Press release | 06.10.2011

Structural and cohesion funds

Balanced reform package undermined by proposals to penalise states with budget deficits

Today the European Commission presented its legislative proposals to reform European structural and cohesion funds, with the European Parliament set to have co-decision powers over the legislation for the first time. The Greens welcomed the balanced approach in the proposals but criticised suggestions to cut payments to member states with budget deficits. Commenting on the proposals, Green MEP and spokesperson for regional affairs **Elisabeth Schroedter** said:

“While the Commission has overall taken a balanced approach to reforming EU structural and cohesion funds, the package is undermined by suggestions to cut funding for member states with high budget deficits as a punitive measure. This would undermine the very essence of structural and cohesion funds and is not the appropriate measure to address non-compliance with the stability and growth pact.

"In general, the package succeeds in creating a European added-value on the one hand, while leaving the regions relatively free to decide how they reach the goals set out in the Europe2020 Strategy on the other hand. We welcome the proposals to allocate a specified proportion of funds for sustainable growth, which will be a step forward in terms of combating climate change and creating a social Europe. The proposals to strengthen local development, including local stakeholders, are particularly positive. In the past this method, called LEADER, was very successful in rural areas. Now all regions will be supported to use this approach for their development. The proposals to decrease bureaucracy and promote best practices are also to be welcomed. The Greens will now work to strengthen and improve these largely positive proposals.”

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