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SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE ESF QUESTIONNAIRE EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND SOCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

1. Introduction

This summary was based on the responses received to the questionnaire on the ESF (present and future situations) recently sent out by the CPMR General Secretariat to all the Regions in the "Employment, Training and Social Inclusion" working group. It also includes information obtained from other work undertaken by the working group such as the conclusions from the seminars and workshops held during 2008 and 2009. The synoptic table of responses to the questionnaires is enclosed in the Appendices to this document.

2. Regional situations

1. The socioeconomic characteristics of the Regions that responded to the questionnaire are fairly varied: higher-level services and ICT work predominates in Nordic capitals, industrial tradition is present in regions such as Gävleborg (Sweden), other regions have a more diverse context such as East of England where rural areas and medium-sized urban areas are mixed and the productive sector is diverse from biotechnology, engineering and ICT to farming and food processing, whereas some areas of Aberdeenshire or the Asturias are still predominantly rural. The level of development in these regions also varies greatly. Some Regions are covered by the Convergence objective or *phasing out*, e.g. Podlaskie and the Asturias, while others are covered by the Competitiveness and Employment objective. Some of these are among the most highly developed Regions in the EU e.g. Stockholm and Uusimaa. Significant differences also exist in unemployment levels. Regions in which the manufacturing fabric consists largely of industrial sectors that are currently restructuring often have unemployment rates that are initially higher than Regions in which the economic fabric is dominated by service industries.

2. Despite this diversity, the results of the survey show that most Regions are affected by the same problems:

- All Regions, whatever their level of development, size and manufacturing profile, are suffering from the effects of the global crisis. This manifests itself in a significant increase in the unemployment rate, whatever its initial level;
- Unemployment affects mainly young people, women, workers above the age of 45 and underprivileged sectors of the community. Young people are finding it more difficult to get a foothold on the jobs market while women and workers over 45 years of age are more affected by corporate closures and restructuring and, because they generally have a lower level of qualification, their access to a new job is limited. Immigrants, ethnic minorities, and those in the most precarious professional situations are the first to suffer from difficult situations. Long-term unemployment is on the rise;
- Unemployment among the young varies, affecting either unskilled workers who left school early or qualified young people who cannot be absorbed by the manufacturing fabric of the Regions because the available qualifications are not sufficiently aligned with the needs of the job market. As a result, young people with qualifications remain unemployed or tend to leave their home Regions to look for job opportunities in other parts of the world;
- There is a risk of exclusion for underprivileged groups, especially for the long-term unemployed, older workers and immigrants;

- The isolation of older people, in both rural and urban areas, and their difficulties in accessing general services is a problem that is growing with the increase in the aging population and the drop in traditional family solidarity and proximity.

3. Immigration from inside and outside the EU affects most Regions and the demographic dynamics of the EU as regards the increase in migration flows are set to rise still further. Immigrants come from a wide range of countries such as Eastern Europe and EU countries, the Balkans, Africa, Latin America and China. The number of refugees is also increasing. Regions in the UK have a long tradition of welcoming large numbers of immigrants. Although immigrants from India, Bangladesh and China were initially in the majority, more recent flows from EU countries such as Poland, Portugal and Eastern Europe have risen significantly. The Nordic Regions have been more recently affected by immigration, mainly from the Middle East and Africa; they have also taken in refugees (especially from Iraq). The Regions of Southern Europe are faced with other flows of immigrants from Africa, Latin America and Eastern European countries, many of them illegal. Poland remains a corridor for immigrants from Eastern Europe travelling to the more westerly countries in the EU. The diversity of these situations requires more adequate, targeted policies to assist in the integration of immigrants, policies that should be implemented at regional and local levels. Despite the differences, there are a number of common features in regional political steps to integrate immigrants, especially as regards the development of linguistic competence, and access to information and services, employment and housing. The social inclusion policy applied to immigrants (which is transversal and integrated in its approach) is becoming a major issue for many Regions in the CPMR. The integration of migrant populations will eventually offset the effects of decreases in the natural demographic balances in European regions.

3. Application of the ESF in the 2007/13 period

1. For most Regions in the working group, the main areas of application for the ESF are social inclusion (particularly of immigrants in Nordic Regions and the UK), lifelong learning and proactive employment policies. The main added value of ESF action consists, firstly, of its contribution to the development of social inclusion (notably through the development of fundamental skills), access to the job market and the strengthening of partnerships between stakeholders. The Community's priorities as far as the ESF is concerned are seen as adequate by the Regions. However, the manner in which they are adopted and introduced at national levels does not meet the specific needs of certain regions as far as areas of application are concerned (rural areas).

