

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-002240/24
to the Commission
Jadwiga Wiśniewska (ECR)
(23 October 2024)**

Subject: Dismantling cohesion policy

In an unofficial internal presentation, the Commission proposed replacing 530 ongoing programmes with 27 national operational programmes. This proposal would lead to the removal of regions' competences and is in fact a way of acting outside the Treaties to boost the centralisation of Brussels' power.

The changes the Commission is planning would increase red tape and reduce flexibility in responding to local needs. They would restrict regional authorities' participation in the decision-making process and contribute to a greater disparity between the regions.

Under the guise of streamlining cohesion policy, the Commission's ideas are dismantling EU regional policy, as other EU institutions — the European Committee of the Regions, the European Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control and the European Court of Auditors — have also pointed out.

In light of the above:

1. Could the Commission please confirm whether it is considering a model for the centralisation of EU funds which would deprive the regions of their autonomy and which is at odds with Articles 174-178 TFEU on the establishment, implementation and management of cohesion policy?
2. Is the Commission aware that centralising EU power over the regions breaches the subsidiarity principle, which is one of the pillars of the European Union?

Submitted: 23.10.2024

**Answer given by Executive Vice-President Fitto on behalf of the European Commission
(10 January 2025)**

1. In her political guidelines, the President of the Commission emphasised the need for a strengthened cohesion and growth policy with regions at the centre. The policy must be designed in partnership with national, regional and local authorities and address regional and social disparities. Furthermore, in its communication on the 9th Cohesion Report, adopted on 27 March 2024 ⁽¹⁾, the Commission underscored the importance of partnership and multi-level governance. As the Commission develops the Multiannual Financial Framework post-2027, these founding principles will need to be preserved. Regional and local authorities will need to be at the core of the design and implementation of future cohesion policy to ensure the broadest possible ownership.

2. A thorough analysis of subsidiarity is necessary for all impact assessments accompanying legislative initiatives in areas which do not fall under the exclusive competence of the EU. In addition, every politically sensitive or important legislative proposal that is accompanied by an impact assessment includes a subsidiarity assessment grid assessing whether EU action is justified in light of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

⁽¹⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the 9th Cohesion Report (COM(2024)149, adopted by the College on 27 March 2024): https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information-sources/cohesion-report_en