Università Ca'Foscari Venezia

Master's Degree

in Global Development and Entrepreneurship

Final Thesis

The Cohesion Policy and the European Structural Investment Funds: Why and how is Veneto Region involved?

Supervisor
Ch.Prof. Marcella Lucchetta

Graduand
Nicole Distaso
Matriculation number
871040

Academic Year
2018 / 2019

To my beautiful family and my amazing boyfriend, to all my wonderful friends and all the people who have supported me since the beginning.

Cada tic-tac es un segundo de la vida que pasa, huye, y no se repite. Y hay en ella tanta intensidad, tanto interés, que el problema es sólo saberla vivir.

Cit. Frida Kahlo

Index:

Introduction

During my thesis it will be discovered the world of Cohesion Policy, why it is important and how it has influenced the European territory and how it can impact on Italian economical situation.

It is known that the Cohesion Policy dates back in the 80s, when the concept of "Harmonization" and "Union" started to sound more familiar to the European citizens. The process to create and develop a true Community was large and full of obstacles, due to the narrow-mindedness of the population and in particular of the Politician. When finally, the Cohesion Policy and the first Funds started to spread, rumours and prejudice arose and the situations was as difficult as never, also due to the inclusion of new low-income Regions in the European Panorama. Different Reforms have passed by, until today when the ESIF are entitled with severe criteria and right distribution trough distinct income Regions.

Italy has always been a beneficiary of the Funds, since it is a Founder of our precious European Community. Nevertheless, because of its differences has always encountered some obstacles in the administration and registration of the Funds. For this reason, in the future, it is important to maintain the labour and sustainability objectives, but also enhance the Authority condition.

More in depth it will be analysed the Veneto Region, a prosperous area of the Italian scene, which concentrates its Funds in cultural heritage, territorial cooperation and protection. It will be seen that this is a consequence of its financial position and its excellent Funds management.

The objective of my dissertation is for sure to analyse the effects of the Cohesion Policy and Funds on Italy and in particular on the Veneto Region, speculating on eventual forecast and provisions for the next Cohesion Policy and Funds Reforms, predicted for the period 2021-2027.

Chapter 1: The Cohesion policy and the ESIF

1.1 The Cohesion Policy

1.1.1 A Brief Overview

The Cohesion Policy is the European Union's strategy to promote and support the “harmonious development” of its Member States, centred on regional policies. In fact, it is recognized as a policy of solidarity, which represent the vehicle for delivering regional aid trough integration guarantying a wide coverage.[1] The Cohesion Policy idea was born with the EU founding fathers (the original 6 Member States), which have always had the idea of taking care of underdeveloped Regions of Europe as a primary objective. Indeed, in the Treaty of Rome is highlighted that: *“the Community shall aim at reducing the disparities between the levels of development of the various regions “* [2], confirming that supporting less favoured regions have always been left in the hands of national governments.

Nowadays the Cohesion policy is developing from a mere helping funds for the poorer regions to a system of harmonization and sustainability promotion for all the EU countries.

It is now promoting its 11 thematic objectives, helping to deliver the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy, the EU’s growth strategy to deliver smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The cohesion policy funds will be the main investment tool for measures supporting employment, innovation, education, inclusion, and the shift towards a low-carbon economy.

The protagonists responsible for the realization of the strategy are the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund (ESF), which consider several main priorities under the thematic objectives, and a certain amount of financing is allocated to these objectives.

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/glossary/c/cohesion-policy

[2] “Treaty of Rome”, 25th March 1957, Rome

As a matter of numbers, the Cohesion policy concentrate at least 50 % of the ERDF funding and 60 % of ESF allocations on these objectives for less developed regions; the 60 % and 70 % respectively for transition regions, and 80 % for more developed regions. Obviously, there is the necessity of certain conditions, which must be in place before funds can be channelled, in order to maximise the impact of the available funding, the focus on results and the strengthening in the actual programming period. These are the so-called ex ante conditionalities, which ensure that the right preconditions are in place for cohesion policy spending to have a real effect in the region.

1.2 Historical view

1.2.1 The Beginning

To understand the origin of the regional policy we have to date back in the 50s, where the economic conditions of the Europe was characterized by great imbalances, due to the post-war era. After that period the States were focused on strengthen the unity of their economies and on the ensure of a harmonious
development by reducing the differences existing between the various regions.
1957 the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), alias the Treaty of Rome was signed. Thanks to the funding of the European Economic Community (ECC), we have the first trace of the Cohesion Policy provisions and the structural funds. But the Rome Treaty did not create a proper European Cohesion policy, in fact during that historical period the policy was considered politically divisive and too ambitious. The States taught about several reasons to not implement the policy, the most compelling were the fact that regional development was at the beginning of its course and still nascent at national levels; the second one was that that it touches a such delicate theme such as the relationships between organizations, state and enterprises; the last one regarded the economic and financial relations between states, which in that period were entrusted to the newly created World Bank. This block was dejected only almost 20 years later, when in 1969, the European Commission took a position about that: “even more than other branches of economic

policy, regional policy is clearly the concern of the public authorities in the Member States. The measures it involves fall directly under the political, cultural, administrative, sociological and budgetary organization of the States" (CEC 1969: 13). The direct implication was the application of three instruments addressing regional imbalances belonging to Rome Treaty: The European Investment Bank (EIB), which occupied to grant loans and supply guarantees for the financing of development projects in developing and restructuring regions; the European Social Fund (ESF), which task was to sustain and improve mobility in the European labour market. Its funds were administrated by the Commission.

The third instrument was the Guidance section of the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), which aim was to provide support for underdeveloped rural areas.

Even if the premises were good all these instruments were not enough to manage the 60s European economical situation, in fact a few months later the initiatives demonstrated that the provisions taken by the European Commission were not enough. In fact, even if during the 1950s and 1960s national governments paid more attention to national regional policies, the creation of a truly common Cohesion policy remained a controversial issue at least until the beginning of the 1970s. Actually, in these years the European Parliament supported the European Commission in its attempt to adopt a series of resolutions in favour of the institutionalisation of Cohesion policy. During the 1970s there were two principal motifs that encouraged the EU to implement and enhance the Cohesion policy. The first was the 70s' oil crisis, which convinced the national governments to apply coordinated actions to cope with regional disparities in Europe. The second was the accession of Denmark, the UK and Ireland in 1973. The entrance of the United Kingdom and Ireland enlarged the coalition of national governments that was in favour of the establishment of a common regional policy. Moreover, the fact that the UK became a net contributor to the Community budget upon accession required the adoption of economic compensation to persuade a British public opinion sceptical about the benefits of European integration.

As a matter of fact, in December 1974 the EU leaders approved the creation of the ERDF (European Regional Development Funds), which was formally established in March 1975. Initially, the ERDF achieved only modest results for three main reasons: it was considered a compensatory measure for net contributors to the Community budget; its budget was too small to play a significant role; the Council of Ministers was in charge of defining the budget on the basis of national quotas annually negotiated between the Member States, without targeting regions that were lagging behind in terms of development.

The aim of these Funds was to correct regional imbalances due to predominance of agriculture industrial change and structural unemployment. From this point on, Member States' governments dominated ERDF management.

1.2.2 The Evolution

At the end of the 70s the EU repute that there was the necessity to reform the system, indeed it promoted two minor reforms in 1979 and 1984.

Due to the growth of regional imbalances after the Greek accession, 1979 the national governments approved a 50% increase of the ERDF budget. Consequently, the regional policy accounted for about 6 % of the Community budget. Moreover, the Member States decided to approve a "non-quota" section. This revolution was quite irrelevant at the economical level, but it was politically salient; in fact, the Commission could use the funds more autonomously, to support development projects in areas not covered by the national governments. This reform institute, also, "integrated" development programmes, characterized by different funds with a regional dimension, such as the ERDF, the ESF (European Social Fund), the EAGGF (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund) and the EIB (European Investment Fund).

The new reforms obliged the Commission to write periodic reports on the economic and social conditions of the regions, eventually suggesting new regional priorities and guidelines.

The second reform was labelled in 1984, which progressively increased the economic resources allocated

to the ERDF (The European Community Budget reached +9.1% in 1986).

A system of indicative (minimum and maximum) ranges, replaced the old system of quotas. Integrated programmes were further strengthened. Moreover, the possibility to open a negotiation with MSs to finance specific National Programmes of Community

Interest was also granted to the Commission. Even if these reforms increased the community orientation of the policy and granted greater autonomy to the Commission. But European Community regional policy remained essentially a transfer-of-payment system until 1988.

The number of citizens living in less developed regions was doubled, so the accession of Spain and Portugal in 1986 was estimate as a negative decision by some Member States. Greece, in particular, threatened the EU Governments, advising that if the EU did not adopt measures to protect its agricultural production, Greece will not guarantee to join the Union.

Therefore, in 1985 the Council of Ministers created the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes (IMPs),

a budgetary commitment established for seven years (1986–1992) in order to help "the southern regions of the present Community"(Greece, parts of southern France and most of southern Italy), "to adjust under the best conditions possible to the new situation created by enlargement" (Council of Ministers 1985: 11).

The IMPs were based on provisions that would become the core of Cohesion policy in 1988, such as the leading role of the Commission and the active involvement of regional actors in co-financing and co-deciding

the programmes.

With the Single European Act (SEA), in 1986 regional policy became a Community competence and a Community goal. The Art. 130a of the SEA stated that" In order to promote its overall harmonious development, the Community shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic and social cohesion. In particular, the Community shall aim at reducing disparities between the levels of development of the various regions and the backwardness of the least-favoured

regions, including rural areas". Indeed, the Art. 130b SEA established that the achievement of these objectives should be supported through the Structural Funds, the EIB and the other existing financial instruments, and that "The Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions every three years on the progress made towards achieving economic and social cohesion".

The approval of the IMPs and the adoption of the SEA, in fact, permitted to have a general view of the process of reform announced on 12 March 1985 by the Commission President Jacques Delors. Indeed, it constitute an improvement of the Programme of the Commission, respecting what the Commission President stated in 1985: “The Commission aims to reverse the trend towards treating these Funds as mere redistribution mechanisms”, helping the “regions in difficulty”.

In February 1987 the Commission presented a huge reform of the EU budget (the Delors package), and recalled that the SEA asked the Commission to submit to the Council a comprehensive proposal on the Structural Funds, in order to clarify their tasks to contribute to the achievement of the objectives and to increase their efficiency (Art. 130d SEA).

The Commission recognized two principal problems with the management of the Structural Funds. The first was the lack of complementarity between national action and Community support. The second problem was the insufficient apparent utility of Community support. Nevertheless, the reform was meant to ensure that the disposable resources must be concentrated in the truly most needy regions.

The detailed proposal was presented in April 1987. However, the governments concentrated their debates mainly on the amount of Structural Funds spending and not the new architecture of the policy. The UK and France opposed the reform, because they fear that this would have an impact on their position as net contributors to the Community budget, while the poorer Member States preferred to support the economic liberalisation in order to increase the regional spending. This negotiation ended only in February 1988, when the UK was assured that its budget would be not jeopardised. Moreover, at the same time, Germany agreed to substantially increase its budgetary contribution. Furthermore, the more prosperous Member States strongly supported the completion of the single market and wanted this market extending to include Spain and Portugal. So, the doubling of the structural funds was accepted by the most relevant governments as the trade-off securing general agreement on issues of greater importance

1.2.3 The birth of *Cohesion policy*: The 1988-1993 Reform

1988 marked the truly birth of the fully-fledged *Cohesion policy*. The aim of the reform was improving the efficiency of regional policy, and a significant increase in regional funding.

The new regulations introduced four basic principles, which are: Concentration; Programming, Additionality and Partnership.

The main Objectives* of the reform were characterized principally by a promotion of development of lagging regions, convert regions affected by industrial decline, enhance the employment condition and the Reform of the CAP (5a and 5b).

During the 1988 reform there were also created the so-called *Community Initiatives* (CIs), which accounted for more or less the 8 percent of the structural fund budget for the period. The initiatives were managed directly by the Commission and fixated themes like economic and social conversion of the coal-mining areas, the improvement of the environment, the strengthening of the innovation capacity and technological development, cooperation between regions on different sides of national borders etc.

At the beginning, the influence acquired by the Commission did not contradict the Member States' opinion; the wealthier ones, in particular, looked at the Commission as a guardian of the efficient spending in the poorer MSs, where the majority of Structural Funds have been invested. This brought to a direct consequence for the Commission, considered a very important actor in the reform and funds administration.

In a nutshell, the 1988 reform created a truly European regional policy, converting it "from an essentially budgetary transfer" to a "genuine regional development tool with the potential to provide effective solutions to the problems faced by the EU regions" (Manzella and Mendez 2009: 13).

We can denote that since 1988 *Cohesion policy* assumed not only an economic connotation, but also an integrated approach: a reduction in territorial disparity was possible only if subnational institutions, especially regional authorities, were involved in decision-making and implementation processes.

Regarding the five regulations presented during the 1989–1993 reform it can be denoted that there have been given a particular importance to Structural Funds and effects on the Member States, particularly on the coordination between EU Investment Bank and Financial Instruments. Moreover, there were highlighted the new provisions for ERDF, ESF and EAGGF Guidance Section.

1.2.4 The Cohesion Policy during the 90s and early 2000s: The 1994-1999 Reform and the beginning of a new Era.

The 1993 Reform was moved up by the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. This treaty set out the construction of the

Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and confirmed the centrality of Cohesion policy for reducing socio-economic disparities among the European Union; counting the impact that may have the adoption of the single currency. Moreover, this reform brought also up the theme of the operation of the funds (particularly in view of the substantial increase in structural funding), and the enlargement to include Finland, Sweden and Austria (which would take place in 1995).The Maastricht Treaty enhanced the role of the Commission in Cohesion policy, approving its right to make appropriate proposals in order to strengthen EU economic and social cohesion (Art. 159 TEC). Moreover, the treaty created a new structural instrument, the Cohesion Fund, designed for Member States whose gross national income (GNI) per inhabitant was less than 90 per cent of the EU average.

This decision was not approved by all the Member States, in fact Spain, Portugal, Greece and Ireland did not immediately vote in favour of the Treaty. The regulator had to create a financial instrument to help less-developed countries which were facing serious difficulties in fulfilling the single market criteria.

For this reason, the Objectives* were revised:

Objective 1 and 2 remained unaltered, the new Objective 3 combined the previous Objectives 3 and 4, introducing special attention for the “integration of those threatened with exclusion form the labour market". At the same time, the new Objective 4 implemented the tasks laid down for the European Structural Funds in the Maastricht Treaty, aiming at facilitating workers' adaptation to industrial changes and to changes in production systems. Objective 5a maintained its initial goals, but also included aid to modernise and restructure fisheries, while Objective 5b facilitated the "development and structural adjustment of rural areas". Due to new territorial challenges in view of the Union's enlargement, a new Objective 6 for developing sparsely populated Nordic regions was introduced. Finally, a new regulation was added, laying down provisions regarding the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG).

The new regulations also promoted new measures to increase partnership, foster transparency, simplify fund allocation procedures, and specify the role of national governments, subnational institutions and the European Commission in light of the subsidiarity principle (CEC 1993), and provided for an extension of partnership from subnational governments to economic and social partners.

On 16 June 1993 the Commission published a Green Paper on the Community Initiatives suggesting five main aims for future Community Initiatives: cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation and networks; rural development; assistance to the outermost regions; employment promotion and development of human resources; and management of industrial change. After the consultation debate, they incorporated two new priorities: development of urban areas hit by a crisis; and restructuring of the fishing industry. The new Community Initiatives were pit into force during 1994.

In 1995 the Commission launched a new initiative called *Peace*, to support the peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland.

The regulations presented during the 1994–1999 reform highlighted, instead, the coordination of ESIF and promotes a Framework Regulation and a Coordination Regulation. The ERDF, ESF and EAGGF (Guidance) Regulation were amended and was introduced the FIFG (Financial instrument for fisheries guidance).

The situation was quite stable until 1999, when the EU outlined a new reform in order to support the accession of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, and the introduction of European Monetary Union (EMU). The Commission concentrated in particular on the regional policy, concerning the lodging of new members whose levels of wealth were considerably lower than those of the fifteen Countries, which were part of the European Union in that year (EU15). This last eastern expansion represented a true challenge for the EU, because the richest candidate country was Slovenia, with only a per capita income around 70 per cent of the EU average. This meant that, almost the entire territory of the candidate countries was eligible for Objective 1 assistance. Another relevant component was the economic context, in fact, the launch of EMU ensued in a period of slow economic growth for many Member States, with Germany struggling to pay the costs of the 'internal' enlargement to the eastern Länder.

An important consideration to make Is that in 1997 entered into force the *Amsterdam Treaty*, which set the achievement of a 'high level of employment' as one of the main aims of the EU.

Consequently, in November 1997 the European Council said "hope that the forthcoming reform of the Structural Funds (would) make optimum use of the Funds to serve employment needs wherever possible in the framework of the objectives assigned to them while respecting their primary purpose, which is to enable regions lagging behind to catch up" (European Council 1997).

For this reason, the Commission delineated the *"Agenda 2000: For a Stronger and Wider Union"*, a document offering a vision of the future of the EU on the threshold of the twenty-first century. The paper emphasised some priorities, such as the necessity to: maintain the Cohesion policy; pursue the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP); strengthen growth, employment and living conditions through the EU internal policies; and consent the accession of new members, while maintaining budgetary discipline.

The 1999 was focused on the steadying of total expenditures, instead of predicting an increasing spending on the Structural Funds. The bases of this reform were *concentration, efficiency and simplification*, which included a reduction to 3 of the number of the Objectives and the reduction of the Community Initiatives from 13 to 4, stricter eligibility rules, and the addition of a new efficiency principle to the existing five principles.

For this reason, the Commission needed to promote a timely and efficient use of Structural Funds, which were envisioned by the so-called *N12 rule*. This rule promoted the programmed *"de-commitment"* of the Funds by the end of the second year following the year of commitment. Moreover, it was presented a performance reserve, represented by the 4% of the indicative allocation for each Member State (MS), that was held back at the beginning of the period and would be allocated as a "performance reserve" to the programmes whose performance the Commission, on the basis of proposals from the Member States.

A greater role was to be delegated to domestic actors in the implementation and monitoring of programmes, thus reducing the Commission's sphere of action and conferring greater room for manoeuvre on national and subnational governments. All the MS agreed upon the need of a major reform, but on the other hand they tried to reduce the loss of the Structural Funds for their own regions.

Even if the Commission introduced a "Safety net" during 1998, the MSs were deeply divided over the budgetary figures. The net contributors to the EU budget (primarily Germany and the Netherlands) opposed any significant increase in EU Cohesion policy spending, while the net beneficiaries of regional policy (Spain and Italy) argued that it would be unfair to pay for the eastern enlargement by reducing the resources previously devoted to the Structural Funds.

In early summer of 1999, the new regulations were finally approved and introduced new regulations, reducing the number of priorities from seven to three: Objective 1, promoting the development and structural adjustment of regions whose development is lagging behind; Objective 2, supporting the economic and social conversion of areas facing structural difficulties; and Objective 3, backup for the adaptation and modernisation of policies and systems of education, training and employment.

Under the new regulations, regions that were eligible for regional assistance under the Objectives in 1994–1999, but which were no longer eligible in 2000–2006, qualified for an appropriate level of digressive transitional assistance in order to avoid an abrupt cessation of Community funding. Among those regions which were no longer eligible for Objective 1 funding, a distinction was made between those which, in 1999, met the basic eligibility criteria for funding under the new Objective 2 and those that did not. The former was entitled to transitional assistance from the four Structural Funds until 31 December 2006, whereas ERDF funding for the latter stopped on 31 December 2005.

Objective 1 continued to receive the majority of the funds, and the MSs more privileged in funding allocation were Spain, Italy, the German eastern Länder, Greece and Portugal. Concentration affected also the CIs, whose number was reduced to four: *Interreg III*, promoting cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation. *Leader +*, which guaranteed the promotion of the rural development. *Equal* concentrated on fighting all forms of discrimination and inequalities in connection with the labour market and *Urban II*, fostering social and economic regeneration of towns and neighbourhoods in crisis, with a view to promoting sustainable urban development.

During the 2000–2006 reform, there were presented a general provision on ESIF, new regulations for ESF, ERD, FIFG and an amend on EAGGF.

1.2.5 The 2000s: Focusing on the new enlarged EU territory

During the 2000s there were acted major changes, explained most of all by two factors: the adaptation of Cohesion policy to the EU's eastern enlargement, and the need that this policy focuses on the goals established by the new *Lisbon Agenda*[*1]* (action and development plan launched in 2000), which aim was to "make Europe, by 2010, the most competitive and the most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" (European Council, 2000).