2. The added value from the ESF is seen mainly in the field of social inclusion and, to a lesser extent, competitiveness whereas its contribution to territorial cohesion is not very highly considered by respondents. Most of the regions emphasise the added value of the ESF as far as assistance for underprivileged sections of the population are concerned i.e. immigrants or long-term unemployed with few, if any, qualifications. The ESF has encouraged the development of policies and instruments targeting this sector of the population, providing a level of cover that would not otherwise be attained because assistance from national policies alone would not be sufficient. On an ad hoc basis, some regions highlight the role of the ESF in the fields of competitiveness and innovation. Among the examples are the Uusimaa region, with funding for business incubators, the region of Aquitaine where it has funded a mobility platform and the regions of Asturias and Emilia-Romagna where it has funded innovations in policies targeting the job market and training. Despite the importance of the ESF, it is often difficult to show its added value because a large part of the allocated funds goes towards reinforcing national policies on education, training and employment and is not sufficiently visible to ordinary citizens who fail to appreciate the contribution of the ESF and EU in solving local and regional problems.

3. The system of governance applied to the ESF is deemed restrictive by most regions. This is particularly the case when intervention occurs on a national level. Adapting programmes at a regional level is not always satisfactory and the highly centralised management mechanisms are seen as lacking flexibility and being too bureaucratic. The intermediate management bodies do not always operate satisfactorily. This limits flexibility in programme management (especially in the UK) and restricts the provision of effective, creative answers to the needs expressed at grass roots level. The constraints limit fast responses to the crisis situation and the redirecting of policies and instruments is slow and difficult. However, some Regions highlight good decentralised management practices for the ESF, one such being Emilia-Romagna which ensures the involvement of the "provinces". In most cases, the Regions take part in the consultation process when the ESF OP is designed. However, the Regions' positions are not adequately taken into account by Central

Government and this limits the adaptability of the programmes to specific regional characteristics. Finally, as far as coordination in the implementation of the ESF and ERDF is concerned, it is deemed insufficient by most Regions, except Emilia-Romagna and Podlaskie. The selected formula (single-fund programmes) hinders strategic action in the field and does not help in any way with better coordination of action by the two funds – ERDF and ESF. The mechanism that allows for the mobilisation of a residual share of the other fund is seldom used. The merger of the two funds (ESF and ERDF) into a single fund is seen by some Regions as one way of solving coordination problems and increasing the effectiveness of the use of the funds at regional level.

4. The ESF after 2013

1. With regard to the future of the ESF, the Regions have expressed strong support for an extension of the cohesion policy and action by the ESF in all European regions after 2013. The role of the ESF in assisting the underprivileged, developing lifelong learning and implementing active employment policies is fully recognised. Its removal would have negative effects on social cohesion within Europe and the gaps between social groups would tend to widen.

2. Confirmation of the first scenario suggested in the questionnaire (reduction of the EU budget and ESF) might mean the end of access to the ESF for most Regions and, therefore, a break with the work carried out over the past few years thanks to the EU's support in favour of underprivileged social groups. According to the Regions, alternative mechanisms supported by national and regional funds might alleviate the problems but this would distance the EU from its citizens and cast doubt on the objectives of social and territorial cohesion on a European level.

3. One scenario following on from the concepts proposed in the "Barca Report" (the maintenance of the cohesion policy for all the regions in the EU, with the ESF and ERDF continuing as independent funds) would be a positive development compared to the current situation. Maintaining the ESF would undoubtedly preserve the aim and objectives of the policy in all European regions. Strengthening the role of the regions in the design and implementation of OPs would be very positive and would allow for more accurate targeting of regional objectives. Efforts in favour of decreased bureaucracy and better coordination between the ESF and ERDF would be challenges that would need to be overcome before progress could be made, compared to the current situation. This would be well supported by the Regions that responded to the questionnaire.

4. The revolutionary scenario introduces a few proposals that would break with the current system, in particular the merger of the ESF and ERDF, an increase in regions' role in the design and implementation of OPs (in accordance with European guidelines) and the decentralisation of ESF management. The Regions that responded to the questionnaire find this proposal interesting because it would strengthen flexibility and the ability of regions to respond to specific needs within each area. However, the Regions are fairly divided on the merger of the two funds to create a single, new fund. Some Regions support the idea while others can see no advantage in the scheme, deeming on the contrary that social policies may be the poor relation compared to other policies traditionally supported by the ERDF.

