should provide new opportunities especially for the promotion of energy efficiency, renewable energy, sustainable transport systems and integrated urban development. The environmental organisation CEE Bankwatch has demonstrated that a significant proportion of these funds is however linked to climate-damaging projects. (http://www.bankwatch.org/billions/).

The conference "Climate proofing European Structural and Cohesion Funds", hosted by Elisabeth Schroedter in Brussels on 17 November, will identify opportunities for sustainable development and will set the course for a more climate-friendly cohesion policy 2014-2020. The German Green MEP gave this comment ahead of the conference:

"It is unbelievable that EU funds are still being invested in projects that are harmful to the climate. The European Union has set clear climate targets, but it puts its money into Structural and Cohesion Funds that often inconsistent with € or in clear contradiction to € these goals. Many investments favour road transport and road infrastructure development. For example, 11% of the 2007-2013 Cohesion Funding is invested in the construction of motorways and less than 6% is spent on public transport systems. In Poland 66% of the Cohesion Fund is used to build waste combustion plants and less than 3% of Structural and Cohesion Funds go to renewable energy projects in the country.

Given the threat of climate change, we cannot afford to continue misallocating funds in this way. Structural Investment must be assessed according to its long-term climate effects. The European Commission is hardly credible and coherent by talking about the urgent emissions reductions on one while refusing to reform the spending of remaining Structural and Cohesion Funds until 2013. The Greens, together with environmental NGOs, demand a paradigm change now, especially regarding the approval process for major projects. Investment in a sustainable economy creates sustainable jobs, and this is exactly what we need in times of crisis."

Date of conference: 17 November 2009, 9:00 am - 5:30 pm
Venue: European Parliament, PHS 5B 001, Rue Wiertz, B-1047 Brussels
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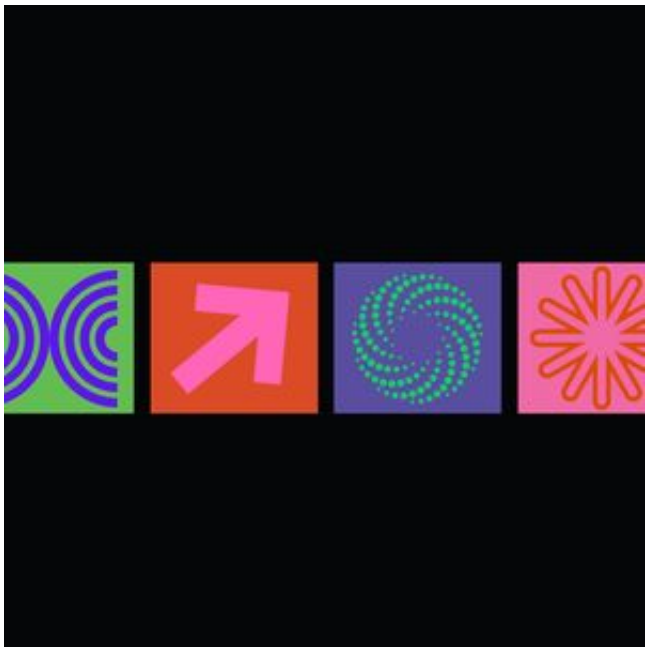
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Contact person



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