The Commission, in its Third Report on Economic and Social Cohesion, stated that: the EU enlargement would bring "to a widening of the economic development gap, a geographical shift in the problem of disparities toward the east and a more difficult employment situation: socio-economic disparities will double, and the average GDP of the Union will decrease by 12.5%" (CEC 2004: xxv).

From a political point of view, the Third Report animated a debate, formed by two big coalitions: on one side, there were the Member States favouring a larger spending on Cohesion policy; on the other, the better-off states that opposed any significant increase of their contribution to the EU budget.

Another important factor that influenced the new Reform was the Lisbon Strategy[*1].

For these reasons the Commission decided to concentrate on *key actions*, such as supporting knowledge and innovation in Europe; reforming state aid policy; better regulation; developing the internal market for services; completing the Doha round of international trade negotiations; removing obstacles to mobility; developing a common approach to economic migration; managing the social consequences of economic restructuring. The Lisbon Strategy was a difficult plan to implement and had many limits, nevertheless it contributed to a profound reframing of the Cohesion policy.

Obviously, they EU government encountered some obstacles in making the new regulations, due to the long bargaining process between the Commission and national governments taking place over the adoption of a new *Financial Perspective* for 2007–2013. The negotiations for the new policies started in the autumn of 2004, reaching an agreement on EU budget only during the EU Council Meeting of December 2005. The budget for the EU Cohesion policy was decided only in April 2006 when, the EU decided to grant Cohesion policy 35.7 % of the total EU budget, which showed, clearly, an increase from the past; even if, analysing it as a percentage of EU GDP it embodied a decline with respect to the previous period.

In 2007 EU government revised some Objectives relative to the Cohesion policy: Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment, and European Territorial Cooperation.

The Convergence Objective was created to trigger growth and employment in less advanced regions. The principal elements of the revision were innovation and knowledge-based society, flexibility, environmental care and administrative efficiency. The areas qualified for the Convergence Objective comprehended the regions with a GDP less than 75% of the Community average and Member States eligible for the Cohesion Fund on a national criteria basis (GNI less than 90% of the European average). The Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective were meant to strengthen the regions' competitiveness, attractiveness and additionally employment, trough the anticipation of economic and social changes. It covered all the areas of the EU not eligible for the Convergence Objective. An important difference with the previous

Objective 2 was that there would no longer be any Community zoning for the Regional Competitiveness and Employment Objective.

Lastly, a new Objective for European Territorial Cooperation reinforced cross-border collaboration through combined initiatives by local and regional authorities, whereas nurturing transnational and interregional cooperation and exchanges of best practice. In particular, this Objective's aim was to promote common solutions such as urban, rural and coastal development, the development of economic relations, and the setting up of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The principal elements promoted were research and development, a knowledge-based society, risk management and integrated water management.

There were created three programmes to sustain this objective: *Interact* (Cooperative project management), *Urbact* (Thematic city network), and *ESPON* (Observation network for spatial planning).

Eligibility criteria changed accordingly to the main focus of the planned projects: for *cross-border cooperation*, *NUTS* (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics) *3 level regions* (small regions for specific diagnoses) were eligible; *for transnational cooperation*, all the regions were eligible considering the 13 cooperation zones identified by the Commission; *for interregional cooperation*, non-specific eligibility criteria were recognized. The MSs, which benefited most of these new Territorial Cooperation Objectives, were Poland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Czech Republic, Germany and Hungary.

The new Objectives, created by EU Commission, were for sure a confirmation of the principles demarcated for the 2000–2006 programming period, but with some adaptations.

The partnership principle was addressed to any suitable organisation representing civil society, environmental partners, non-governmental organisations and organisations responsible for promoting equality between men and women. These institutions have the privilege to participate to all stages regarding the Structural Funds, from the setting up to the evaluation phases. Furthermore, additionality's principle was applied in a different way: it was confirmed that the Structural Funds must not substitute state's spending, but there were introduced a financial corrective mechanism, which entered into force if the budgets were not respected.

There were also introduced a new *proportionality principle* to moderate the MSs' duties to the total amount of expenditure on an operational programme. This implies the choice of some indicators in order to assess a plan, which comprises obligations in terms of evaluation, management and reporting; moreover, it presents the control and monitoring of the aforesaid programme.

The new Cohesion policy was particularly related to other EU policies such as the CAP and the Common Fisheries Policy. Besides, cooperation with non-EU countries was no longer part of Cohesion policy, as two new initiatives, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) provide funds to that end.

Finally, there were introduced three new instruments in order to guarantee regions and MSs to manage more efficiently their funds and to implement the financial resources provided by the EIB and by other financial institutions such as JASPERS (Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions, the EIB, the ERDF (European Regional Development Funds), JEREMIE (Joint European Resources for Micro and Medium Enterprises) which is promoted by the Commission, the EIB and the European Investment Fund in order to increase accessibility to EU funds for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises; and JESSICA (Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas), which coordinates the efforts of the Commission, the EIB, and the Council of Europe's Development Bank in the field of sustainable investment in the urban field.

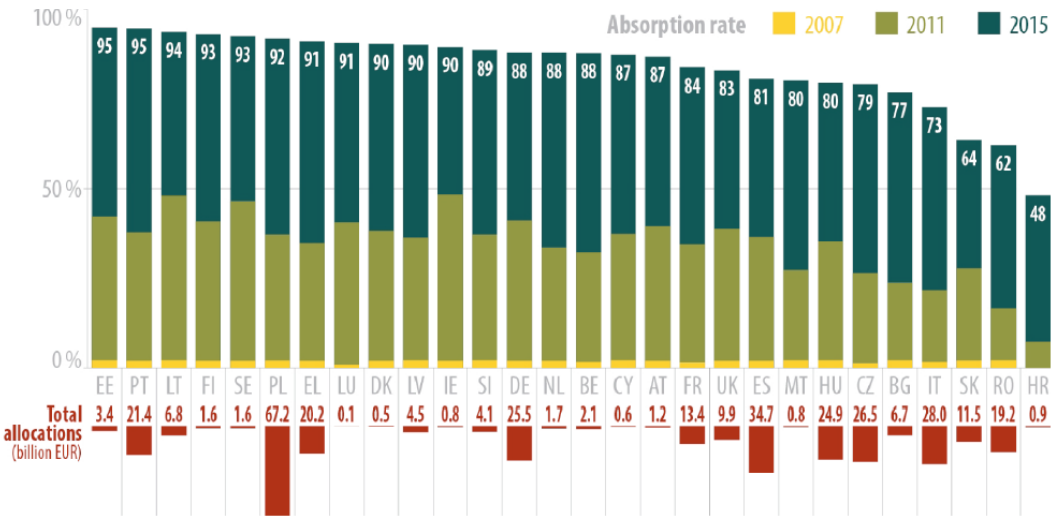


Figure 1. Structural and Cohesion Funds absorption rate,2007-2014 (source: European Commission)

In the figure below we can see the Funds, which were paid out by the Commission after the 2007-2013 Reform.

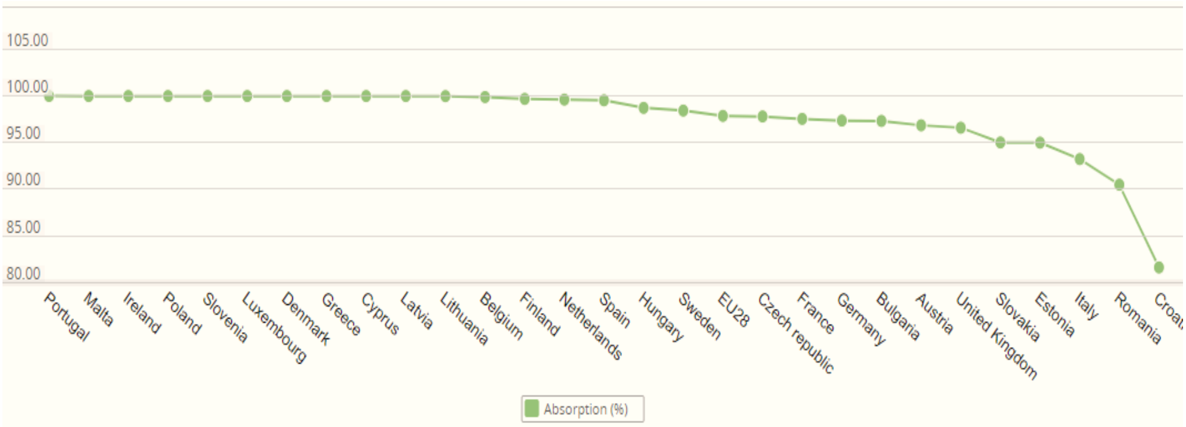


Figure 2. Total Percentage of Available Funds Paid Out by the Commission 2007-2013. (source: https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/2007-2013/Total-Percentage-of-Available-Funds-Paid-Out-by-th/w8x7-cqjd)

1.2.6 The 2014 reform: the new economic framework

The 2014-2020 Reform was framed in an era of changes, in fact thanks to the approval of Lisbon Treaty, in 2007, there was guaranteed a new legal context in which the 2014 reform occurred.

Taking into consideration the Article 174 TFEU we can state that: “the Cohesion policy is one of the main instruments of the EU aiming at promoting the EU overall harmonious development”. More specifically, considering the Art. 4 TFEU we may learn that: “the Cohesion policy is recognized as a shared competence between the Union and the MSs”, finally, considering the Art. 175 TFEU we can recognized that it has changed the legislative process in the field of Cohesion policy from the traditional “assent procedure” to the new “ordinary legislative procedure”.

Considering the dramatic economic crisis of 2008, we can surely state that it has had a huge influence on the EU, especially on Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Italy and Spain.

Obviously, there was the need to find a set of possible solutions, but the MSs were divided between those in favour of the implementation of severity measures and those in favour of solidarity.

Because of the economic crisis afflicting the EU during the beginning of the XXI century, the unemployment was brought to a never-reached-before level, particularly in Southern Europe. In this occasion the Cohesion policy was used to assemble resources for the national economies facing complications. The Commission adopted three main positions of interventions:

- Secure greater flexibility, mainly by the calculation of final EU contributions and the simplification of financial management of Cohesion Policy;
- Give regions a head start (increasing cash flow, helping with major projects, simplifying state aid rules);
- Target Cohesion policy smart investment.

The Commission agreed on promoting a series of actions in order to enhance the development of major projects. With this background, in March 2010, the European

Council approved the new document: *Europe 2020*, delineating a ten-year strategy to obtain jobs and growth in the EU.

The EU approved five major goals, which must be achieved by the end of 2020: *increase of employment rate; improvement of research and development projects; safeguard of climate and environment; encourage the EU citizens and industries to use and produce clean energy; enhancement of the level of education in the EU territory; and social inclusion and poverty reduction.*

Thanks to these initiatives the Commission tried to establish a new approach to Cohesion policy, in fact in November 2010, within the Fifth Report on Economic and Social Territorial Cohesion, the Commission highlighted the benefits that the Cohesion policy may generate for the entire European Union.

The Commission presented its formal legislative proposals in October 2011. The 2011 reform aimed at increasing the investment destinated to growth, jobs-creation, European territorial cooperation. The most significant innovation was the introduction of new partnership contracts in which MSs would specify the actions to be taken to achieve Europe 2020 goals with the help of Cohesion policy. Moreover it was proposed a new distinction between regions: more-developed regions, with a per capita GDP above 90% of the EU27 average; transition regions, with a per capita GDP between 75% and 90% of the EU27 average; less-developed regions, with a per capita GDP less than 75%of the EU27 average.

The new proposal was subject of a debate between Member States. In fact, the MSs less affected by the economic crisis supported the idea of a reduction in Cohesion policy spending, while the others were critical on this reduction. Moreover, the latter were also against the automatic disbursement of EU funds in the MSs failing to adhere to the so called "macro-conditionality", an EU economic governance which rules on public deficits and debt. The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the negotiations for the new regulations began in 2011 and they were quite challenging. For the MFF they lasted until February 2013, when the European Council agreed to grant €325 million to Cohesion policy, about 34% of the EU budget, which represented the 1% of the EU GNI.

In the following figure there is a representation of the Cash Flow allocated to each MSs, after the approval of the new Reform.

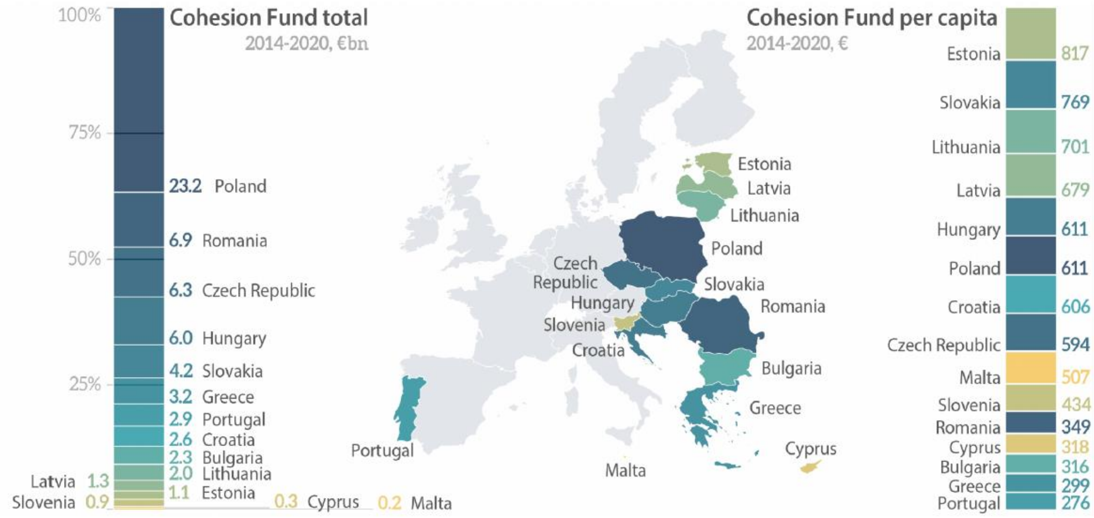


Figure 3. The CF allocation per Member State per capita,2014-2020(source: cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu)

Furthermore, there were also negotiated the allocations provided for the youth employment initiative, rural development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

The new regulations for Cohesion policy were approved in December 2013. These regulations created the premises of what has been called European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF): the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

These funds had 11 principal thematic objectives related to Europe 2020 priorities:

1. “Strengthening research, technological development and innovation.
2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies.
3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs.
4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy.
5. Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management.
6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency.

7. Promoting sustainable transport and improving network infrastructures.
8. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility.
9. Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination.
10. Investing in education, training and lifelong learning.
11. Improving the efficiency of public administration.”

Another innovation introduced was that two new goals replaced the previous three Objectives and a the three-tier classification of EU regions was approved. The changes regarded principally three aspects, that are Resources, Efforts and Spending.

Furthermore, the introduction of new conditionality measures leaded to a more results-orientation policy. A so-called ex ante conditionality was created, thanks to the introduction of different framework conditions, obligatory before the funds are distributed to ensure that investments are made in the most effective manner. Moreover, macroeconomic conditionalities have the objective to ensure that the effectiveness of the funds is not undermined by unsound macroeconomic policies. Another innovation introduced was that each MS has to negotiate with the Commission a new Partnership Agreement which outlines the country’s strategy and proposes a list of programmes.

In the figure below, there is a summery of the main differences between the two last reforms.

2007-2013	2014-2020
The Community Strategic Guidelines for cohesion policy The Community Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development	The Common Strategic Framework covering the five ESI Funds
The National Strategic Reference Framework covering mainly the three cohesion policy Funds and only some parts were formally approved by the Commission The National Strategy Plans covering the rural development programmes and the fisheries programmes prepared by the Member States in close collaboration the Commission and partners	The Partnership Agreement covering all the five ESI Funds and a majority of its elements require a formal Commission's approval, including in case of amendment.
Different content of the cohesion policy, EAFRD and EFF programmes	Common, basic set of elements for all ESI Funds' programmes
Separate programmes for the ERDF (+CF) and the ESF	Multi-fund ESF-ERDF (or ESF-CF) programmes allowed as well.

Figure 4. Main differences between 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 Reforms. (Source: European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: Official texts and commentaries)

The 2014–2020 reform in a nutshell:

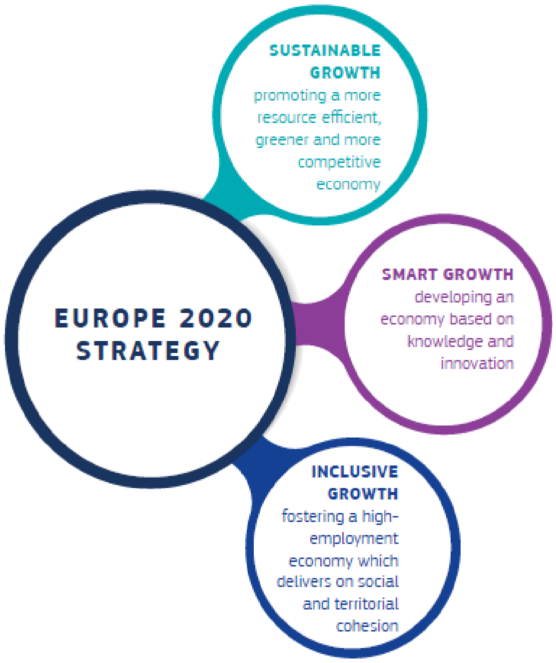


Figure 5.The 2020 pillars (source: "European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: Official texts and commentaries", European Commission).

In the figure below we can see how the payment of the Funds for the 2014-2020 Reform are now distributed.

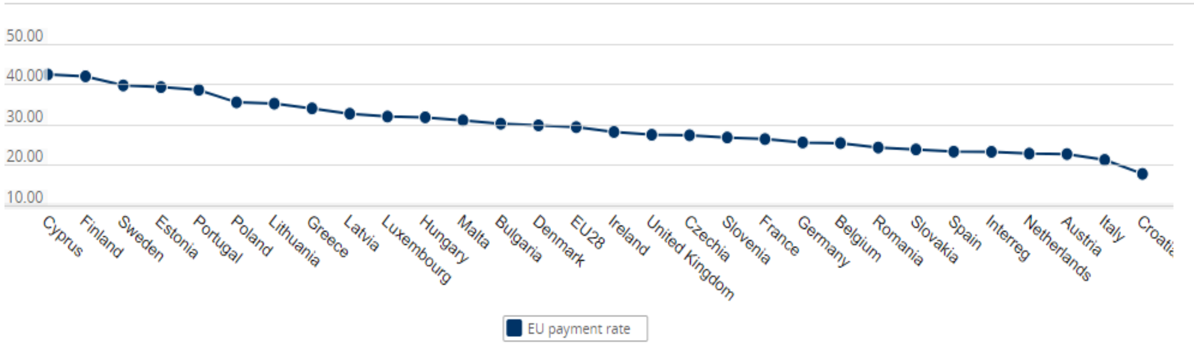


Figure 6. Regional Policy 2014-2020 EU Payment Details by Country upgraded at 24 august 2019. (source: Cohesion data of the European Commission).

Before making a brief overview of the new Reform, that will cover the Period between 2021-2027, It would be interesting to see the differences and the improvements between the various Reforms.

Table 1. The European Reforms through the years.

1989-1993	1994-1999	2000-2006	2007-2013	2014-2020
1.Birth of the truly Cohesion Policy 2.*Four basic principles*: Concentration, Programming, Additionality, Partnership. 3.*Objectives:* Help poor regions, Combating long term unemployment, Facilitation of the occupation of younger, CAP reform (5.a;5.b). 4.Creation of *Community Initiatives (9).*	1.Approval of the *Cohesion Fund.* 2.New Objective 3 which combines the previous goals regarding employment, introduction of a principle protecting people tendentially excluded from work. 3. New Objective 4 implementing Eu Structural Funds. 4.Creation of Objective 6 regarding the development of Nordic regions. 5. Ampliation of Community Initiatives: cross-border and international cooperation, rural development, development of human resources, industrial changes.	1.*"Agenda 2000: For a stronger and Wider Union".* 2.*Three basic principles:* Concentration, Efficiency, Simplification. 3.Community Initiatives reduced to 4. 4.*N12 rule* 5.Creation of *a "Safety Net".* 6.Objectives reduced to 3: Promotion of development and structural adjustment of poorer; supporting the economic and social conversion of poorer areas; supporting the modernisation of policies and systems of education, training and employment. 7. Introduction of: *Interreg III, Leader, Equal and Urban II* programmes.	1.Development *of Key actions*, regarding principally education, policies and regulations, internal market for services, Doha trades, migration. 2.Revision of Cohesion Policy Objectives, introduction of *Convergence, Regional Competitiveness and Employment, European Territorial Cooperation*. 3. Creation *of Interact, Urbact, ESPON* programmes. 4.New Eligibility criteria and partnership principles. 5. Introduction of *proportionality principle*. 6. New initiatives regarding the Cohesion Policy: *ENPI* and *IPA*. 7. New instruments for more efficient management of funds: *JASPERS, JEREMIE* and *JESSICA*.	1.*"Europe 2020 Agenda"*, establishment of five goals regarding Employment, R&D, Climate, Clean Energy, Education, Social field. 2.New Region distinction: more-developed regions, transition regions, less-developed regions. 3. Introduction of macro-conditionality and new conditionality measures, comprehending the *ex-ante conditionality*. 4.Creation of *European Structural Investment Funds*(European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, Cohesion Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, European Maritime and Fisheries Fund). 5. Creation of 11 Thematic Objectives for 2020, which replaced the previous Objectives. 6. New Partnership agreements.