5. Summary of conclusions

In short, the responses from Regions to the questionnaire reveal the following:

- The economic crisis has affected all Regions and is evident in the rapid increase in the unemployment rate for young people, workers aged over 45 with few skills who have recently lost their jobs and the more underprivileged sections of the population, in particular immigrants;

- The ESF is being used to respond to the crisis but rigidity in programming, bureaucracy and, in some cases, difficulties within national and regional budgets, are forcing faster responses;

- The added value of the ESF is acknowledged in the fields of social inclusion and innovation in training and employment sectors. Its role in helping underprivileged sections of the population is seen as assistance from the EU in solving problems of social exclusion;

- The style of governance is considered by most Regions as bureaucratic and too centralised, preventing the targeting of the ESF to solve specific problems in various regional situations. It remains difficult to coordinate the ESF and ERDF at grass roots level.

As far as the development of the ESF after 2013 is concerned, the Regions are seeking the following:

- The maintenance of the ESF for all EU regions because its removal would signify the weakening of European solidarity and the distancing of the EU from its citizens¹;
- Direct, and more proactive, involvement of Regions in the design stage of OPs in their role as contacts for national and European agencies, to ensure that programmes are better tailored to the strategic development objectives of the various Regions;
- Decentralisation of ESF management to provide flexibility in implementation to suit regional requirements;
- A management model based on strategic objectives (instead of the administrative logic that prevails at the present time). The method would be simpler and less bureaucratic, producing the conditions for effective programmes. It would also be worthwhile enhancing and integrating the lessons learnt from the EQUAL initiative in *mainstream* OPs;
- The strengthening of the role of the ESF in the funding of innovative initiatives in the fields of education, training, employment and social inclusion policies and an increase in its public visibility;
- Better coordination between the management of the ESF and ERDF to provide the synchronicity that is essential for the effective use of the two instruments to promote the integrated development of territories.

¹ Only one region (Stockholm) questions the usefulness of sending funds to Brussels and receiving them back in the form of the ESF.

APPENDIX: SYNOPIIC FRAMEWORK OF THE RESPONSES

1. Regional Context

Region	Unemployment rate*	Most Important Groups Unemployed	Main Problems of Social Exclusion	Relevance of Immigration
Aberdeenshire	1.4%		Accessibility to services; education and training; seasonal and part time work (lower wages).	Migrant workers from new MS; English language.
Aquitaine	9%	Young people; women.	Young without work; women represent 53% of unemployed.	Not a regional competence. However the regional administrative level follows the evolution of the problem.
Asturias	12.1%	Young; women; single parents; long-term unemployed (mainly older than 45 yrs old).	Women, advanced age, low level of qualification and ethnic minorities are the main groups at risk of exclusion.	No relevance.
Devon	3.4%	Young people.	Difficult accessibility to services; poor transport links; access to information; aging and older people; (pockets of deprivation in rural areas).	Not as high as some other British regions; immigrants from Poland and eastern countries; accessibility to services, linguistics; accommodation, education of migrant's children.
Emilia-Romagna	3.4%	Women aged 40-55 years old (migrant background; low level of qualification; short-term contracts).	Work inclusion of disadvantaged people (ex-offenders; drug problems; single parent families).	Rate of unemployment is double the regional average; main problems: job (female occupation); school integration of young people; access to services and housing; risk of exclusion.
East of England	5.9%	People aged over 50; single parents; people with disabilities; ethnic minority.	Low skill levels; aging; disabled people; ethnic minorities; single parents; groups living in areas of high unemployment.	Migration from EU accession states; access to information and services; housing; skills (including English language); migrant workers make an essential contribution to the success of the region's economy.
Gävleborg		Young people.	Immigrants and young without work.	Immigrants from Kurdistan and former Yugoslavia; unemployment and lack of training.
Hampshire	2.5%	Young; women; immigrants; long-term unemployment.	Access to employment, housing, training and support.	Immigrants from Poland, eastern & central European countries; language barrier, housing, unemployment, access to services (medical care).
Podlaskie	11.2%	Young people; long-term unemployment, low skills level.	Long-term unemployment; disabled people; low skill level, mismatch between skills and labour market needs, rural areas, small towns.	No.
Skåne	9.2%	Young people and immigrants.	Lack of integration of immigrants.	Migration from outside Europe, lack of work, housing.

