Press release | 07.11.2013

Social funds

Approval of opaque Council deal deprives crisis countries of much-needed social funds

The European Parliament's regional development committee today voted to approve a proposal from the Commission on new financial allocations for certain member states under the European Social Fund (ESF) for the current period. The proposal would see additional funds for action on unemployment exclusively allocated to France, Spain and Italy. The Greens expressed regret at the failure to extend this to other countries. After the vote, Green regional spokesperson **Elisabeth Schroedter** stated:

“Instead of allocating this funding to the hardest hit crisis countries, where it could have made a real difference, the allocation of these funds to France, Spain and Italy under the ESF was in reality designed to compensate them for the deal on the EU's multiannual financial framework, which left them relatively disadvantaged, notably as a result of the UK rebate. This opaque deal was the result of internal haggling in the Council, rather than being motivated by social policy priorities, and we regret the regional development committee failed to redress this. The European Parliament should overturn this when it votes in plenary, and ensure the funds go where they are most needed."

Green MEP **Rui Tavares** (Portugal) added:

"Allocation of funds under the EU budget cannot be decided only in backroom Council deals. The outcome of this particular deal is scandalous and means that these funds intended for action on youth unemployment will not target all of the countries under financial assistance programmes, which are experiencing massive problems with youth unemployment. This must be changed."

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