Source: Own Elaboration

1.2.7 Beyond 2020: The new Cohesion Policy

European Commission has yet extensively discussed about the 2021-2027 Reform, in fact, it has approved five investment priorities, where the EU is best placed to deliver. The Investment will focus on Objectives 1 and 2, with more than 65% of Cohesion funds allocated to them.

The new priorities are: *"A Smarter Europe", "A Greener, carbon free Europe"; "A more Connected Europe"; "A more Social Europe" and a "Europe closer to Citizens".*

The allocation of the Funds will be distributed in this way:

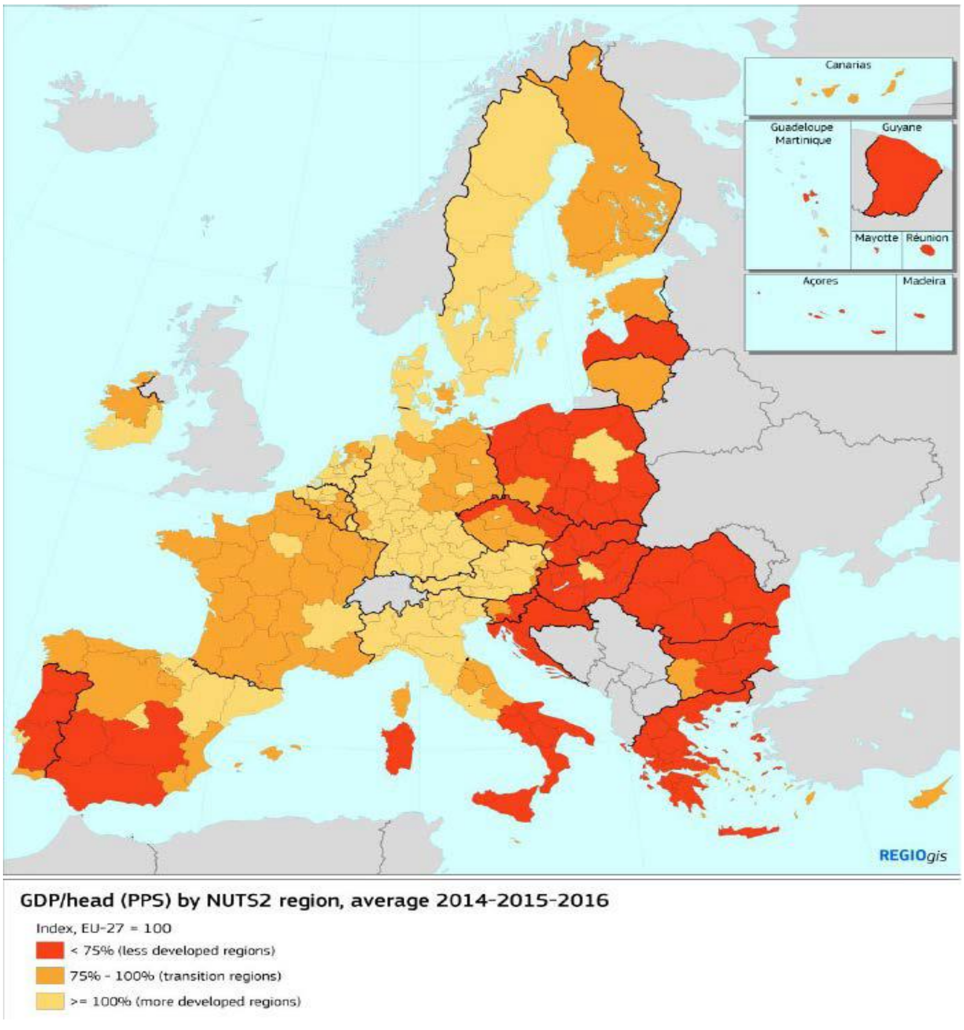


Figure 7. The new Funds distribution. (Source: EU Legislation in Progress 2021-2027 MFF, EPRS, European Parliamentary Research Service,Vasileios Margaras Members' Research Service PE 625.152 – March 2019)

In Appendix 1, there will be a short analysis of the funds' distribution during the years.
The new Reform, will for sure maintain as primary Cohesion Policy investments the regional ones, preserving the 3 categories regional division (less-developed; transition; more-developed).
The allocation method for the funds is still largely based on GDP per capita, but there will be added new criteria (youth unemployment, low education level, climate change, and the reception and integration of migrants). Outermost regions will continue to benefit from special EU support.
Moreover, Cohesion Policy further supports locally led development strategies and empowers local authorities in the management of the funds. The urban dimension of Cohesion Policy is reinforced, with 6% of the ERDF dedicated to sustainable urban development, and a new networking and capacity-building programme for urban authorities, called the European Urban Initiative.

To facilitate synergies between European Member States, a single rulebook now covers 7 EU funds implemented in partnership with Member States ("shared management"). Moreover, it has been proposed to lighter controls for programmes with good track record, granting more confidence to national systems leading to the extension of the "single audit" principle, to avoid duplication of payments.

The new reform will combine the stability in investment planning with the proper level of budgetary flexibility to manage unforeseen events. A mid-term review will determine if changes in the programmes are needed for the last two years of the funding period, based on emerging priorities, performance of the programmes and the most recent Country-Specific Recommendations.
Within certain limits, transfers of resources will be possible within programmes without the need for a formal Commission approval. Country-Specific Recommendations expressed in the context of the European Semester will be considered twice over the budgetary period: in the beginning, for the design of Cohesion Policy programmes, and during the mid-term review. To promote a further job creation, new "enabling" conditions will help to make investments more conceivable, obviously with a monitoring in the first period.

The Asylum and Migration Fund will simplify the local migrant integration strategies supported by EU resources; the Asylum and Migration Fund will focus on migrants' short-term needs upon arrival while Cohesion Policy will support their social and professional integration.

Regarding the Interreg Programme, there will be promoted the elimination of cross border obstacles and will support interregional innovation projects. Interregional and cross-border cooperation will be facilitated by the fact that a region may use parts of its own allocation to fund projects anywhere in Europe jointly with other regions. The new generation of *Interreg* programmes will help Member States overtake cross-border obstacles and develop joint services. The Commission has also approved a new instrument (*the European Cross-Border Mechanism*) for border regions and Member States intended to harmonise their legal frameworks.

All programmes will still have a performance framework with quantifiable targets, which will be reviewed each year, in the form of a policy dialogue between programme authorities and the Commission. Moreover, there will be also assured a mid-term assessment. For transparency reasons, Member States will have to report all implementation data every two months also on the Cohesion Open Data Platform.
On a voluntary basis, Member States will be able to transfer a part of their Cohesion Policy resources to the new, centrally managed *InvestEU fund*, to access the guarantee provided by the EU budget. Combining grants and financial instruments it will be easier to attract investors.

For a Europe ever closer to citizens, more emphasis is put on the need to better communicate the positive results of Cohesion Policy. Member States and regions have reinforced requirements in terms of communication, such as the organisation of events for the opening of big EU-funded projects and the development of social media outreach plans.[3]

[3] Source: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/2021_2027/

In conclusion, since the early 1990s, cohesion policy has been one of the key policies of the European Union. Its resources have increased from around 160 billion euros at the outset to the current 352 billion euros.

Most of the interventions focused on the development and structural adjustment of the Convergence regions determined at NUTS-2 level and defined as regions with a per capita GDP less than 75% of the European average. In the period 2007-2013, the Convergence regions received € 199 billion in funding or 57.5% of the 346.5 billion spent by the Union through the Structural Funds.

1.3 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)

The ESIF funds were introduced in 2014 by the new 2014-2020 Reform presented by the European Union. These are the embodiment of all the previous funds and investments made for MSs by the EU, starting from 1988 Reform until now. Thanks to the development of these new resources, the objectives and division of the EU politics were made clearer and Regions started to see some enhancements.

In the figure below, we can denote the allocation of the funds for the 2014-2020 period.

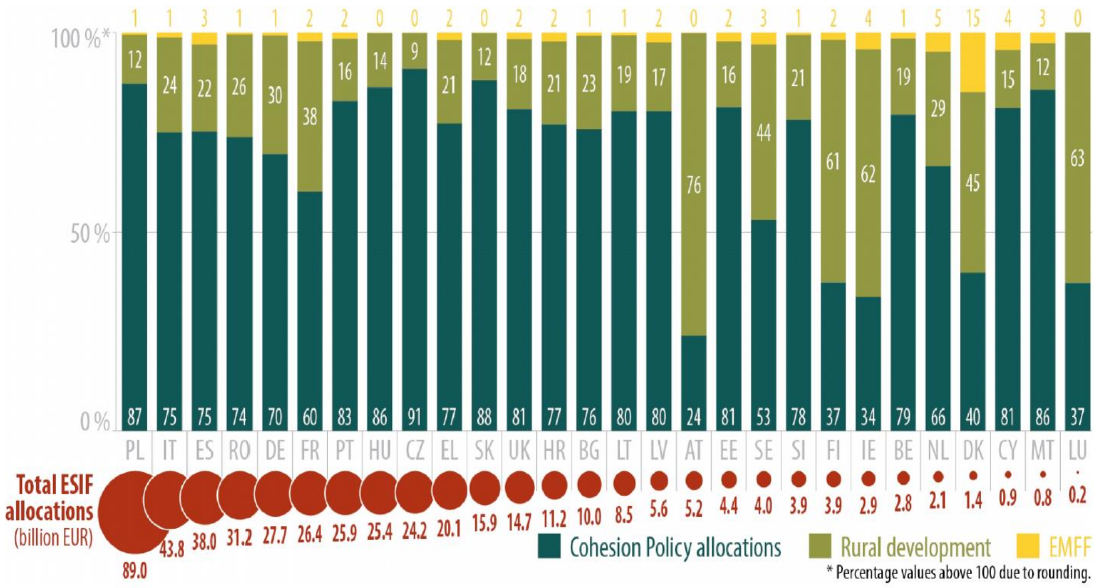


Figure 8.ESIF Allocation 2014-2020 in €, billion. (source: European Commission)

The main objective of all these funds is to invest in job creation and in a sustainable and healthy European economy and environment. The funds mostly focus on 5 areas, which are research and innovation improvement, digital technologies development, support to the low-carbon economy, sustainable management of natural resources, care of small businesses. All these funds are managed by the EU countries themselves, through a series of *partnership agreements*. Each country prepares an agreement, in association with the European Commission, organizing how the funds will be used during the current funding period, in this case, 2014-2020.

The partnership agreements lead to a series of investment programmes directing the funding to the different regions and projects in policy areas concerned.

The five funds related to the ESIF are five: European regional development fund (ERDF), European social fund (ESF), Cohesion fund (CF), European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD) and European maritime and fisheries fund (EMFF).
The rules governing the individual cohesion policy funds are contained in Regulations no. 1301/2013 concerning the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), n. 1304/2013 concerning the European Social Fund (ESF) and n. 1300/2013 on the Cohesion Fund, as well as in Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 laying down specific provisions for the Cohesion Fund. For the Territorial cooperation, Agricultural (EAFRD) and Fisheries (EMFF) fund it is making reference to the Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 amending Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006.

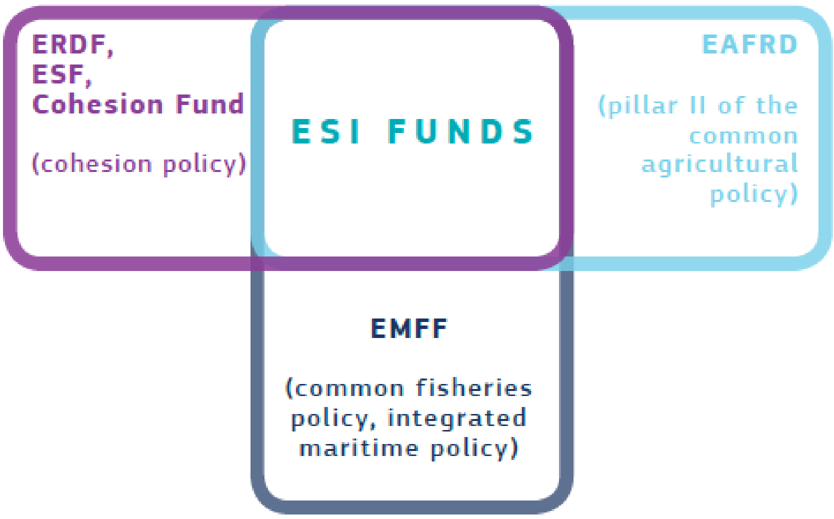


Figure 9. The European Structural Investment Funds (Source: "European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: Official texts and commentaries", European Commission)

1.3.1 The European regional development fund (ERDF)

The main focus of the ERDF is to strengthen the economic and social Cohesion throughout the European Union, trying to improve the conditions of less developed Regions. The funds concentrated on four priority areas also called the "thematic concentrations", these are:

- Innovation and research;
- The digital agenda;
- Support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);
- The low-carbon economy.*[3]

The ERDF resources are allocated depending on the category and the economic-social condition of the Region in which funds are administered.

In more developed regions, at least 80 % of funds must focus on at least two of these priorities;

In transition regions, this focus is for 60 % of the funds and in less developed regions the percentage is 50%.

Moreover, a justified amount of resources must be channelled towards low carbon economy projects and programmes. For more developed regions, this amount to the 20%, for transition regions to the 15% and to less developed regions to the 12%.

Another important programme financed by the ERDF is the *European Territorial Cooperation*; under which at least 80 % of funds will be concentrated on the priority areas above mentioned.*[3]

The ERDF also gives particular attention to specific territorial characteristics. ERDF funds are focalized on reducing economic, environmental and social problems in urban areas, with a special focus on sustainable urban development. At least 5 % of the ERDF resources are set aside for this field, through “integrated actions” managed by cities.

Areas that are naturally disadvantaged from a geographical view benefit, obviously, from special treatment. Lastly, the furthest areas also benefit from specific assistance from the ERDF to address possible disadvantages due to their remoteness.

Deep inside the ERDF funds:

The priorities of these funds are concentrated on research, ICT, SMEs and the low-carbon-economy, as said before.

1. Aim and Investment priorities:

The Article 3 of ERDF Regulations supports the ERDF trough the definition of activities that may be covered by these funds. Moreover, also Article 5 is important, since it lists the priorities linked to the 11 thematic objectives of the 2014-2020 Reform.

2. “Thematic concentration”

The Article 4 focusses on spreading the funding relative to the level of development of each region. This is possible thanks to the definition of minimum financial allocations to specific thematic objectives regarding the allocation of resources.

The compensation, by derogation, is permitted in these three categories of Regions, if the overall amounts at the national level are reliable to the minimum requirements.

3. Particular territorial features

In the ERDF programme there is also a section which is destinated to organizing the treatment of particular territorial features such as urban development, naturally or demographic less developed areas, northernmost and outermost regions also with very low population density. What is important to evidence is that European Commission dedicates at least 5 % of ERDF resources (at the national level) to integrated actions for sustainable urban development.[4]

1.3.2 The European social fund (ESF)

The ESF is the procedure through which the UE support jobs, trying to ease people's job research, maintaining as a guide principle "fairer job opportunities for all EU citizens". The driving force of the ES funds are the investments in *human capital* (workers, young people and all those seeking a job). Trough ESF 10-billion-euro yearly investment, there is an enhancement of job chances for a lot of Europeans, in particular those who find it difficult to get work.
The European Union future objective is to create more and better jobs, promoting a more socially inclusive society. These goals are at the core of the Europe 2020 strategy for generating smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the EU.

The European Commission and EU countries in partnership set the ESF's priorities and decide how the resources must be spent. One of the most important priorities is boosting the flexibility of workers with new skills, and firms with new ways of working. Moreover, there are also considered other significances such as the access to employment, following younger trough the transaction from school to work or intensifying the training of less-skilled jobseekers to improve their job prospects.
Another priority focuses on helping people from disadvantaged groups to get jobs. This is part of enhancing 'social inclusion', in order to help underprivileged people returning to work quickly if they lose their jobs.
The ESF is promoting a lot of local, regional and national employment-related projects throughout Europe.
There is a huge assortment of projects related to nature, size and focus of them, moreover they address a wide variety of target groups. There are plans dedicated to the

[4] "European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: Official texts and commentaries, European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO DG), European Union, 2015"

education systems, teachers and schoolchildren; to young and older jobseekers; and to potential entrepreneurs. The key of the ESF projects are, as demonstrated before, people.[5]

1.3.3 The Cohesion funds (CF)

The Cohesion Fund are designed for Member States, which Gross National Income (GNI) per inhabitant does not overcome the 90 % of the EU average. The Cohesion Fund is important for the UE, since it focus on the reduction of economic and social disparities and on the promotion of sustainable development.

It is now subject to the same rules of programming, management and monitoring as the ERDF and ESF though the Common Provisions Regulation.

For the 2014-2020 period, the Cohesion Fund concerns Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The Cohesion Fund allocates a total of € 63.4 billion to activities dedicated principally to the TEN-T and the Environment.

In the case of an inadequate use of the Cohesion funds or the excessive public deficit of the Member States the financial assistance can be suspended by a qualified majority Council decision.[6]

1.3.4 European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD)

The EAFRD are related to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and they complete the CAP pillar dedicated to the system of direct payments to farmers and measures to manage agricultural markets. These are connected to the Rural policies which are essentials for the Agricultural field.

The EU's rural development policy is supported by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), which has a budget of €100 billion from 2014-2020

[5] https://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp

[6] https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/cohesion-fund/

There are 118 different rural development programmes (RDP) in the 28 Member States for this period, with 20 single national programmes and 8 Member States opting to have two or more (regional) programmes.
The UE Member States create their rural development programmes based on their needs, covering also some UE priorities such as enhancing viability and promote food chain organizations.

These priorities are subdivided in “focus areas”. As example we may take "reducing greenhouse gas and ammonia emissions from agriculture" and "fostering carbon conservation and sequestration in agriculture and forestry" related to the third priority. Obviously, in order to respect the 7 years objectives, it is essential to create annual targets in order to verify the status of jobs. Through this they can understand which measures to use in order to achieve the goals and how to use resources.
At least 30% of funding for each RDP must be dedicated to measures relevant for the environment and climate change and at least 5% to LEADER.
These funds operate, also, in relation to partnership agreements, which requires a coordination of all UE structural investment funding. Each of the measure are measured and evaluated from the UE Commission and Parliament in order to be approved. [7]

1.3.5 European maritime and fisheries fund (EMFF)

The fund helps the fisheries field to transit into sustainable fishing techniques, moreover it supports coastal communities, in order to diversify their economies and financial projects. Furthermore, it helps to support sustainable aquaculture factories.