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Region	Unemployment rate*	Most Important Groups Unemployed	Main Problems of Social Exclusion	Relevance of Immigration
Somerset	8.9%	Young people; people over then 50.	Rural isolation; equal access to services; housing; gypsies.	Yes, incoming immigrants from EU, Poland and Portugal; long term immigration from China, India, Bangladesh; problems with access to services; language barriers.
Stockholm	2.8%	Young people and long term unemployment.	Areas with concentrated social problems.	Yes, mainly refugees; unemployment
Uusimaa	6.5%	Young people (men).	Young immigrants without education and work experience.	Yes. It is increasing. Refugees; language and access to jobs

- Unemployment rates refer to different moments. For some regions at the end of 2008, in other cases they are more recent. Nevertheless a common issue concerns all the regions, the fast increase in unemployment rates.

2. Current Programming Period

Region	Main fields of application of ESF	EU priorities	Governance and coordination	Added value of ESF	Impact of crisis
Aberdeenshire	Education; LLL; Social inclusion (including immigrants).	Satisfactory. Spatial targeting in Scottish programmes constrains the access for support for unemployed people and curbs the ability to access the programme 2007-13.	National (Scotland). National priorities are not adapted to regional context. They are targeted to deprived urban areas. Region is mainly rural. Region participated in the consultation process but their views were not taken enough on board. Programme more centralised than the previous one.	A very important programme for fostering social cohesion and competitiveness. Highest added value of the ESF - literacy, numeracy, English language and training.	Impact of the crisis is expected in the increase of the unemployment rate, social exclusion and migration.
Aquitaine...	LLL; Employment policies; social inclusion.	Insufficient stress on innovation.	National. The system is too centralised. The national utilisation of the ESF by central government gives legitimacy to intervene on decentralised issues ex: training and apprenticeships. Globally the national priorities are adapted to regional needs. Region and a large regional partnership previously chose the main topics for the	Quality of the apprenticeship system and the platform for international mobility. The ESF is relevant to foster territorial cohesion and competitiveness.	The crisis is felt in the region, unemployment rate is increasing. The region created a "fond social de formation" addressed to workers and enterprises to support their restructure processes and changes. Some adaptation of

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Region	Main fields of application of ESF	EU priorities	Governance and coordination	Added value of ESF	Impact of crisis
...Aquitaine continued			priorities. Regions within the <i>Association des Régions de France</i> are well informed and play a role in the design of the employment policies. The ESF is integrated within regional and national policies though not visible enough. The situation is different regarding apprenticeships, the ESF finance international mobility of people. A better coordination between ESF and ERDF would be useful.		the OP has been made to help those losing their jobs.
Asturias	Employment policies; LLL; social inclusion.	Satisfactory.	Regional. Single fund is satisfactory. Need to simplify the requirements in the justification of expenses.	Complementarities to initiatives financed by regional funds.	Expected with consequences in the increase in the unemployment rate and risk of exclusion (long term unemployment, older workers and women). The ESF is useful to respond to the social crisis.
Devon	Social inclusion; Employment policies; LLL.	Satisfactory.	National. Some mismatch between national priorities and Devon priorities (small businesses and sparser population are not fit by national priorities). Need for a more decentralised approach to allow priorities more addressed to regional needs. ESF and ERDF implementation are not coordinated. Need to create a more flexible local funding pot.	The ESF is mainly addressed to support social cohesion. A lot of activities would not be able to take place in Devon without ESF: upskill the workforce - people with basic qualification, aiding people to access the labour market.	Felt: unemployment doubled over the past year. Older workers. The design of OP is not flexible enough to answer to the crisis. Probably some adjustment will be introduced for the period 2011-13.
Emilia-Romagna...	Employment policies; social inclusion; R&D.	Satisfactory.	Regional. ESF is managed in collaboration with the 9 Provinces (intermediary bodies). Regional government is responsible for coordination and administration of ESF. Professional training projects must be carried out by accredited centres. Satisfactory	ESF is very important to support social cohesion and competitiveness. ESF helped projects about gender equality and labour market problems.	Strongly felt. Increasing unemployment (young people and women with short-term contracts). Immigrants (If they lose their job they have to leave Italy).

