

MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

National Coordination Authority

Expert meeting of the Visegrad Group countries and partners



CONCLUSIONS

July 15. – 17. 2019; Ostrava

MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

National Coordination Authority

SESSION 1

There is an overall satisfaction with conclusions of RO PRES in the Council and work done by SK V4 PRES.

MFF negobox priorities are very similar in all V4+4 countries.

ERDF thematic concentration seems to be priority of all delegations (the highest for the CZ and SK), lowering of the ERDF limits might bring more flexibility; some of the countries are open to accept compromises so far introduced (i.e. combined quota for PO1 and PO2; digital infrastructure inclusion to the PO1).

Financial aspects seem to be the highest priority of most of the countries. Some countries might be quite flexible towards the decommitment rule, **most of the countries would though prefer the N+3.** Regarding the financial package, **most of the countries prefer to maintain current co-financing rate** and would like to increase pre-financing rate.

CZ highlighted **requirements for climate change objectives** are not fit to requirements for ERDF thematic concentration (Annex I CPR). Many fields of intervention from PO1, and even from PO2 and other PO contribute to climate change objectives by 0% or 40 % (waste management, water management). Same perception is having RO. HU explained the limits are not obligatory and these goals may not be planned at the beginning of the period. **This issue must be clarified.**

Most countries are against introducing new ENC. Some see as important to solve the issue of VAT eligibility. **Some countries see a pressure on climate requirements among regulation as inappropriate.**

There are some other specific issues, such as 91/1/d – suspension of payments in case of infringements or efforts to re-introduce TO11 (public administration support). Some countries would prefer to use ESF+ for social infrastructure investment (PL, SK, HU).

Some of the countries will have all three categories of regions, **there is only small intention to open/press dialogue within a proposal to set up two categories** thus simpler and more straightforward set up could be achieved.

For some countries there is a problem of reference years (2014-16 x 2015-17); this represents a big problem for some member states including HR and SI of V4+4.

Some countries intend to transfer allocation between funds (from ERDF to CF in case of SK; from ESF+ to ERDF in case of HU, PL and RO) **and between categories of regions** (to the more developed in case of SK and RO).

MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

National Coordination Authority

SESSION 2

Most countries are in the process of identification or approval of national priorities. In some cases, there is perceived a mismatch between Annex D and national priorities (SK, SI).

Countries agreed on keeping PA, as simple as possible. Countries established working groups for preparation of PA, some have “assumption” or “first drafts” for PA.

In most countries OP’s architecture is not finally decided on political level. Most countries assume to keep similar OP’s as now, SK plans to prepare “radical” simplification, PL plans launching a new territorial OP devoted to deprived areas and potentially to merge some OPs.

There might be a growing tendency to use multi-fund solutions in the next programming period – RO will newly propose a multifund OP.

As of now, **only BG has a preliminary allocation for its OPs approved by the government.** CZ has developed first draft to be discussed with Managing Authorities.

SK and BG will give significant amount of allocation on transport from Cohesion fund envelope (at the expense of environment part).

Some countries will propose national OP for technical assistance (to be financed from ESF+ in case of PL; to be financed from ERDF due to digitization in case of BG; to be funded from more funds in case i.e. CZ). **Some of the countries feel EC pressure to exclude personal costs from TA** - some already has in place (HU) or will propose (SI).

Related to the transfer to InvestEU countries do not have a final decision yet. PL and other do not see any added value. Many questions should be answered. CPR and InvestEU regulation are inconsistent. In countries with “National Promotional Bank” they plan to provide “3 pillar assessment” to be an implementing partner of InvestEU.

CZ is asked to continue with an Initiative of V4 and EIB to establish a special advisory platform for V4 countries concerning large investment projects (e.g. high speed railway etc.).

The issue of coal regions (CRIT) is relevant and in same time a priority for several countries. Yet, the financing and links to cohesion policy remain unclear.

Most countries intend to use both integrated instruments (incl. CZ, SK, SI, RO, PL, HR); some countries intend to use also “other territorial tool”.

Several interesting intervention were presented, such large support of energy efficiency in buildings through PPP form (SI); use of the WB and OECD for setting up a territorial dimension.

MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

National Coordination Authority

PROCEDURAL PART

Plan B: Several countries met with EC during common technical meetings and EC mostly sticks to wording of their original legislation proposal. Most countries don't have a full plan B, rely on the SMWP amended wording, but they will consider some re-arrangements if EC original prevails.

There will be effort to persuade EC to follow more progressive (SMWP) wording of regulations during negotiations.

Opinion on EP AMDs: Countries thank for the EP effort but many proposals remain unclear. Some countries will wait for the new EP explanation. The biggest issues seem to be the EP proposal regarding climate improvement. In general countries prefer to maintain Council compromise.

CZ is asked (during PRES) to coordinate common dialogue while negotiations are running.

HR is asking to share an expectations for their presidency in Council in the first half of 2020.

Countries agreed to share questions and answers towards EC, and will keep communicate and share information and experience.

DG Meeting will be held at the beginning of the October, most likely. Date is to be confirmed.