[7] https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020_en

The graph below indicates the financial allocation per member state:

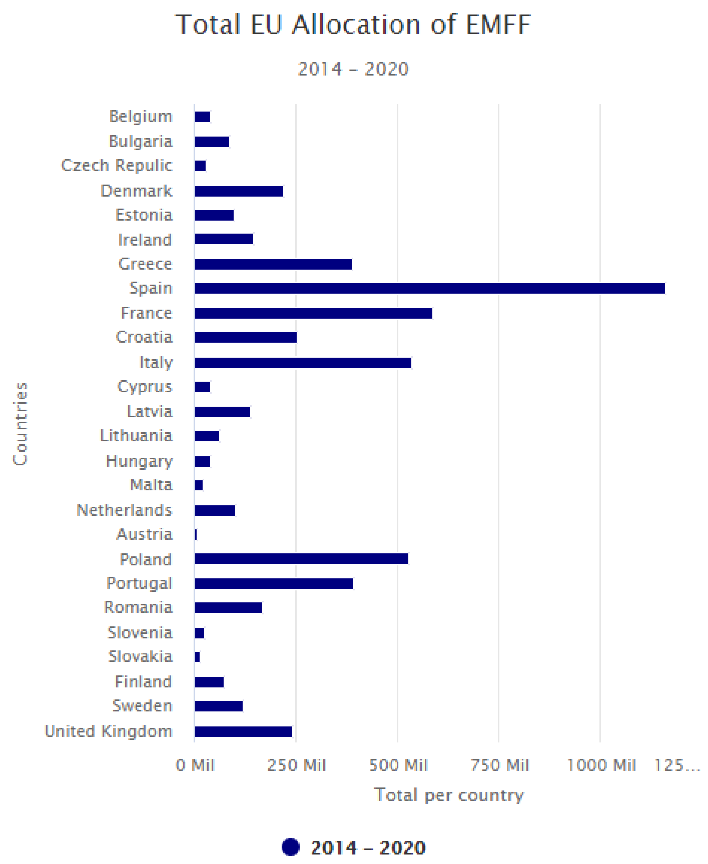


Figure 10. EMFF financial allocation per member state (source:https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/emff/)

The Fund is used to co-finance projects together with national funding. The base for allocation is the share of the total Fund budget based on the size of each MS's fishing industry. After that there is designed an operational programme sized for each country. Once it is approved each Member State has to implement it.[8]

After this ESIF overview, I would like to focalize on CAP and CPR, in order to understand better, the policies and the funds related to it.

[8] https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/emff/

Focus 1: The Common Provision Regulation (CPR)

The CPR are the provisions approved by the European Commission, which indicates all the rules, investment strategies, indications, eligibility criteria, conditionalities, way of implementation and objectives of each of the ERDF funds. They have been also set out during the past Reforms, but they are not exclusively related to ERDF funds, since they have been created with the last regulation. In appendix 1, there is the complete version of the funds. (?)

Focus 2: Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

The CAP is dedicated to the Agricultural sector, it provides income support through direct payments and tries to ensure income stability to farmers and first sector workers. Moreover, it provides market measures to deal with difficult situations, creating a fund for rural development measures supported by national and regional programmes to address the specific needs and challenges facing rural areas.

"The level of support for EU farmers from the overall EU budget reflects the many variables involved in ensuring continued access to high quality food, which includes functions such as income support to farmers, climate change action, and maintaining vibrant rural communities."

The CAP is financed through some funds as part of the EU budget such as the European agricultural fund (EAGF)and the European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD) finances rural development.

Furthermore, CAP identifies the conditions that will let farmers complete their functions in the society at the very best.

CAP deals, also, with food certifications and quality, and rural community development within the countryside, comprehending themes such as environmentally sustainable farming and biodiversity safeguarding.[9]

[9] https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cap-glance_en#thecapinpractice

Focus 3: Partnership Agreements:

These are agreements between individual EU countries and the European Commission. (e.g. European Union – Italy). The scope is to set out the national authorities' projects on how to use Funds from the European structural and investment funding between 2014 and 2020, and successively of the 2021-2027 Funds.[10]

[10] https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/partnership-agreements-european-structural-and-investment-funds_en

Chapter 2: The Cohesion policy and the ESIF funds in Italy

2.1 About Italy and the Cohesion Policy: an introspective analysis

Cohesion policy in Italy is based on the Italian Constitution (art. 119, fifth paragraph); the second paragraph of Article 3 and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Article 174), which promotes "special interventions" to encourage "harmonious development" (Treaty) and "removing economic and social imbalance" (Constitution).
In the figure below we can see how the ESIF funds were distributed in Italy and the rest of Europe from the beginning until now:

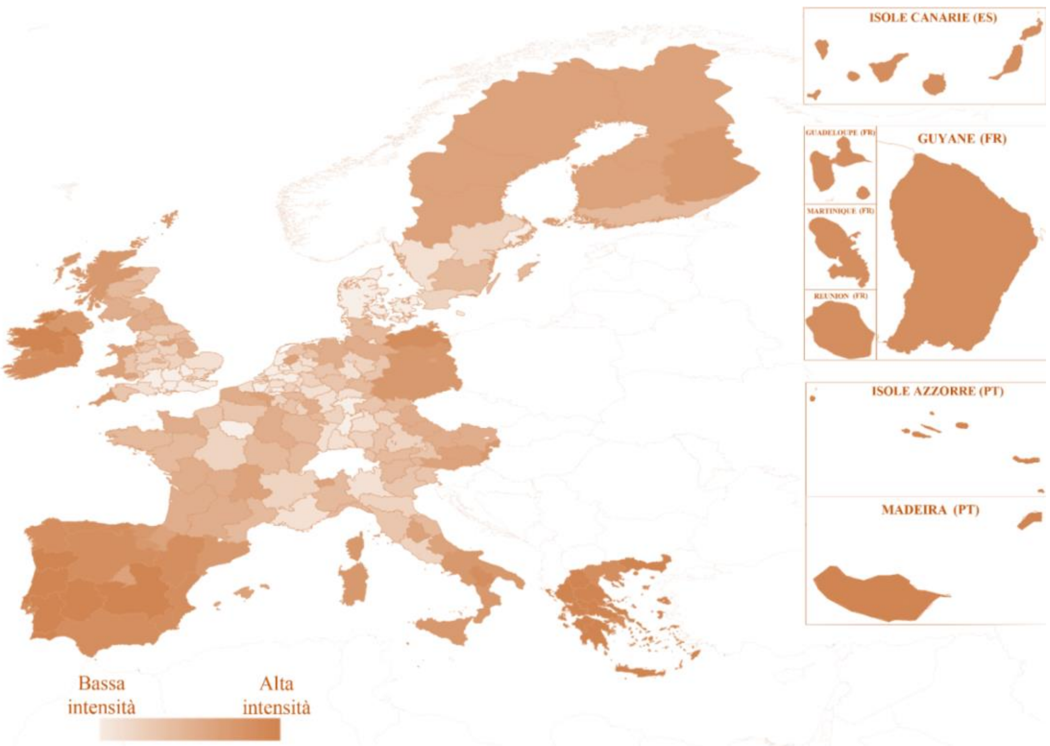


Figure 11. How the ESIF funds were distributed 1994-2010. (Source: "Trent'anni di politiche Ue per le aree depresse: l'impatto della coesione in Italia e in Europa", Senato della Repubblica).

We can denote a particular concentration in the South of Italy, in fact our Peninsula suffer from a worse economic and social situation in the "Mezzogiorno".
The gap in per capita GDP between Northern and Southern Italy amounts to more than 40%.
As example we can denote that, in the three-year period from 2013 to 2015, the

capital expenditure in the South amounted to 14,4 billion euros per year, of which 9.4 billion (65%) from the Structural Funds, co-financing and resources for under-utilised areas, as a result, the additional capital expenditure was just in the order of 4.8% of the total of public spending in the area. It is clear that arises a difficult condition, which influences negatively the strengthening of the growth and the improvement of services, that cannot be enhanced using only the 4.8%.

Various studies show the existence of delays to the detriment of the South in quantity and, especially, in the quality of the supply of almost all essential services: justice, health, education, security, local public services (Bank of Italy, 2009). These delays are rooted in the past but depend on the current administrative capacities and the social and institutional context in which the policies of the operate. This demonstrated the need for all public expenditure, and a huge amount of ESIF funds to sustain the situation.

Italy is a particularly interesting from the Cohesion policy point of view because of the great chasm between North and South.

During the years, many regions of the Mezzogiorno have been included in the Convergence Objective, dedicated to less developed Regions: Abruzzo (until 1996), Molise and Sardinia (until 2006), Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicily, which are included here also nowadays. In average these regions have had, at the per capita level, more than double the resources from the ESIF in relation to the rest of the country, which have partially protected these Regions, through a substantial reduction in transfers from the central government. In figure 11 we can see the socio-economic output of the recent funds' allocation.

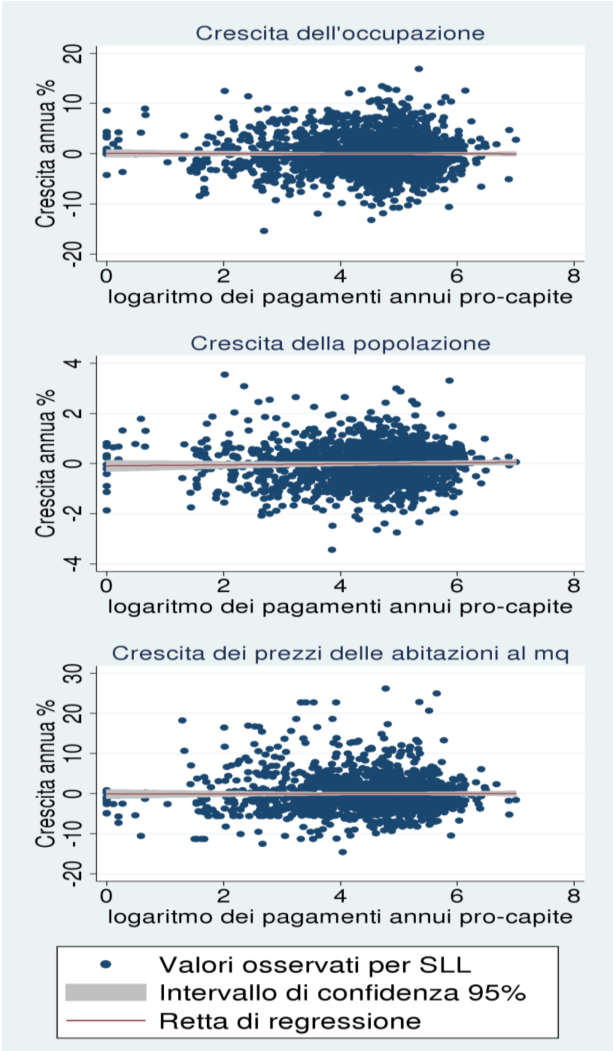


Figure 12. Outcome of 2007-2014 Funds allocation (Source: L' impatto della politica di coesione in Europa e in Italia, Senato della Repubblica).

It can be observed an increase in the values given, after the fund's injection, demonstrated by the high regression %.

The previous graphs are confirmed by the subsequent affirmations, which are referred to the period between 2007-2014. With the implementation of cohesion policies in the Mezzogiorno, with an amount of 38 billion euro (compared to only 15 in the Centre-North), it can be stated that the funds injection was huge and influenced a lot of different areas. A large part of the funds was dedicated to the implementation of Community programmes; only a tenth is derived from national projects financed by the Fund for development and cohesion or by the interventions included in the in the Action and Cohesion Plan. In Figure 11 we can denote the intensity of Funds' transfer, that had mainly changed in the levels of GDP per inhabitant, which affected the assignment of the resources at regional level.

Figure 13. Intensity of Cohesion Policies 2007-2013, data in euro. (Source: "Trent'anni di politiche Ue per le aree depresse: l'impatto della coesione in Italia e in Europa", Senato della Repubblica).

It is clear that the maximum intensity of the intervention was reached in Calabria and the minimum in Abruzzo.

Analysing the projects according to the ten priorities of intervention defined by the National Strategic Reference Framework, it emerges as about 30% of the expenditure in the South related to mobility, energy and the environment. 25% were instead aimed at human capital, research and development.

In Italy, the Politician have often focused more on the effective capacity of the Structural Funds, than on the effect on the economic performance of the territories in which to intervene. Several investigations have shown the impact of significant share of the Structural Funds in GDP per capita in the various European Regions, showing that the results for the Italian regions are generally less positive. The consequences averages on economic dynamics are modest and, moreover, the result could be a transitory effect: an example is the case of the Abruzzo, whose exit from Objective 1 has resulted in, over time, a negative effect on GDP. Even in the most favourable cases, when the European countries seem to have had positive effects on local economies, the results have focused on the operations and have not triggered a self-sufficient growth path.

Furthermore, the Italian condition highlights that, the quantity of the resources used, on their own, with difficulty may be considered a sufficient requirement for the success of growth policies. Other factors to consider include the modest results of policies of Cohesion in Italy and the institutional quality at the territorial level. From the shortcomings of the context institutional (as it is experienced most of all in the South) are the results of the deficits presented at the planning stage; the low speed of execution, connected to the bureaucrat's slowness. All of this emphasized by the high degree of fragmentation in the objectives and interventions of the European Union in the Italian territory.

The analysis can be deepen examining the *SPI*, which is an index that indicates the social progress and is based on the aggregation of 50 indicators that measure three dimensions of social progress. Moreover, it is important to consider the *Cumulative index*, which is the sum of the Convergence and the Competitiveness of a UE Region. These indexes are mostly based on essential human needs and the minimum guaranteed to obtain a base level of well-being.

Table 2. European Social Progress Index 2016 (Source: Eurostat).

Paesi	Aree di intervento	SPI	Bisogni essenziali	Basi del benessere	Opportunità
UE a 28	Comp.	71,5	82,4	65,0	67,7
	Conv.	55,8	63,6	55,8	48,7
	Totale	66,5	76,4	62,1	61,6
Area Euro 18	Comp.	70,6	82,6	64,6	65,5
	Conv.	57,9	69,5	57,7	47,7
	Totale	68,3	80,2	63,3	62,3
Area Non Euro	Comp.	73,8	81,9	66,3	73,7
	Conv.	54,6	60,5	54,6	49,1
	Totale	63,6	70,6	60,1	60,7
UE a 15	Comp.	72,0	83,2	65,3	68,2
	Conv.	59,0	71,6	57,7	48,9
	Totale	70,3	81,7	64,4	65,7
Austria	Comp.	73,0	86,5	65,1	68,3
Belgio	Comp.	71,3	82,1	63,6	68,9
Germania	Comp.	72,5	85,0	66,4	66,9
Danimarca	Comp.	81,2	87,4	72,9	83,8
Grecia	Comp.	56,2	70,6	52,8	46,5
	Conv.	56,6	69,7	54,7	46,6
	Totale	56,5	69,9	54,2	46,6
Spagna	Comp.	67,8	79,8	63,2	61,2
	Conv.	64,8	79,8	58,3	57,4
	Totale	67,6	79,8	62,8	61,0
Finlandia	Comp.	80,7	84,6	73,6	84,1
Francia	Comp.	69,2	82,2	63,9	62,4
	Conv.	62,9	74,0	70,0	46,6
	Totale	67,6	80,1	65,4	58,5
Irlanda	Comp.	72,3	78,7	71,7	66,9
Italia	Comp.	61,0	76,9	56,2	51,4
	Conv.	51,8	64,2	51,8	40,8
	Totale	58,4	73,4	55,0	48,5
Lussemb.	Comp.	73,4	82,2	67,0	71,4
Olanda	Comp.	79,5	89,7	70,0	79,6
Portogallo	Comp.	61,5	74,1	57,6	53,8
	Conv.	58,6	73,2	52,4	51,5
	Totale	59,6	73,5	54,1	52,3
Svezia	Comp.	79,6	89,1	68,8	81,6
Regno Unito	Comp.	73,1	81,8	66,0	72,1
	Conv.	72,6	82,9	65,3	70,1
	Totale	73,1	81,9	65,9	71,9

Paesi	Aree di intervento	SPI	Bisogni essenziali	Basi del benessere	Opportunità
Nuovi Paesi UE (13)	Comp.	61,0	66,4	58,5	58,2
	Conv.	54,5	60,3	55,0	46,6
	Totale	55,3	61,0	55,4	49,8
Area Euro (dei NMS)	Comp.	63,8	71,8	61,3	58,8
	Conv.	59,0	66,4	60,4	51,0
	Totale	60,6	68,2	60,7	53,6
Cipro	Comp.	59,0	69,4	52,5	55,7
Estonia	Conv.	64,9	65,6	67,1	62,0
Lettonia	Conv.	54,6	55,0	55,6	53,3
Slovacchia	Comp.	62,6	68,3	63,4	56,3
	Conv.	56,3	66,8	58,5	44,9
	Totale	57,9	67,1	59,7	47,7
Slovenia	Comp.	69,9	77,6	68,0	64,5
	Conv.	65,8	77,4	64,4	56,3
	Totale	67,9	77,5	66,2	60,4
Area Non Euro (dei NMS)	Comp.	58,8	62,4	56,4	57,7
	Conv.	53,8	59,5	54,2	48,3
	Totale	54,3	59,7	54,4	49,1
Bulgaria	Conv.	44,5	46,9	48,9	38,3
Repubblica Ceca	Comp.	65,9	73,9	60,3	63,8
	Conv.	60,5	72,6	59,1	50,9
	Totale	61,2	72,8	59,2	52,5
Croazia	Conv.	54,9	68,8	56,5	41,1
Ungheria	Comp.	59,4	65,3	57,2	55,9
	Conv.	55,1	64,5	53,2	48,3
	Totale	55,7	64,6	53,8	49,4
Lituania	Conv.	59,0	58,2	61,3	57,6
Polonia	Comp.	57,9	58,4	57,1	58,0
	Conv.	57,1	60,8	57,4	53,2
	Totale	57,1	60,7	57,4	53,5
Romania	Comp.	52,0	52,0	50,9	53,2
	Conv.	46,1	47,3	46,3	44,8
	Totale	46,8	47,8	46,9	45,8

The Table shows us the almost actual condition of EU Regions, with greener areas considered the richest (Competitiveness) and the orange areas considered the most in need (Convergence).

Based on the last years observations, the SPI of the less developed or Convergence Regions was about 55.8 (on a scale between 0 and 100), while the richest Regions achieved a value of about 71.5. If we compare the data, we can see that the delay of the Convergence regions is more sensitive to essential needs (63.6 against 82.4) and in opportunities (48.7 versus 67.7).

The Regions with an SPI of 61, are located below of the EU average due to a deficit encountered in particular with the basic needs (76.9 against an average of

of 83.2 in the EU-15) and a considerable distance European standard of opportunity (51.4 against 68,2 in the EU-15).

The situation in the poorer regions is more difficult, because with an SPI equal to 51.8 they are far below the UE average.

How about Italy? How is it positioned?

Italy is in a difficult position principally because of the lack of opportunities in our countries evidenced with only a 40.8 against a UE richest Regions average of 48.9. Moreover, the Italian cumulative index is 58.4 compared to 70.3 in the UE 15 wealthiest Countries.

The Italian economic dualism between South and Center-North leads to a systematically higher score for the Italian regions of the Competitiveness (Centre-North) compared to the southern ones of the Convergence. The social development gap within the Italian economy is born first and foremost due to the different degree of satisfaction of the essential needs (76.9 in the Competitiveness regions) and compared to 64.2 in the convergence regions).

As example we can compare the Veneto Region and Campania Region indexes.

Table 3. SPI Veneto Region (Source: European Commission)

EU Regional Social Progress Index	59.93	200/272	Veneto
GDP PPP per capita (2011)	€29,600	57/272	

Basic Human Needs Score 77.85 Rank 161

Nutrition and Basic Medical Care Score 88.76 Rank 33
- Mortality rate before age 65
- Infant mortality
- Unmet medical needs
- Insufficient food

Water and Sanitation Score 89.45 Rank 125
- Satisfaction with water quality
- Lack of toilet in dwelling
- Uncollected sewage
- Sewage treatment

Shelter Score 59.92 Rank 193
- Burdensome cost of housing
- Satisfaction with housing
- Overcrowding
- Lack of adequate heating

Personal Safety Score 75.24 Rank 180
- Homicide rate
- Safety at night
- Traffic deaths

Foundations of Wellbeing Score 54.59 Rank 230

Access to Basic Knowledge Score 63.16 Rank 206
- Secondary enrolment rate
- Lower secondary completion only
- Early school leaving

Access to Information and Communications Score 58.68 Rank 173
- Internet at home
- Broadband at home
- Online interaction with public authorities

Health and Wellness Score 74.82 Rank 89
- Life expectancy
- General health status
- Premature deaths from cancer
- Premature deaths from heart disease
- Unmet dental needs
- Satisfaction with air quality

Environmental Quality Score 28.05 Rank 261
- Air pollution-pm10
- Air pollution-pm2.5
- Air pollution-ozone
- Pollution, grime or other environmental problems
- Protected land (Natura 2000)

Opportunity Score 49.17 Rank 226

Personal Rights Score 39.30 Rank 184
- Trust in the political system
- Trust in the legal system
- Trust in the police
- Quality and accountability of government services

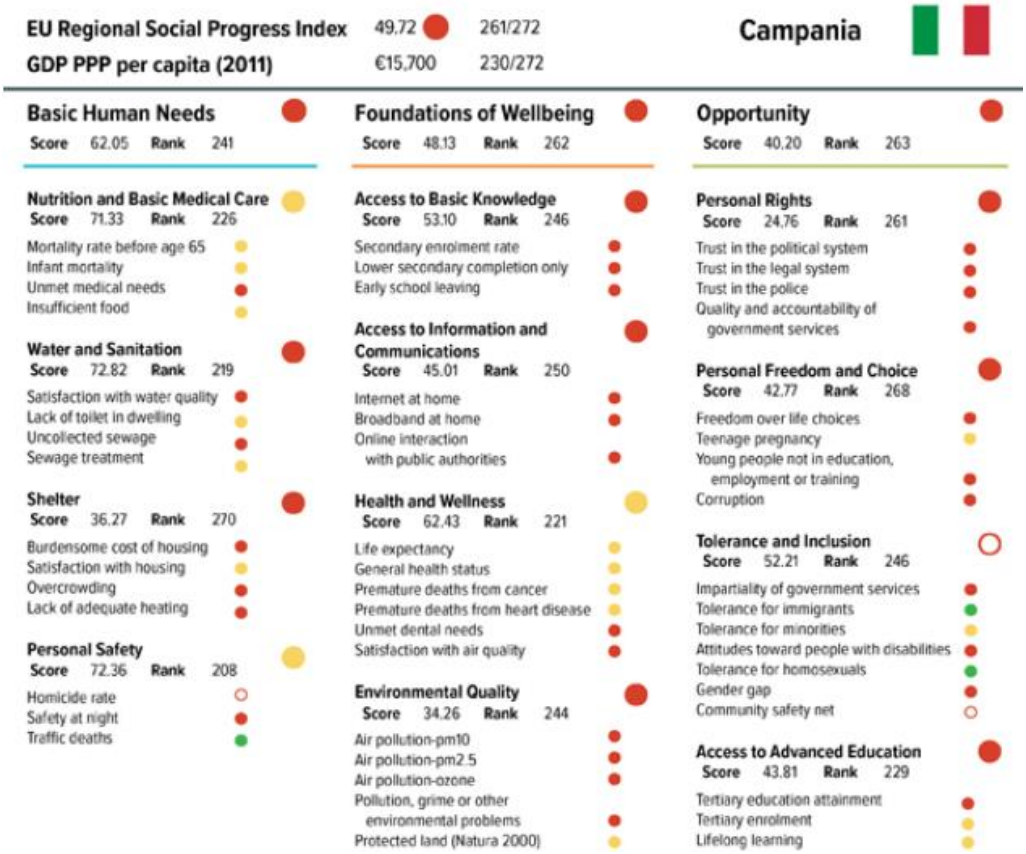
Personal Freedom and Choice Score 62.23 Rank 206
- Freedom over life choices
- Teenage pregnancy
- Young people not in education, employment or training
- Corruption

Tolerance and Inclusion Score 60.51 Rank 200
- Impartiality of government services
- Tolerance for immigrants
- Tolerance for minorities
- Attitudes toward people with disabilities
- Tolerance for homosexuals
- Gender gap
- Community safety net

Access to Advanced Education Score 37.37 Rank 253
- Tertiary education attainment
- Tertiary enrolment
- Lifelong learning

Looking at the table we can denote that the "Basic human need" section with its 77.8 points, is quite high and reflects the UE Competitiveness standard. Moreover, the "Foundation of wellbeing" (59.59 points) and the "Opportunity" (47.17) section represents also the standards of richest UE Regions. Comparing also the other general standards we ca denote that Veneto is not between the most SPI wealthiest Regions, but it results at the 57th out 200 positions, if we consider only its GDP per capita. This means that the Regions is quite rich and full of resources, but it may lack of some essential instruments to reach the top Regions.

Table 4. SPI Campania Region (Source: European Commission)



If we consider Campania as our second comparison component, we can denote that the SPI rank is very low, and it is 61 position below Veneto. In general, the "Basic human need", "Foundation of wellbeing" and "Opportunity" sections are quite low and below the EU Competitiveness standards. These numbers demonstrate clearly the distance between North and South, mainly caused by lack of resources, organization, control and instruments by the Mezzogiorno.

Concluding this brief analysis, we can state that Italy sees its distance from the core grow of Europe from the beginning of the European Union. It is always a matter of the North-South boundary line separating the places of opportunity from those of exclusion: the Mezzogiorno remains, as stated before, the largest "less developed area" of the continent.

The main causes remain a weak national growth and widening gaps between Italian Regions, bringing the regionalism to its worst.

For sure the 2008 crisis has brought out the limits of the model of economic policy of the European Union, which was hampered to achieve its original objectives, bringing also up a difficulty in distributing correctly the Funds and influencing also the Italian situation.

In general, the Italian situation would be difficult to enhance, because there would be the need of a total regionalism eradication.

2.2 The 2014-2020 Funds and the Cohesion Policy: The effects on our Peninsula.

European Union, for the 2014-2020 period has destinated to Italy around 50 operational programmes relatives to the EU Cohesion Policy.

The Partnership Agreement has been adopted in 2014, as well as the operational programmes at national and regional levels.

How much will the European Union invest in Italy from 2014 to 2020?

For the period 2014-2020, Italy has been assigned around 32.2 billion euro in total for the Cohesion Policy funding:

- € 22.2 billion for less developed regions (Campania, Puglia, Basilicata, Calabria and Sicilia)
- € 1.3 billion for transition regions (Sardegna,Abruzzo and Molise)
- € 7.6 billion for more developed regions (Valle d'Aosta, Piemonte, Lombardia, Liguria, Veneto,Provincia di Bolzano, Provincia di Trento, Friuli Venezia-Giulia, Emilia Romagna, Toscana, Marche, Umbria, and Lazio)
- € 1.1 billion for European Territorial Cooperation
- € 567.5 million for the Youth Employment Initiative

Of this, the ESF in Italy has been estimated to be 10.5 billion euro, because of the specific challenges the country needs to address in the areas covered by the ESF.

Figure 14. Italy and the eligibility of ESIF funds in 2012-2020 (Source: Cohesion Policy and Italy, an official document of European Union)

The Figure upon indicates the eligibility for Italian peninsula regarding the ESIF funds of 2014-2020 Reform. Italy is hence divided:

- *Less developed regions*, with a GDP < 75 % of EU-28 average (dark orange);
- *Transition regions*, with a GDP between >= 75 % and < 90 % of EU-28 average (orange);
- *More developed regions*, with a GDP >= 90 % of EU-28 average (lighter orange).

The Eligibility of the Regions for the Funds administration is conformed to the Decision no. 2014/99/EU of 18 February 2014, with which the EU Commission identified the eligible areas to receive financing from the Structural Funds.

Which are the Priorities that UE has set out for Italy?

It is obviously necessary to create innovation-friendly business environment; contemplating the use of high-performance and cost-effective managerial infrastructures; the expansion of labour market contribution, and the promotion of social inclusion, establishing the value, effectiveness and efficiency of PA.

Regarding the outcomes of the last period funds (2007-2013) we can denote that there was a total allocation of almost 28 billion euro, granting more than 47 000 jobs creations, the support to more than 26 000 SMEs; a huge coverage of the Broadband technology and the renovation of wastewater and railroad.
Throughout this matching period, the ESF co-funded more than 500 000 projects, including more than 6.6 million members, of which more than 2 million between 15–24 years old and nearly 0.5 million beyond 55 years. Nevertheless, the funds covered a broad range of areas.

As it is said before, the Community regulatory framework defining the objectives and financial instruments of intervention for the new 2014-2020 programming cycle is defined by Council Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of 17 December 2013.

During 2016, the Commission reviewed the total allocations of the Member States for the Funds eligibility Regions, taking also note of the fact that the Member States benefitting from the Investment for growth and employment objective regarding the Cohesion policy, are also related to the Commission's proposal for a multiannual financial framework for the period 2014-2020. Moreover, the Commission, in order to distribute evenly the Funds, has also take into account the technical adjustment of the multiannual financial framework related to the evolution of the Gross National Income (GNI). The total net effect of these adjustments is to increase the overall Community resources for economic, social and territorial cohesion of 4 billion euro.
Regarding the Italian case a large part of the resources, more than €317 billion (instead of the €313 billion previously foreseen) is allocated to the 'Investment for growth and jobs' objective, which covers the following three categories of regions:

1. Less developed regions: for Italy, Basilicata, Campania, Calabria, Sicily and Puglia;
2. Transition regions: for Italy, Abruzzo, Molise and Sardinia;
3. More developed regions: for Italy, central and northern regions not covered by the new "Objective for Transition Regions".

The remaining resources are allocated to the Objective of transnational, inter-regional and regional cooperation.

The Committee also welcomes the Commission's proposal for a Directive on cross-border cooperation (€8.9 billion) and the Youth Employment Initiative (€4 billion).

The resources made available by the European Union are, it should be remembered, additional, never substitutive, compared with the normal sources of funding for the different policies of each Member State, on the basis of the principle of additionality.

The following table shows the distribution of Community resources between the Member States, at current prices; including the effects annual indexation of 2%, in accordance with Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1941 of 3 November 2016:

Table 5. Distribution of Community Resources (Source: Eurostat)

(MILIONI DI EURO -prezzi correnti)

	Fondo di coesione	Regioni meno sviluppate	Regioni in transizione	Regioni più sviluppate	Regioni ultra periferiche o scarsamente popolate (*)	Cooperazione territoriale	TOTALE
Belgio	-	-	1.039,7	949,6	-	263,1	**2.252,4**
Bulgaria	2.278,3	5.089,3	-	-	-	165,6	**7.533,2**
Rep. Ceca	6.143,9	14.824,0	-	546,7	-	339,6	**21.854,2**
Danimarca	-	-	87,3	332,3	-	140,1	**559,7**
Germania	-	-	9.771,5	8.498,0	-	965,4	**19.234,9**
Estonia	1.061,5	2.437,7	-	-	-	55,4	**3.554,6**
Irlanda	-	-	-	955,3	-	168,8	**1.124,1**
Grecia	3.265,7	7.345,7	2.922,1	2.511,0	-	231,7	**16.276,2**
Spagna	-	2.155,6	14.927,9	11.562,6	484,1	643,0	**29.773,2**
Francia	-	3.434,3	4.253,3	6.322,0	443,3	1.115,0	**15.567,9**
Croazia	2.509,8	5.837,5	-	-	-	146,1	**8.493,4**
Italia (**)	**-**	**23.382,8**	**1.506,2**	**7.874,9**	**-**	**1.136,7**	**33.900,7**
Cipro	294,9	-	-	432,3	-	32,8	**760,0**
Lettonia	1.349,4	3.039,8	-	-	-	93,6	**4.482,8**
Lituania	2.048,9	4.628,7	-	-	-	113,8	**6.791,4**
Lussemburgo	-	-	-	39,6	-	20,2	**59,8**
Ungheria	6.025,4	15.005,2	-	463,7	-	361,8	**21.856,1**
Malta	217,7	-	490,2	-	-	17,0	**724,9**
Paesi Bassi	-	-	-	1.020,6	-	389,7	**1.410,3**
Austria	-	-	72,3	906,0	-	257,3	**1.235,6**
Polonia	23.208,0	49.628,7	-	3.777,3	-	700,5	**77.314,5**
Portogallo	2.861,7	16.642,2	324,6	1.237,5	115,7	128,5	**21.310,2**
Romania	6.935,0	14.607,1	-	893,0	-	452,7	**22.887,8**
Slovenia	914,0	1.296,1	-	848,6	-	62,9	**3.121,6**
Slovacchia	4.168,3	9.130,3	-	328,7	-	223,4	**13.850,7**
Finlandia	-	-	-	1.004,9	305,3	161,4	**1.471,6**
Svezia	-	-	-	1.491,9	206,9	342,3	**2.041,1**
Regno Unito	-	2.641,0	2.590,6	5.594,6	-	865,6	**11.691,8**

It is denoted that Italy has quite funds beneficial, but it is not included into Cohesion Policy funds. But it is clear that the Italy is beneficiary of principally the Funds destinated to Territorial Cooperation and Regional benefits. This is related to the fact that Italy is a peculiarity in the European panorama. In fact, we have seen before that Italy is subdivided in all three regional steps delineated to enlarge Funds within the EU. It is relevant that the less developed Regions are destinated to a majority number of Funds: principally because there is the necessity of reforming the general system and institutions. The aim of these financial aids is to bring up the most overdue Regions, because, remembering one of the main goals of the European Union "the UE need harmonization". Comparing to the Regions present in the Table, it is important to say that Italy re-enter in the "EU 15", which are the richest and part of the founding UE Regions, but it is not the most brilliant, due to the North-South conflicts. It is also denotable the fact that Italy receives a pretty good amount of Funds for the Territorial Cooperation. This is for sure related to the fact that Italy is a Region, which borders with three different European Regions and for sure the fourth and not included in the European Union: Switzerland. This means that Italy is exposed to different migratory inflows and outflows, delineated by a general Territorial Cooperation line, strictly connected to the Italian government indications and laws, with the necsrrity to be harmonized with UE directives.

In Appendix 2 I will make an elaboration of United Kingdom and what it may happen if the "no deal" Brexit occur on 31st October 2019.

Returning on our Italian case, it can be certainly assured that, the ESIF are trying to be a community solution to the North-South problem. It is clear that Italy has the instruments to be one of the most powerful Nations of Europe, but it is not supported by the socio-economic situation of the Country.

2.3 The Italian Funds distribution in depth

Focusing on resources distribution it can be stated that the majority of European Funds derive from FESR and FSE, as we can see in Table 6.

Table 6. Community funds available for Italy in the period 2014-2020 (Source: Governo italiano, Ministero per la Coesione Territoriale)

Fondi	Importi in val. ass.	Incid. %
Fondi strutturali (Fesr e Fse)	31.131,0	71,80
Cooperazione territoriale	1.137,0	2,62
Feasr	10.430,0	24,06
Regioni più indigenti	659,0	1,52
Totale	43.357,0	100,00

It should be noted that the equivalent distribution of the Structural Funds and the ERDF alone follows in fact the thematic objectives dictated by the Common Provisions, with a different concentration sorted by Regions. In Table 7 it is represented the distribution upon citated.

Table 7. Distribution of Community resources by Thematic Objective and Fund. (Source: Governo italiano, Ministero per la Coesione Territoriale)

Obiettivo tematico	Fsr	Fse	Feasr	Totale
Ricerca, sviluppo tecnologico e innovazione (OT1)	3.191,0	0,0	500,0	3.691,0
Accesso alle tecnologie dell'informazione (OT2)	1.813,0	0,0	140,0	1.953,0
Competitività Pmi, settore agricolo e pesca e acquacoltura (OT3)	4.838,0	0,0	4.420,0	9.258,0
Transizione verso un'economia a basse emissioni di carbonio (OT4)	3.123,0	0,0	1.200,0	4.323,0
Adattamento al cambiamento climatico, prevenzione e gestione dei rischi (OT5)	847,1	0,0	1.850,0	2.697,1
Tutela dell'ambiente (OT6)	2.763,0	0,0	980,0	3.743,0
Trasporto sostenibile (OT7)	1.696,0	0,0	0,0	1.696,0
Occupazione sostenibile e mobilità lavoratori (OT8)	201,8	3.859,0	300,7	4.361,5
Inclusione sociale, lotta alla povertà e alle discriminazioni (OT9)	1.064,0	2.092,0	300,7	3.456,7
Istruzione, formazione, apprendimento permanente (OT10)	807,4	3.205,0	134,0	4.146,4
Pubblica amministrazione efficiente (OT11)	210,3	376,0	349,3	935,6
Assistenza tecnica	677,0	368,0	255,0	1.300,0
Totale	21.231,6	9.900,0	10.429,7	41.561,3

It can be denoted that ERDF devotes quite large shares of its total resources to Thematic objective 1 and 4, i.e. research, technological development and innovation, on the one hand, and the transition to a low-carbon economy, on the other, even if this objective is to some extent linked to OT 6, i.e. environmental protection in the broad sense.

On the other hand, the ESF is almost entirely used for the attainment of OT 8, 9 and 10, inherent to the traditional fields of intervention of this fund, which are employment and mobility of workers, education and training, as well as social inclusion and the fight against poverty.

If it is also considered the distributions in Italian regions, we already know that a clear concentration of resources tends to emerge in favour of the less developed regions consistent with the aim pursued by EU cohesion policy to reduce interregional imbalances within the Member States and with the strategy outlined in the Partnership Agreements.

It can be denoted that Thematic objective 3 (competitiveness of SMEs), the less developed regions have received funds for more than 3,650 million euros, because of the known backwardness of the productive activities located there. Furthermore, there are also made profitably allocations for the promotion of sustainable employment, especially in view of the sharp rise in the unemployment rate that has occurred in recent years due to the closure of those companies that have failed to cope with the serious international crisis or the contraction in domestic demand.
Fortunately, there have been also made high investments concerning the promotion of cultural heritage and tourism (more than 2,420 million euros for less developed regions). Moreover, there have been also allocated 2,700 million in favour of the labour factor, above all in order to reallocate it by sector after having submitted it to an adequate requalification activity, thanks to which it is possible to cope with the technical progress and technological innovation introduced both in the production processes and in the organisational system adopted by non-agricultural companies.

After this brief clarification I would like to introduce some problems related to Funds using and make a brief illustration for the next Funds Period.
Unfortunately, Italy is not one of the most correct Regions, when we talk about Fund management. As example, in terms of administrative capacity for the implementation and control of the Funds, it can be specifically noticed a problem regarding planning, selection, monitoring, evaluation and control of the projects, as well as for the slow implementation of the Programmes, also at regional level, in fact, there are diversified application levels between the North and the South of Italy.
For this reason, for the 2021-2017 period, it will be necessary to invest, in particular, in the capacity of strategic planning, which must be based on solid objectives defined more precisely and supported by explicit indicators and targets, as well as clear and detailed actions to achieve them.
The partnership discussed from UE, for the 2021-2027 period, is divided into five Thematic Tables, one for each of the Policy Objectives covered by the proposal for the new UE Regulation.
The whole partnership is encouraged to actively participate in the planning process through specific contributions, which, together with the ideas already emerged, will

permit to the appointee Department to redact a summary document, representative of the results of the comparison for each Table. The five documents will be refined in the following phases of preparation of the Partnership Agreement and the Operational Programmes.

More in depth, the purpose of the Tables meetings is to identify and gradually define the scope, modalities and intensity of cohesion policy intervention 2021-2027 within each of the five Objectives, trough the definition of "unifying themes", which are: high quality work; preservation of territory and natural resources for future generations; homogeneity and quality of services for citizens; culture as a vehicle for economic and social cohesion.

Considering the UE directives, the major challenges, for 2021-2027, in Italy will be characterized by the prevention of the general decline condition and the promotion of a harmonious development of the Italian territories. The cohesion policy must deal with the issue of the working difficulties of Italian citizens, especially young people and women, who do not express their full potential in the economic sphere. There is not a single indicator sufficient to describe the alarming situation of youth and female employment.

Considering the Italian Country Report, our Nation will have to concentrate principally on these aspects, in order to manage efficiently and effectively the Funds, most of all finding a remedy to the high rate of inactivity among young people, women, and the low-skilled population; find a solution to the employment gap between men and women and bring near the North and South employment rate, differentiated by 14%.

It is also quite essential to empower the Agency for Territorial Cohesion, which is able to oversee the governance of all bodies, exercising functions of both coordination and strategic direction and, where necessary, also to assist in the management of the Programmes. This agency, is operational since 2014 and deals principally with massive investment in a training programme; the definition, for each administration holding the Programme, of a minimum level of structure and skills and also commensurate with the needs arising from the exercise of the responsibilities assigned and to be maintained during the entire programming period; the integration of the ordinary planning tools of the Public Administration with the strategies outlined for the management of the funds;

the use of the Evaluation Units as a tool for direct evaluation and/or to support the definition of guidelines for evaluations carried out by other subjects or the appointed Officials; the possibility of using Technical Assistance resources to ensure a taskforce of shipbuilding projects at the start of the new cycle; the predetermination of the timing of the relevant management acts, in order to make the action of the Public Administration known; the improvement of the quality, timeliness and usability of the monitoring; an investment in transparency through the availability of data on the Open Cohesion model and the activation of stable comparison methods between the Managing Authority, the European Commission, the evaluators and all other interested parties and the continuation and extension of the "improved cooperation" method, successfully implemented with the Task Forces already operating.

Another relevant problem is the unsatisfactory level of effectiveness. Some economists, having pointed out that the co-financing formula, although excellent in principle, in Italy is unreasonable and deleterious. In fact, Italy spends several billion euros on numerous projects financed by the European Structural Funds but has no idea of the effects they produce. Therefore, they come to the double conclusion that the programming for the 2014-2020 period, is not substantially different from the previous one, and therefore "does not seem to be able to solve the existing problems, also risking to be destined to shipwreck in a sea of rhetoric" (Perotti and Teoldi, 2014).

Regrettably, the evaluations in Italy are not very precise, indeed the estimation of the actual impact produced by the structural funds is not accurate. This is also caused by the Italian Public Administration, which is not at all prerpared for the culture of evaluation of the results of any economic policy measure, despite the well-deserving activity carried out by the Italian Association of Evaluation.

For its part, the European Commission prepares annual Implementation Reports for the 27 Member States, through which it disseminates the results obtained from the implementation of cohesion policy , but the report is accurate only for projects, which information on the results in socio-economic terms is precisely collected and then punctually provided to EU. It is important to recall that the specific Community rules on ex-post evaluation impose to MS to collect results obtained with Structural Funds both in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and in terms of the impact produced on the main socio-economic variables.

It is, hence, clear that the quality of the results' collection is a crucial phase for the ESIF evaluation and comprehension.

In Italy it is well known that almost all the various types of public intervention carried out over several decades in the southern regions with a view to redressing the balance between the Centre-North and the South of the country have so far not succeeded in bringing the latter out of the state of profound economic and social backwardness in which it still finds itself.

I my opinion a country like Italy, despite the fact that it is among the founders of the European Community and benefits from the ESIF since the beginning, because of the disparities and differences throughout all the Peninsula, finds still today in a difficult situation.

To conclude and demonstrate that ESIF in Italy have also had positive results, I will illustrate some ERDF successful outcomes:

1.Technopoles in Emilia-Romagna

The Technopoles project creates a network of ten research locations for technological transfer in the Emilia-Romagna. Including six universities and four research institutes. Counting 34 industrial research laboratories and 11 innovation centres, the technopoles aim at reinforcing the region's already consolidated high-tech network.

The expected value creation of this project includes the creation of 1600 job places for researchers, 132 research programmes and 520 different solutions available for companies. The Technopoles is cooperating with research institutions in other Italian regions, at the national level and with international partners in Germany and France.

The total cost of operations is 241 million euro, of which 94 million euro as ERDF contributions.

2. La Venaria Reale Project in Piemonte

The La Venaria Reale Project was considered as the largest restoration project in Europe relating to a cultural asset. The project has renewed the baroque majesty of the Reggia di Venaria, the royal residence appointed by Duke Carlo Emanuele II of Savoy in the mid-17th century. Even if it has received the UNESCO World Heritage status, the palace had

fallen into bad shape after decades of neglect. The renovation of the Reggia and the Gardens was completed over a period of several years, and La Venaria Reale is now one of Italy's five most visited cultural sites.
The total cost of the project was 73.5 million euro (ERDF contribution: 36.7 million euro).

Moreover, it is also interesting to present some ESF success stories in Italy:

1. 'School mechanism' in Convergence regions

The 'school mechanism' project, by the end of 2013, permitted to more than 400 000 students to have the opportunity to participate in school – work experiences, periods of study abroad or integrated plans for key skills development. Moreover, there were approved more than 200 initiatives to prevent early school leaving.
The total cost of the operation was 576.5 million euro, with an ESF contribution of 419.6 million euro.

2. 'Giovanisì' in Toscana

The Giovanisì project dedicates to find a solution to the lack of job opportunities, shortage of quality training programmes and internships, and the trouble in finding an accommodation. Giovanisì promotes and offers help with employment, training, education, entrepreneurship and housing. From 2011, the project has given opportunities to more than 40 000 young people.
The estimated total cost was of 427 million euro, of which 72 million ESF contribution.

Chapter 3: Case Study: Veneto Region and the ESIF Funds

3.1 A brief overview of Veneto Economy

Industrial sector:

In 2017, the growth of activity in the manufacturing sector in the Veneto region has strengthened; the industrial production of the companies with at least 5 employees grew by more or less 3% supported by the internal and external factors. In Figure 15 we can see how Veneto Region has developed its financial situations during a three years period, from 2015 to 2017. It is important o denote that 2017 has characterized a huge enhancement form the turnover and orders field, but it has encountered some problems in the investment programming.

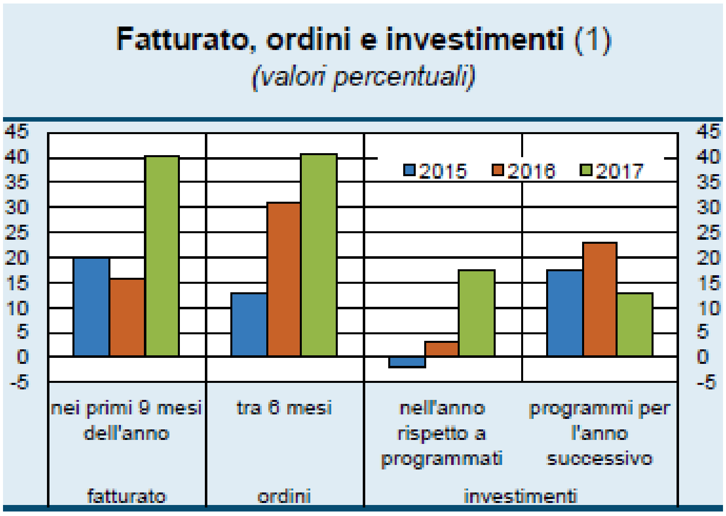


Figure 15.Veneto Region financial situation (Source: Banca d'Italia)

The general growth in activity spread in all sectors and was above average in eyewear, in mechanics, in metal products, in the rubber and plastics sector, and in general in Multinationals field. However, the size of the growth was weaker in the goldsmith's and fashion system's sectors.

Positive indications come also from firms with at least 20 employees, according to the data registered from Banca d'Italia survey on 250 companies, the balance between increase and decrease in turnover in the first nine months of the year, with respect to the to the same period in 2016, is 40%.

The recovery has yet been consolidated, bringing Veneto Region in a positive trend cycle. In general, optimistic expectations are widespread among industrial sectors, except for the fashion sector, including, also, orders from abroad.

Mostly, Veneto Region is experiencing a positive trend in the industrial sector and a continue Investment expenditure grow for the fourth consecutive year.

As seen before, the only difficulty is the slowdown in the Investment programmes formulated at the beginning of 2017, but they have shown a more or less 30% increase in the last period. The detailed sales can be seen in Figure 16, proving that the last year was quite positive.

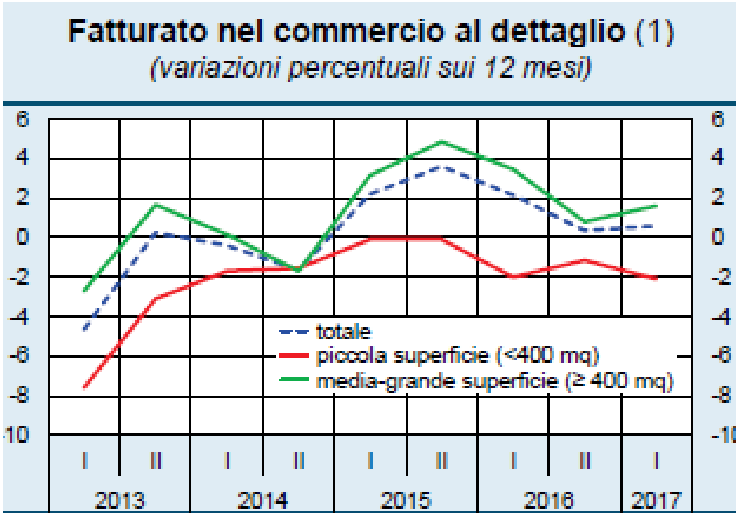


Figure 16. Veneto commercial sales. (Source: Banca d'Italia)

Commercial sector:

Favoured by the strengthening of global demand, in 2017 the exports, valued at current prices, increased by 5.9 % compared to the previous year.

The Veneto growth has intensified, particularly in markets outside the European Union, indeed, exports outside the Union were supported by the dynamic performance in the United States and in the countries of in Central and Eastern Europe. Also, sales in Russia, which in the two-year period 2014-15 had been severely affected by the depreciation of the rouble and the sharp drop in demand have grown, thanks to the restriction on some products importation. These affirmations are confirmed by Figure 17, which illustrates the Export made by Veneto Region in the lasts 10 years. For sure 2017 registered a positive trend, which has clearly endured also today. The extra UE export are the strongest one, the UE are quite stable but they are also reaching a peak.

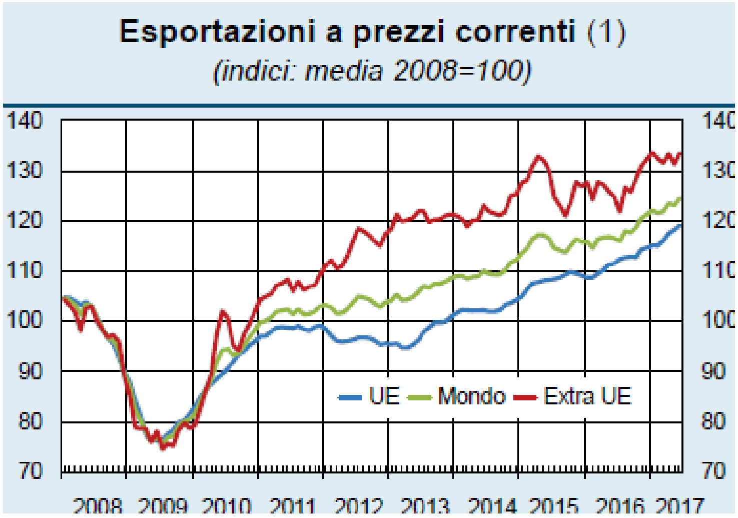


Figure 17. Veneto Export at current prices (Source: Istat)

In general, the mechanical sector was the one with most benefits, instead the fashion and automotive sector has suffered a period of stagnation.

A general overview on the job market:

The level of employment in Veneto Region has always been high looking at the national media. During last years, the number of employees is increased by more or less the 2%, returning to 2007 levels. The growth was mainly due to the trade, catering and hotels, but there has also been an increase in the number of people employed in the industry. The increase in employment was more intense for workers with a degree, which represents a fifth of the employed. The employment rate has risen of about the 65%. There has been an increase mainly in fixed-term contracts and, to a lesser extent, from apprenticeship and administration. In Figure 18, there is an illustration of the previous affirmations.

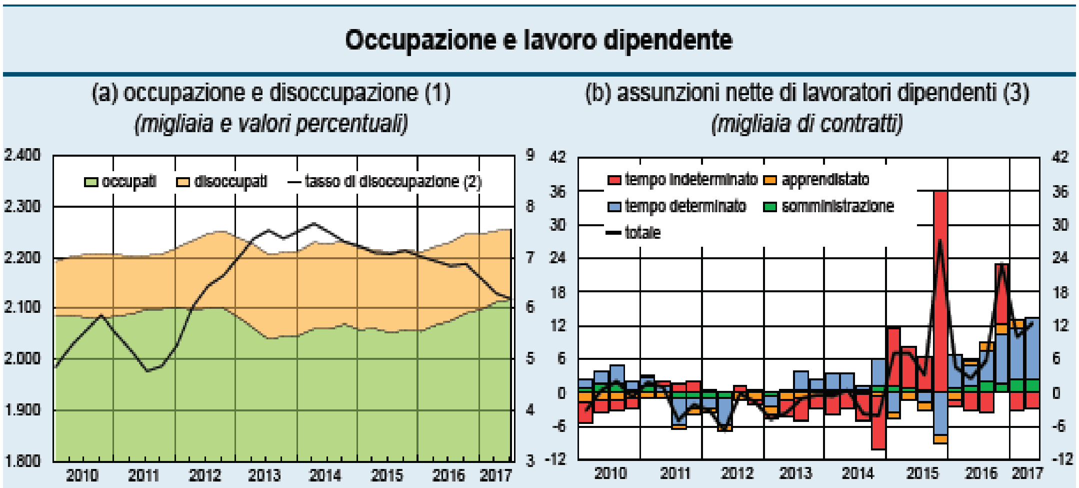


Figure 18. Job market in Veneto (Source: Istat)

Consequently, the increase in employment, associated with a more modest growth in the population, has led to a rise in the number of jobs.

An important improvement in the economic situation has also led to a reduction in the use of to social safety nets.

In conclusion, the Veneto GDP has grown by 1.7% in 2017, which is a rate higher than the national average. Domestic demand is moving away from the stagnant situation of the years post crisis: household consumption rose by 1.5% and investment enhanced by the 4%.

The result for 2017 is attributable to a good performance of the Veneto industry, which remains competitive and shows an increase in value added by 2%, for 2018 the percentage is more around 1,8%,

3.2 Veneto Region and the European Funds

Even if it is one of the richest Regions in Italy, it needs fund in order to maintain its socio-economical level. For this reason, the major Funds are related to educational and enterprise competitiveness programs.

An important program brought up in Veneto, thanks to the funds, is the *Interreg* (related principally to Adriatic-Ionian and Alpine-Space programs).

3.2.1 A General overview on FESR

It is important to state that Veneto is one of the eligible areas, touched by FESR.

The total monitored public cost is around 300 million euro, with 35% of project concluded and 63% of project launched.

The main areas covered by the FESR Funds in Veneto are:

- Business competitiveness (33%): With more than 2.8 million euro financed and the 30% of projects concluded, this is the most relevant areas financed by EU for Veneto Region. The principal areas interested by the project's funds are goods and services purchase, infrastructure construction, enterprise incentives and capital conferral. The Belluno province is the one which have received more of these investments. Finally, the most financed contract is that of the Agri – food and manufacturer industry.
- Research and innovation (18%): there are more or less 52,206 projects financed by the R&D section of the FESR dedicated to Veneto Region. The province more involved with these funds is Venezia. The principal areas, in which the investment is enlarged are goods and services purchase, infrastructure, entrepreneurial activities and capital investments. The most financed project is "Invitalia".
- Transport (13%): with more than 14.3 million euro investments, the 14% of products concluded and the majority of investment in infrastructure, this is one of the most relevant investment, relative also to the creation of European Corridor. The Venezia province is the one that receives more funds.
- Digital Agenda (13%)
- Energy (8%): another important investment theme is for sure the Environment, with more than 2.9 million invested, dedicated principally to the modernization of infrastructure, this is a quite essential theme for nowadays, principally because the Europe 2050 goals for the Environment. The province that has received the most investment is Padova. In Figure 19 we can see that Veneto Region in general has always been interested in investing in the renewable energy sector. It seems to decrease in the last period, probably because Veneto is keeping up with European renewable energy standards.

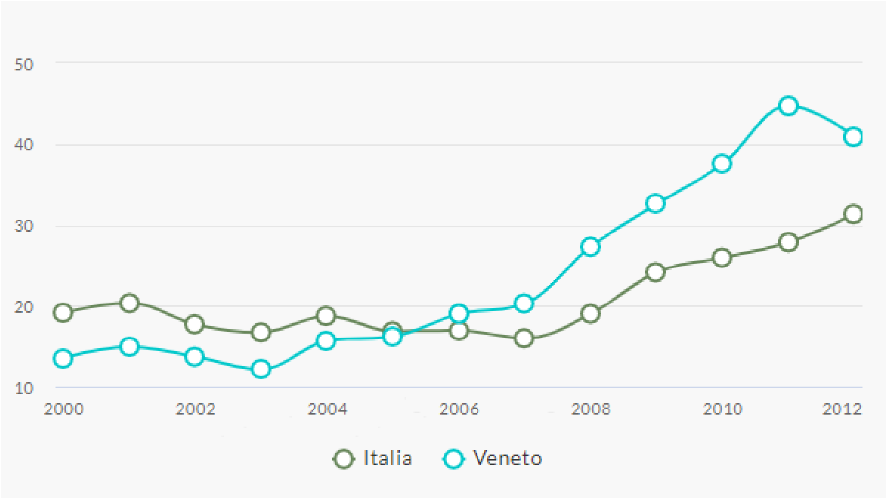


Figure 19. Energy produced by renewable energy sources. (Source: Opencoesione)

- Environment (6%): The Environment is quite a touching theme nowadays, principally because of the climate situation, which is in a quite negative period. Europe dedicates 6.5 million euro to the theme, with more or less 15.000 projects launched. It is also very important to say that Italy and Veneto Region has given a truly importance to the investment in this area, enhancing structures and purchasing new goods. The Province benefitting more from these funds is Venezia, with more than 55 thousand euro invested. In Figure 20, it can be denoted that Veneto in far over the Italian media for recycling. This demonstrate how much Veneto Region is involved in the Environment, and it will for sure reach the UE 2050 goals.

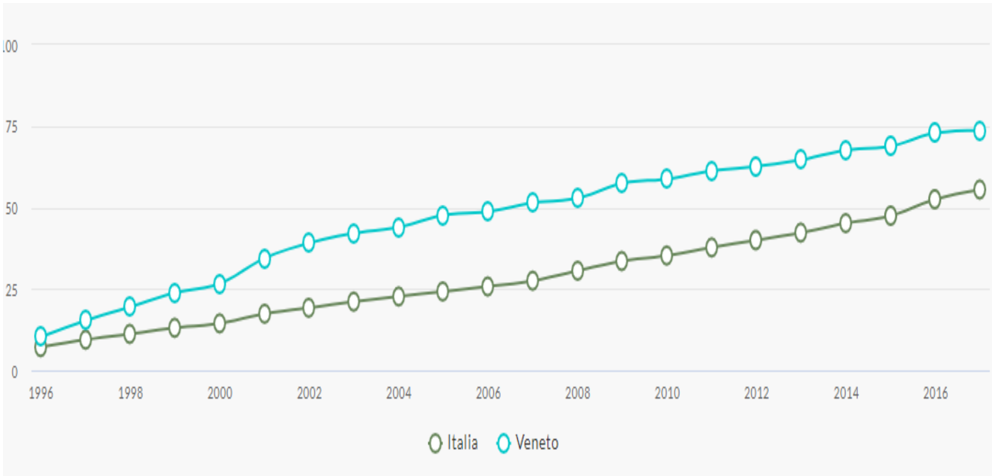


Figure 20. Italy vs Veneto recycling policies (Source: Opencoesione)

- Strengthening PA (4%)
- Social inclusion (4%)

Analysing the general situation of Funds payment have been respected but there is a slight difference between payments and projects realized. (Figure 21)

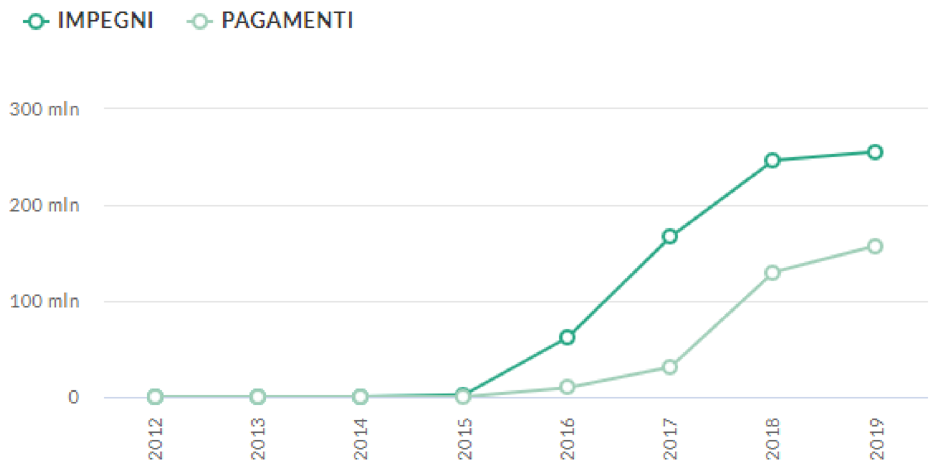


Figure 21. Payments vs Commitment in Veneto Region (Source: Opencoesione)

Regarding the monitoring of payments, we can also say that there have been payed more or less 158 million euro, included attracted resources. There have been yet the 67% of the projects concluded, with 33% of projects ongoing. The funds have been yet payed for the 38% of the Entrepreneurship and competitiveness theme, with R&D and transport funds around the 15% and Energy and Environment around 10%. The Provinces with more projects and funds ongoing are Vicenza (98 euro per person) and Padova (96 euro per person), nevertheless, they are immediately followed by Venice (94 euro per person).

Analysing project in depth, there are currently more than 1900 project financed by FESR, 78% of them are conclude and 21% are ongoing. The most interested theme is always Enterprise and competitiveness (68%), followed by R&D, Energy and Environment. The project that has received more funds in Veneto is the "Plan for the development of the broadband connection".

3.2.2 A General overview on FSE

Veneto is, also, one of the eligible areas, touched by FSE.

The total monitored public cost is around 520 million euro, with 23% of project concluded and 73% of project launched.

The main areas covered by the FESR Funds in Veneto are:

1. Education: It is the most relevant element of financing with the 41% of the Funds dedicated. With 12.6 billion euro dedicated and 310 thousand projects is one of the most essential investment areas. The most important area of development is Contribution to people (with more or less 1 million and half allocated). The Province which benefits more of the Funds is Venezia (with 116 euro invested per person). The main funds are given to Universities in order to empower their system and enhance the students' experience. Moreover, a conspicuous part is also given to students, in order to help young people more in need and the ones who are far from home. In Figure 22 we can see how the investment have influenced positively the attending of school for young people between 15 and 19 years.

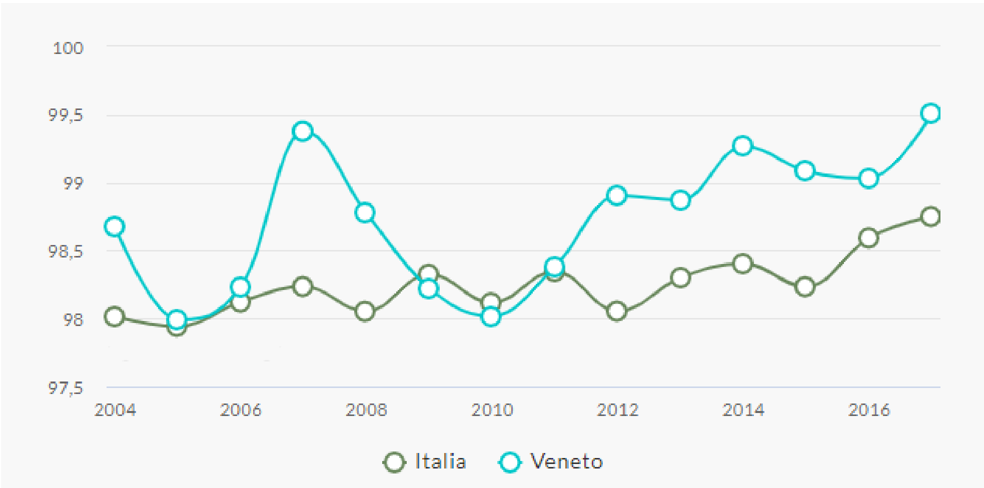


Figure 22. Italy vs Veneto: Students between 15-19 years with high level of instruction (Source:Opencoesione)

2. Job market: The public cost is approximatively 13,2 billion euroland the monitored projects are more than 590 thousand. The concluded projects are the 46% of totals, instead the ongoing ones are the 44%. The most important investments are made in the boosting of goods and services and enterprise

incentives. With 806 euro per person, Belluno Province is the one which benefits the most of the ESF. Moreover, the funds are dedicating mostly at the development of INPS institute. In figure 23, it can be denoted that the level of employment in Veneto Region is far over the national media. More than the 66% of the population is employed. This demonstrates that the economy functions, and even if this demonstrates that the Veneto is an organized and wealth Regions, The FSA had for sure had a positive impact.

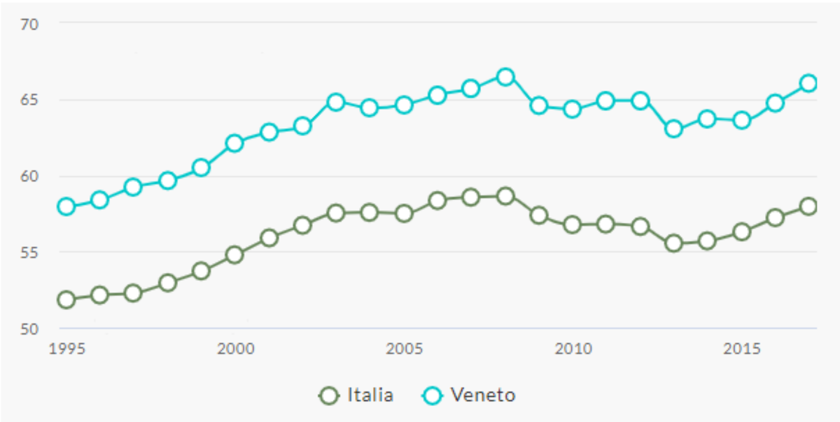


Figure 23. Employment rate Italy vs Veneto (Source:Opencoesione)

3. Social Inclusion: the public spending for this particular theme is 9.6 billion euro. There are more than 337 thousand projects monitored, of which the 27% is concluded. The majority of the funds were dedicated to the boosting of infrastructures, in order to permit a better social distribution.

   The Province, which benefits the more is the one of Venice, for sure more in need because of its peculiar nature and position. In general, the funds are distributed more trough the health authorities. Fortunately, in Veneto Region we can observe only a 6% of the total population below the poverty threshold, which is more than 200% at the national level (Figure 24).

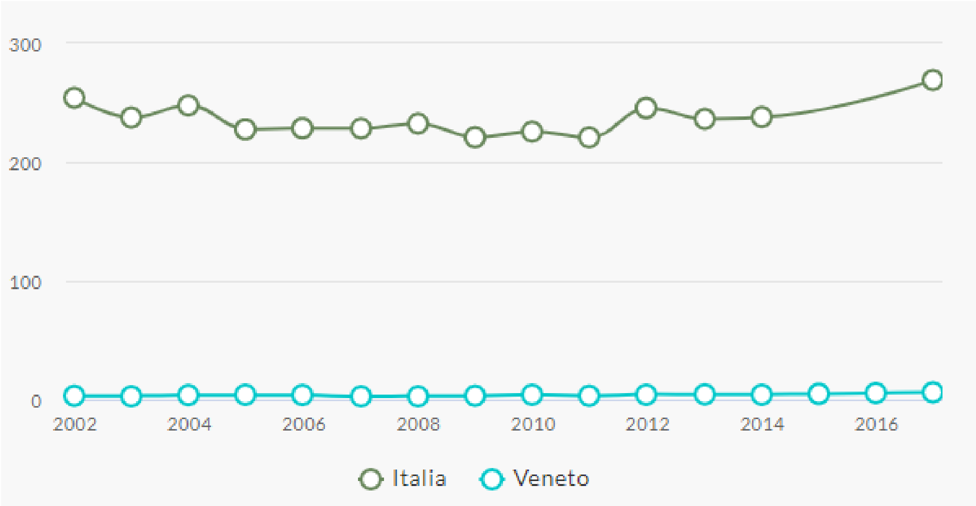


Figure 24. Veneto vs Italy poverty treshold (Source: Opesncoesione)

4. PA strengthens: In this sector there are more than 2.5 billion euro invested. The projects concluded are 37% of the total 10.500 projects. The investments are concentrated in the purchasing of goods and services. The majority of the investments are made in Venezia province, the percentage of the funds concentration is finally quite in line with the Italian average.

3.3 Interreg programs

Before introducing the Interreg Europe projects dedicated also to Veneto Region, it is essential to explain what Interreg is.

It is a program, which helps regional and local governments throughout Europe to develop and deliver better policy, thanks to the creation of a dynamic environment rich of interchange opportunities. Interreg aims at empowering the government investment, innovation and implementation struggles, in order to promote a sustainable development both for people and

The program promotes many different results to help European regions to grow to be the best version of themselves. These Days, the EU's stress about helping Regions to capitalise on their hidden talents, while catching the opportunities, which offer chances for economic, social and environmental progress.

In order achieve the premises, in is important to present opportunities for "regional and local public authorities across Europe, to share ideas and experience on public policy in practice and therefore improving strategies for their citizens and communities."[11]

Interreg Europe sustain three types of beneficiaries, which are Public authorities, local, regional and national managing authorities, in charge of the Investment for Growth and Jobs programmes or European Territorial Cooperation. Moreover, there are also supported agencies and organizations related to UE.

Interreg concentrates mainly on actions developed with financial support to one of the following four categories: Research and innovation, SME competitiveness, Low-carbon economy and Environment and resource efficiency

The main initiatives of Interreg to help the UE Member States are:

1. Interregional Cooperation Projects (Such as Alpine Space and Adriatic Ionian);
2. Policy Learning Platform (New platforms to connect Regions and People).

What about Veneto Region? Of which of these Projects is part?

3.3.1 Alpine Space

The programme is a European transnational cooperation programme for the Alpine region. It gives a structure to facilitate the collaboration between economic, social and environmental major players in seven Alpine countries, besides various institutional levels like: academia, administration, business and innovation sector, and policy making.

The programme is financed through the ERDF and by national public and private co-funding of the Partner States. In the current programming period, 2014–2020, the programme is spending €139 million in projects across which key actors build shared solutions for prevalent Alpine issues. "The ERDF co-financing rate is of 85% for partners from Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia"[12](Figure 25). The thematic areas of the collaboration are pre-discussed for each programming period of seven years, during which different calls for proposals are opened.

[11] https://www.interregeurope.eu/about-us/what-is-interreg-europe/
[12] https://www.alpine-space.eu/about/the-programme/what-is-the-alpine-space-programme-

Figure 25. Alpine Space Regions (Source: Alpine Space website)

At the beginning of each period, the Partner cooperate with regional stakeholders to deliver a new set of founding documents, submitted, then, to the European Commission, for review and approval. The definitive document, called the "Cooperation Programme", defines the programme's objectives.

The current Alpine program is the third edition and was launched in 2014. With an increasing number of project partners during each period, and more than 160 projects financed to date, nowadays, the Alpine Space has an important role in ensuring cooperation between Alpine states.

Alpine Space is developed thanks to the macroregional strategies. The Macro-regional Strategies are an EU instrument, introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon, aimed at promoting concerted action in cross-border geographical areas that share common challenges and opportunities and can be an important innovation for the promotion of territorial cooperation and cohesion in Europe, thus helping to create a sense of common responsibility among the partners concerned that could pave the way for territorial development.

The Alpine Space is divided in different action group and thematic areas.

In particular, Macro-regional Strategies represent an opportunity to develop a multi-level approach to governance that harmonises the work and competences of existing institutions and makes more effective use of available financial resources.

The Alpine Macro-Regional Strategy

The Alpine Region is a central point of prosperity, modernity and innovation fundamental for European development, a space where there are the most important metropolitan areas of medium size in Europe that are strongly linked to the Alpine mountains and foothills, quite important from an economic, logistical and environmental point of view.

Important is the strengthening of the "solidarity agreement" linking the mountains and the metropolitan areas of the Alpine Region, which is the real added value of a macro-regional strategy for the Alps, an occasion to promote "inclusive, intelligent and sustainable" growth throughout Europe.

The first step was the Alpine Conference in Bad Ragaz, in June 2012. The Alpine regions, including Veneto, jointly signed a declaration for the Alpine macro-regional strategy at the Conference on the basis of “guidelines” drawn up in agreement between the regions.

The formal accession of the Veneto Region was during this conference, in which regions launched a macro-regional strategy for the Alps. Thanks to the approval of Regional Council, the Veneto Region's has adhered to the macro-regional strategy for the Alps, signing also the “Macro-regional Strategy for the Alps - An initiative of the Regions”

From the Innsbruck conference, in October 2012, there were also introduced the influence of National government.

The most important step of the recent Alpine Space program is the Grenoble's political resolution, in 2013, that led to the development of a technical document, which summarizes the objectives and strategic axes of the macro-regional strategy, taking up the Bad Ragaz document, and integrating it also with the strategies of the Alpine Convention and Alpine Space Programme.

Moreover, it was also redacted a political document, called “Political Resolution for the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region”, that constitutes the pact between States and Regions to support the elaboration and subsequent implementation of the Alpine Macro-Regional Strategy.

With this resolution, the representatives of the Alpine Regions expressed their common will to support the elaboration of a European Union Strategy for the Alpine Region. Apart from this and a redaction of an action plan there were approved three pillars dedicated to economic development, innovation and research, transport, intangible infrastructure, accessibility, water, energy and environment, biodiversity.

The first Pillar is “Developing Alps” and state that “Ensuring sustainable growth and promoting full employment, competitiveness and innovation by consolidating and diversifying specific economic activities with a view to mutual solidarity between mountain and urban areas”.

The second Pillar is "Connecting Alps" and tells “Promoting territorial development based on sustainable mobility, enhanced academic cooperation, development of services, transport policy and communication”.

The last one is “Protecting Alps”, saying “Promoting sustainable management of energy and natural and cultural resources, as well as protection of the environment”.[13]

Regarding Veneto Region in Particular:

The Lead of the Veneto Region Eusalp Strategy has been given to Venezia (Figure 26).

[13] http://www.regione.veneto.it/web/economia-e-sviluppo-montano/strategia-macroregionale-alpina

Figure 26. Veneto Region Alpine Space (Source: Alpine Space website)

Regarding the Funds distribution we can see that Veneto spend more on "Innovative Alpine Space" projects, which permit to Veneto to have quite advanced method to protect and empower the Veneto Alpine space. It is quite predictable that the funds are used most in R&D field on order to enhance the mountain infrastructures and structural emergencies.

	Financial plan cooperation programme	ERDF committed in call 1 and 2	ERDF committed in call 3	ERDF exhaustion
Priority 1 - Innovative Alpine Space	€37,323,349	€18,496,628	€10,863,707	78,7%
Priority 2 - Low Carbon Alpine Space	€31,491,576	€19,997,052	€6,564,423	84,3%
Priority 3 - Liveable Alpine Space	€31,491,576	€17,424,995	€8,450,202	82,2%
Priority 4 - Well-Governed Alpine Space	€9,330,838	€4,786,460	€916,860	60%
Total	€109,637,339	€60,602,583	€26,795,192	79,7%

Figure 27. Distribution of Alpine Space Funds in Veneto (Source: Alpine Space- Veneto Region Performance)

3.3.2 Adriatic-Ionian (ADRION) Project

From 2010, Italy has promoted a macro-regional strategy keen on the Adriatic-Ionian area, in order to indorse common interests and potentialities of the eight countries grouped around the same sea basin: Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Montenegro and Greece; these are the same countries that, since 2000, are members of the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (IAI), the intergovernmental anchorage of the Strategy.

In 2012, the European Council mandated the European Commission to draw up the European Union Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region to be presented by the end of 2014. In August 2013 the European Commission released the "Discussion paper on an EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region" which contains the statement of the Strategy's objectives. The general objective is, of course to promote sustainable economic and social prosperity of the Adriatic and Ionian region through the implementation of growth and jobs creation, by boosting its attractiveness, competitiveness and connectivity. Another important goal of this strategy is to preserve the environment and ensuring healthy and balanced marine and coastal ecosystems. The strategy focuses on areas of mutual interest with high relevance for the Adriatic and Ionian countries.

The Strategy is based on four pillars identified by the Foreign Ministers of the eight countries in agreement with the European Commission, these are:

1. Driving innovative maritime and marine growth;
2. Connecting the region;
3. Preserving, protecting and improving the quality of the environment;
4. Increasing regional attractiveness.

In 2014, there were a high-level conference, at which there was approved the EUSAIR action plan. The Italian regional system contributed to the process of defining the Action Plan by participating in the consultations launched by the competent national authorities and autonomously through the documents produced in the framework of the EUSAIR – Italy interregional working group set up in 2013.

The Strategy used is particularly relevant because it is a mix of an internal cohesion instrument and a foreign policy instrument, in fact four of the eight participating countries are not members of the European Union. This should facilitate the integration of the "aquis Communautaire" into the regulatory systems of the third countries.
The main challenges that the Action Plan meets are:

- Socio-economic disparities;
- Infrastructure deficit;
- Inadequacy of the interconnection of energy networks;
- Over-exploitation of the marine environment;
- Natural, man-made risks and dangers resulting from climate change;
- Administrative and institutional issues.

The Action Plan therefore confirms the four pillars as indispensable for in order to overcome the challenges identified: Blue growth; Connecting the region; Environmental quality; Sustainable tourism.
There have been also identified two cross-cutting aspects, that are:

- Capacity building, including communication;
- Research and innovation

It is, hence, evident that the adaptation to climate change and mitigation of its effects, as well as disaster risk management, are accepted as principles common to all four pillars. For each pillar, the Action Plan proposes examples of actions considered to allow the exploitation of their potential. To achieve better results the Pillars have been divided into various topics: *Blue Growth; Connecting the Region; Environmental Quality and Sustainable Tourism*.
In general, the Total Operational budget is 117,918,198.00 €, with an EU contribution of 99,156,616.00 €.

The Veneto Region has applied as a member of the Thematic Group of Pillar 1 "Blue Growth"; with a note from the President Zaia in 2015. On the 30th of December of 2016, the Regional Council have formally approved the Veneto Region application. The Director of the European Cross-border and Territorial Cooperation Section has been nominated as the operational focal point of the Veneto Region, as a reference point for national and regional coordination, as well as for the TSG 1 meetings of the EUSAIR Macro – strategy. The participation of the Region in this field has been mainly concentrated in the following activities:

1. At the interregional level, collaborating in the work of the EUSAIR – Italy Group, through the coordination of the work related to Pillar 1 "Blue Growth" of the Strategy;
2. At national level, participating in the Control Room set up by the Inter - ministerial Committee for European Affairs, in order to coordinate the Italian position to be expressed in supranational meetings, through the organisation of all the Administrations involved at central and territorial level in the implementation of the Strategy;
3. At supranational level, collaborating, as a full member, in the work of the five meetings of the Thematic Working Group of Pillar 1.

Moreover, the Region has identified additional internal contact persons at the regional structures with technical expertise in the subjects covered by the various pillars.

The ERDF are also connected to EUSAIR and EUSALP macro regional strategies, with an impact on the regional development, also in these sectors. For sure Veneto, has had the possibility to be involved in a variety of projects regarding the two programs. Veneto is a quite rich Region, but it demonstrates that with the Funds, it can improve and maintain the quality of life and richness of the Region. This was understandable thanks to the previous Funds breaking down.

3.3.3 The Veneto Region Rural Development Program and the Fisheries Found

Veneto Region is for sure known for its good catch but is particularly known for its agricultural gift. Just think about its famous sparkly wine, the “Prosecco”, whose hills are now recognized as UNESCO World Heritage. For sure this Region demonstrate to be a quite wealthy ones, but it needs the Funds to empower as much as possible its Panorama.

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Region Veneto was officially approved in May 2015, outlining Veneto priorities for using the 1.19 billion euro of public money that is available for the period 2014-2020.

The main priorities for Veneto are restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems. More than 82 000 hectares will be protected through environmental land management targeted to preserve biodiversity, water objectives and preventing soil erosion.

Furthermore, almost 8.000 hectares of farmland will receive support, in order to convert or to maintain organic farming. That one may improve the effectiveness and sustainability of the farm sector, more or less 74 000 training places will be designed to promote innovation, cooperation and more sustainable framing practices. More than 4.000 agricultural shares will benefit from support to enhance their economic performance, and reorganize their farms. Ultimately, local development and economic expansion projects will create around 140 new jobs and 11% of the countryside population will get access to new ICT and broadband infrastructure.

Regarding the Common Fisheries Policies Veneto will aim to ensure that fishing and aquaculture are environmentally and social-economic. The major goal is to promote a dynamic fishing industry and guarantee a fair standard of living for fishing communities. Even if it is important to maximise catches, it is essentials to put be limits. Moreover, Veneto aims at ensuring that fishing practices will not harm the ability of fish populations, in order to reproduce. The CFP adopts a careful approach, that recognises the impact of human action on the ecosystem.

3.3.4 Some peculiar Projects

1. *Rapid Open Innovation:*

The Rapid Open Innovation (Rapid OI) project, thanks to a networking platform and working lab, enhances the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in the eco-building, wood-furniture and mechanical engineering sectors in the Italy-Austria border area. It is financed by the ERD funds and it was implemented during the Period 2007-2013. It is part of the Operative Program dedicated to the relationships between Italy and Austria. It has been totally financed with 717.000 euro.

Open Innovation is, hence, used as a tool to increase competitiveness.

Trough the creation of Open Innovation Working Lab (OIWL), which are introductory workshops that identify existing problems clarify how to take advantage of the open innovation tools, more than 100 Firms throughout Italy and Austria have improved their situation. Five groups of companies particularly sensitive to innovation have collaborated with expert consultants, establishing strong contacts with cross-border research institutions.

Open Innovation is based on the existence of a network of partners who share their knowledge in order to consolidate their respective innovation capacities. Strategic exchanges allow each of the companies, mostly SMEs, to identify obstacles to innovation in their own processes and to reduce them through the adoption of good practices.

Currently there are OIWL in Treviso and Belluno. The effectiveness of the Open Innovation platform is tested in a pilot phase to identify further areas for improvement of the Open Innovation tools. It is hoped that these measures will contribute to strengthening the competitiveness of SMEs in a sustainable and sustainable way.

The project has contributed to improving the economic flows of the region and is expected to foster similar cooperation initiatives in the near future. More than 10 000 stakeholders have been informed about the results achieved and the potential expressed. Approximately 150 jobs will be created during the implementation phase of the project and, according to forecasts, a further 50 jobs will be created once implementation is complete.

2. Project HOMER

The HOMER (Harmonising Open Data in the Mediterranean through Better Access and Reuse of Public Sector Information) project is an initiative for the harmonisation of open data between Mediterranean countries through a better access to and the re-use of public sector information. It demonstrates that open data sharing across national borders is possible. In general, nineteen partners from eight countries have worked together to share public data and make it available to citizens and businesses.

The total investment for the "Homer: Med OpenData" was about 3.666.437 euro, of which about 3 million are contributions from the European Regional Development Fund channelled through the "Interreg Mediterraneo", which was an operational programme for the programming period 2007-2013.

The main achievement of the project has been the creation of an open and multilingual web portal for information sharing. Nowadays, the portal shares 4.650 data sets covering a wide range of topics ranging from agriculture to tourism. The challenge for the project was, for sure, overcoming cultural, linguistic, legal and technical barriers. The project aimed to create a portal, but it was also able to ensure that citizens were aware of its existence and could benefit from the information available. This was achieved, principally through the use of two pilot actions, one focusing on citizens and the other on creation of applications and services of economic utility.

The first action promoted workshops open to citizens to find out how to enhance the quality of life in local areas using the data available. The people involved were not expert, but they were able to suggest specific local problems that could be solved with the data provided by HOMER. The workshops showed how the available data sets could contribute to increasing the efficiency and citizen-friendliness of local authorities.

The second pilot action tried to raise awareness of the data available to both citizens and businesses throughout the organization of "hackathons", which are events that bring together computer experts, graphic designers and project managers for collaborative computer programming sessions. Six national hackathons were initially organised. There was a great preparation form Universities, Business and Experts part, which, finally, led to a transnational hackathon entitled *Hack4Med*. The event headed to the creation of 36 web services and mobile applications.

Thanks to European Union's Digital Agenda, the European data are made available and usable for the Citizens, Businesses and Experts. The project may represent a good example of how public sector actors can share information across national borders.

Some Results:
According to Antonia Cobacho, Head of the Department of International Relations, "HOMER has succeeded in opening several thousand public data sets for the benefit of digital transparency throughout the Mediterranean. The datasets enhance economic development through the creation of tools and applications that contribute to improving the quality of life of citizens, as well as to the greater ability of the population to contribute to the definition of public affairs and participation in them. The lessons learned from governance and harmonisation can be a good reference for other collaborative initiatives at European regional level."[14]

3. *Desire - The design of the future*

This is a cross-border initiative, which has enhanced the competitiveness of traditional industrial SMEs in the Italy-Austria border area, while at the same time adopting high environmental and social standards.
The total investment for the project "Desire - The design of the future" was 997.782 euro, of which about 700 thousand are contributions from the European Regional Development Fund, part of the Programme "INTERREG IV Italy-Austria" for the programming period 2007-2013.

For global market companies, industrial design is an essential competitive factor; in fact, we know that the success of the product is influenced by different elements. It is recognized that, design may give the final product a high added value from a functional

[14] Antonia Cobacho, Head of the Department of International Relations, Agencia de Gestión Agraria y Pesquera, Andalusia

point of view, as well as reduce production costs and, consequently, improve competitiveness.
The "Desire" project, with the purpose of unlocking the creative and innovative potential of SMEs in the European Panorma, particularly in eyewear and wood sectors, has successfully contributed to the development of design objects in these sectors in line with current market expectations for the future.

Thanks to this initiative, UE SMEs have acquired knowledge about the latest innovations in formal and creative design, new products, construction of models and prototypes, as well as materials and finishes. Dynamic tools have been developed to optimise production costs and colour management, plan programmes and update products.

One of the innovations brought up by “Desire" has been the opening of new markets for participating SMEs, thanks to the combination of sound business strategy, an integrated marketing communication and the creativity of entrepreneurs, which leaded to an ambitious project destinated to create huge benefits for UE SMEs.
The "Desire" project went beyond the objective of commercial success by voluntarily adopting stricter social and environmental standards than those required by law. The business model, therefore, not only reconciles with the opportunities offered by globalization, but it does so in a context of greater social, ethical and environmental compatibility.

3.3.5 Veneto Region beyond 2020.

According to the last Seminar about the Future of the Cohesion Policy in Italian Regions, held on the 15th June 2019 in Venice, there are some themes, which have the urge to be addressed in the next chapter of European Programming.

President Ciambetti has pointed out that there is a great deal of concern about the future of the cohesion funds and the prerogatives of the regions. He also highlighted that the Region want to analyse the situation in depth, counting on the regions to remain the main players in the management of Community funds.

For Veneto Region, the 2021-2027 period will be focused on the fact that all the territories will have the opportunity to receive new investment from the European Union. This will influence positively the Regional economy, but it will be essential, to define within national policies, how many resources Italy will receive and how they will be distributed internally. One negative aspect may be the understanding of the percentage of resources the Veneto Region will have to provide to the budget to compensate for the decrease in transfers at European level.

Thereby, the next seven years may be characterized by reductions, which could lead to a negative starting point. The Region may be confined to use different tool so that resources reach in a well-balanced way the territory.

Nevertheless, there are also positive novities coming from the Commission; because the new programming intended to arrive until 2027, sees, also, an increase in the allocation of funds destinated to Italy: in these cases this may require greater capacity for planning, spending and identification of strategic objectives, which for Veneto Region must be recognized in sustainable development and inclusivity.

Although projected beyond 2025, the general economy is still affected by the consequences of the deep crisis, that has changed the European economic geography and that has hit not only the south of Italy but also, the northern regions, such as Veneto. It is, thereby, essential to find a new balance between the various needs, for this Reason the Region need to evolve, both by deepening the issue of subsidiarity, and by understanding that the it will no longer express themselves only through cohesion policies.

To conclude the seminar, it has been highlighted that, the next seven-year period will be characterized by a certain emphasis on the role of territories; at the same time, however, on the objective of territorial cooperation, there will be a change of approach and a substantial cut to the resources assigned: it will be necessary to understand how they will have to adapt and the motto will be, for sure: "to do more with less". Some programmes, such as cross-border maritime or transnational programmes are at risk. It is important, thereby, the creation of a platform in which countries of the East and West, North and South of Europe can work together and collaborate.

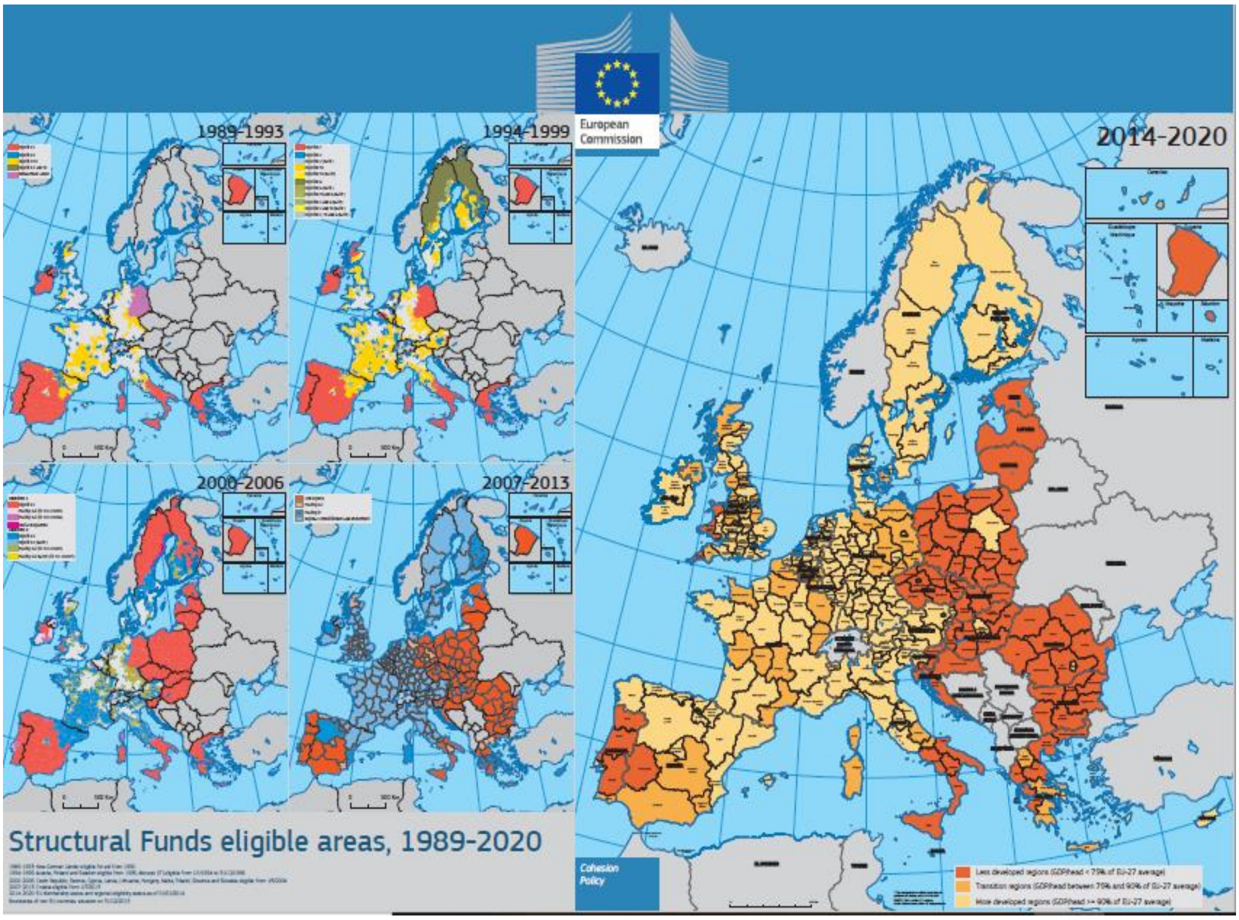
Conclusion

To conclude it can be underlined that, Italy in general is keeping up with the richest Regions of the UE, nevertheless it is divided by the North-South mismatch, which lowers the general Italian standards. The ESIF have for sure helped the poorer Region of the Peninsula to catch up, but it has also permitted to richest Regions to develop their capacities, projects and programs. It has been seen that Veneto Region is above Italian standard in almost each sector. It can provide for itself and other Regions and it is also part of important interregional projects. From the socio-economical point of view it is a quite stable, wealthy and involved Region, capable of empowering.

In the European Panorama, where only Northern countries seems to be the leader of the entire Union, Veneto demonstrates to be a great ally and partner, a positive influence for the least developed Italian and neighbouring Regions.

Overall, Italy is a quite important State in the UE Scenery, reflecting both the richest and the poorest European region, creating an imperfect, but fascinating case study for the UE interested. I think Italy has the instruments to facing the challenges encountered during its road, but it doesn't know how to use and improve them, or better only some Regions are enough organized. I am quite satisfied of Veneto Region performance, but sadly the rest of the Country (at least the South), needs to evolve and face the future, which is yet now.

APPENDIX 1. A brief overview on funds distribution through the years:



Source: European Commission

The first thing that we can denote from the different graphs, is that from 1989 to 2020 the Regions, which can be financed by the European Funds, are increased. This is surely related to the changes of Reforms priorities and principally to the number of European State at each epoque. In the first years it can be denoted a larger Funds dispense to Southern Italy, Greece and Spain, which were recognized as the poorer Regions at the time. This capillarity was followed until more or less 1999. During the following reforms we can denote some changes. In the period 2000-2006 it is clear that the funds are become to be used as a trampoline for new projects and environment related provisions. Another peculiarity of this period is that the funds are enlarged also to Northern Europe, which is not considered a low-threshold country. The investments' funds migrated towards a different European area. They concentrated on Balkan area, as a compensation for the end of the Balkan wars and the need of reconstruction.

For the current Reform, the funds are evenly distributed towards the various UE Regions. In fact, since the main pillars of the new Reform are environment and the infrastructural improvement, the investment are needed throughout all the UE.

Appendix 2: What about a "no deal" Brexit? Will United Kingdom still benefit from the Funds?

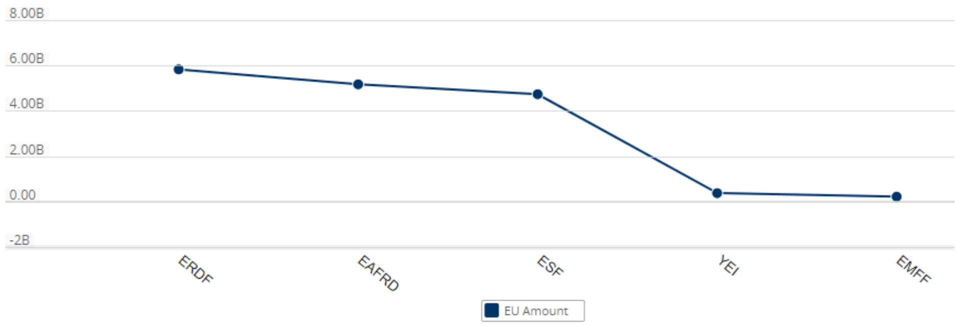


Figure 28. ESIF funds in the United Kingdom (Source: European Commission)

This Graph (Figure 14) provides information about the financial planes UE has for United Kingdom for the period 214-2020. The data are taken from the approved financial tables and are updated at July 2016. They are analysed by fund, programme, priority axis, thematic objective and category of region.

The data now cover 531 programmes adopted and drafted by EU for UK, at the beginning of November 2015, and includes the European Union and national co-financing protected by the adoption decision. Financial allocations in the programme may change over time, making the Figure 14 only provisory.

But what about United Kingdom and the European Funds, with the approaching Brexit?

If the UK leaves the EU without a deal, the UK will abandon the EU Budget, which means that UK organisations would no longer benefits from future funding for projects under EU programmes, such as the ERDF and Horizon 2020, without additional action.

However, the Chancellor announced that, in August and October 2016 , the government will assure EU projects agreed before UK leaves the EU, to provide more certainty for entrepreneurs and businesses.

In July 2018, however, the Chief Secretary placed a Written Ministerial Statement extending the guarantee to provide extra stability for UK organisations if a "no-deal" scenario occur.

The guarantee currently agreed between UK and EU covers:

1. Full Multiannual Financial Framework provision dedicated to structural and investment funds during the 2014-2020 funding period, with guaranteed payments to beneficiaries made up to until the end of 2023;
2. Payment of awards for UK organisations will bid directly to the European Commission on a competitive basis (while UK stays in the EU), for the lifetime of the project;
3. Payment of awards under the condition of successful bids if UK organisations can participate as a third country in the competitive grant programmes, from Exit day until end of 2020, for the lifetime of the project;
4. The actual level of agricultural funding for the 1st CAP Pillar until 2020.

As part of the final settlement in case of "no deal" exigency measures announced on 30 January 2019 is that European Commission has announced a draft regulation that would permit to the United Kingdom to continue participating to EU programmes, in 2019 because of the continuing contribution to the 2019 budget. However, the UK government is still evaluating this proposal.

Which may be the possible implications related to the "no deal" Brexit?

The UE proposal will guarantee to UK organisations related to charities, businesses and universities to continue to receive funds over a project's lifetime, in the case they positively bid into EU-funded programmes prior to the end of 2020.

Nevertheless, UK will be obliged to work with EU, bid successfully trough European Union tenders and win them, in order to have the funds assured.

The guarantee includes exclusively funding committed to UK organisations. So, this means that it does not cover up funds committed to participants related to Member States and other participating countries. This suggests that if UK organisation is the lead member of a partnership, the funds allocates to non-UK associated beneficiaries would be not covered by the "no deal" project.

The ERDF example:

In the case of “no deal” ERDF, UK supervising authorities would continue their existing roles. Projects distributed through the guarantee will be eventually managed mostly following existing processes, including the audit, monitoring and evaluation procedures, which ensure that spending delivers good value for money and fits domestic strategic priorities. To clarify the state of affairs of the agreement, it can be recalled that in July 2018, the United Kingdom government extended the pact that, one may cover all plans that have been funded by the EU under the 2014-2020 programme period, including all ERDF projects. The postponement means that, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the delegated administrations, and HM Government of Gibraltar, will go on with signing of new ERDF projects after Brexit, until programme closing.

Bibliography:

Banca d’Italia, “Economie regionali – L'economia del Veneto, Aggiornamento congiunturale”, Venezia, Novembre 2017.

Bruzzo A., "La performance finanziaria delle Regioni nell’ambito della politica di coesione", EyesReg, vol. 4, n. 2, 201.

Bruzzo Aurelio, “Il recepimento in Italia della politica di coesione dell'UE 2014-2020”, Università di Ferrara, Dipartimento di Economia e Management.

Consiglio regionale veneto, “Seminario di approfondimento sul futuro delle politiche di Coesione UE e le Regioni”, comunicato stampa, Giugno 2019.

del Veneto”, Luglio 2018.

European Commission

European Commission, “European Regional Development

European Commission, “European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: Official texts and commentaries”, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO DG), European Union, 2015.

European Commission, “European Structural and Investment Funds 2014-2020: Official texts and commentaries”.

European Commission, “Rural development 2014-2020: Country files”

European Commission, “Treaty of Rome”, 25th March 1957, Rome.

European Parliamentary Research Service, “EU Legislation in Progress 2021-2027” MFF, EPRS, Vasileios Margaras Members' Research Service PE 625.152 – March 2019.

European Union, “Cohesion Policy and Italy”, an official document of the European Union, 2013.

Fund and Cohesion Fund 2021-2027”, Briefing, 2019

Giunta Regionale Veneto, “Strategia dell'Unione Europea per la Regione Adriatico-Ionica (EUSAIR); modalità di partecipazione ed implementazione della Regione del Veneto.”, deliberazione della giunta Regionale n. 2245 30 dicembre 2016.

Governo italiano, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Ministero per la Coesione Territoriale, 2013

Office of the European Union,” For a prosperous and integrated Adriatic – Ionian Region”, European Union, 2014.

Perotti R., Teoldi F., “Il disastro dei fondi strutturali europei”, 2014.

Piattoni Simona e Polverari Laura, “Handbook on Cohesion Policy in the EU”, Chapter One, Edward Elgar Edition, 2016.

Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, “La programmazione della politica di coesione 2021 – 2027”, Documento preparatorio per il confronto partenariale, Aprile 2019.

Rossi Alvise, “Programma Spazio Alpino 2014-2020 - La performance del Veneto”.

Ufficio di Statistica della Regione Veneto, “Bollettino socioeconomico

Ufficio valutazione impatto, Senato della Repubblica, “L’ impatto della politica di coesione in Europa e in Italia, Senato della Repubblica”, 201.

Ufficio valutazione impatto, Senato della Repubblica, “Trent’anni di politiche Ue per le aree depresse: l’impatto della coesione in Italia e in Europa”,2018.

Sitography:

Brexit:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-governments-guarantee-for-eu-funded-programmes-if-theres-no-brexit-deal/the-governments-guarantee-for-eu-funded-programmes-if-theres-no-brexit-deal

Cohesion Policy:
https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/what/glossary/c/cohesion-policy
https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/2007-2013/Total-Percentage-of-Available-Funds-Paid-Out-by-th/w8x7-cqjd

European Funds:
https://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp
https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/cohesion-fund/
https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rural-development-2014-2020_en
https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/emff/
https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/cap-glance_en#thecapinpractice

Interreg:
https://www.interregeurope.eu/about-us/what-is-interreg-europe/
https://www.alpine-space.eu/about/the-programme/what-is-the-alpine-space-programme-
http://www.regione.veneto.it/web/economia-e-sviluppo-montano/strategia-macroregionale-alpina
http://www.regione.veneto.it/web/programmi-comunitari/eusair

Opencoesione:
https://opencoesione.gov.it/it/lavori_preparatori_2021_2027/
https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/partnership-agreements-european-structural-and-investment-funds_en
https://opencoesione.gov.it/it/programmi/2014IT16RFOP021/#!finanziamenti
https://opencoesione.gov.it/it/temi/ricerca-e-innovazione/
https://opencoesione.gov.it/it/progetti/?q=&programma=2014IT16RFOP021&selected_facets=tema:03&selected_facets=is_pubblicato:true
https://opencoesione.gov.it/it/temi/trasporti/
https://opencoesione.gov.it/it/programmi/2014IT05SFOP012/

Veneto Region policies and funds:
https://bur.regione.veneto.it/BurvServices/Pubblica/DettaglioDgr.aspx?id=337207
http://www.openinnovation-platform.net/
https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/it/projects/austria/rapid-open-innovation-creates-a-cross-border-network-for-innovation
https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/it/projects/italy/homer-sharing-data-to-improve-services-and-develop-innovative-apps

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/it/projects/austria/creative-designs-to-generate-economic-expansion