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Region	Main fields of application of ESF	EU priorities	Governance and coordination	Added value of ESF	Impact of crisis
...Emilia-Romagna continued			coordination between ESF and ERDF. Regional system has been recognised efficient by the EC. Simplification would be useful to transfer to ESF the simplification of administrative procedures and rules tested by the Equal programme as it proved to be successful in managing projects for highly disadvantaged targets.	ESF contributed to the innovation of training and employment systems.	ESF would be a useful response – increase advance payments, simplify procedures and enlarge the range of eligible expenses.
East of England	Employment policies; Social inclusion (incl. immigrants); LLL.	Satisfactory.	National. The majority of the programme is allocated to Government Offices in regions for delivery in accordance with the ESF regional framework, drafted with the collaboration of regional partners. Continuation of global grants is a positive point. System of governance perhaps too top-down, more decentralisation would be useful to increasingly address the programme to regional needs identified in regional strategies. Weak links between ESF and ERDF. A common fund would be more appropriate to address the regional needs and strategies within the framework of Lisbon and Göteborg objectives.	ESF is very important to support social inclusion and competitiveness. Not relevant for territorial cohesion. ESF allows the development of partnerships to tackle new groups at a deeper level.	Strongly felt - contract economy; growth in unemployment (new labour market entrants unable to find work); immigrants leaving region returning back to their country of origin. Public sector and business organisations are working together to fight against crisis (try to maintain employment; training...) with the support of national and ESF funds.
Gävleborg	Social inclusion (immigrants); cooperation, R&D.		Regional. Need for support services at regional level to help stakeholders.	ESF is very important to support social inclusion and competitiveness.	Strongly felt. ESF is considered useful to respond to social impacts of the crisis.
Hampshire	Lifelong learning	Satisfactory.	National. There are global grants in UK but not in Hampshire. The current system is very prescriptive and does not allow for any creativity in solving problems. Region participated in the consultation on the design of the programme.	The add value of ESF is mainly felt in terms of competitiveness and social inclusion. Not relevant for territorial inclusion.	Unemployment rate is rising; negative impacts are foreseen in social exclusion. Migration (internal/external). Young are leaving rural areas. A steering group of regional & local actors is in charge of the assessment of the crisis and its effects.

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Region	Main fields of application of ESF	EU priorities	Governance and coordination	Added value of ESF	Impact of crisis
Podlaskie	Employment policies, LLL, social inclusion.	Satisfactory.	National, but about 60% of the budget is implemented at regional level. National priorities are in line with European priorities and they correspond to the needs of the region. The region didn't participate in the preparation of the Programme. The OP is flexible enough to allow the implementation of a wide range of projects at regional level. Coordination between ESF and ERDF seems to be satisfactory. One of the main problems concerns the administrative procedures which are very difficult.	The added value of ESF is mainly felt in terms of social inclusion and also competitiveness. It is of little importance for territorial cohesion. The highest added value of the ESF concerns projects addressed to unemployed people.	The crisis is starting, unemployment is increasing. It is affecting the ESF programming, some difficulties in finding regional co-financing; some changes in the ESF OP is foreseen to tackle the crisis, for instance fast-track selection of projects, new instruments for unemployed people, new forms of assistance for firms...
Skåne	Social inclusion of immigrants, education, LLL.	Satisfactory.	National. National priorities are adapted to regional needs. At regional level activities are implemented to prevent social exclusion, to increase competence and to help unemployed people. The region did not play any active role in the design of the programme. The Region is in favour of a broader decentralisation as well as less bureaucracy. Merging ESF and ERDF should be a good solution.	The added value of the ESF is mainly felt in terms of social inclusion and also competitiveness. It is of little importance for territorial cohesion. The highest added value of the ESF concerns projects addressed to unemployed people.	The crisis is starting. Employment agencies and communes are making preparations in order to answer to a high demand. The ESF would play a useful role within the answers to crisis; however the crisis is not yet visible enough to justify changes in the ESF OP.
Somerset...	LLL; Social inclusion including social inclusion of immigrants; Employment policies.	Satisfactory.	National. However the SW Regional Framework outlines how the priorities for ESF actions in the SW are delivered. Some ESF projects in the SW have been designed and delivered across regional borders (for example Job Centre Plus by Dorset and Somerset District). Community Grants are administered at regional level addressed to support third sector organisations. The Regional framework was agreed at a time of high employment, it hasn't enough flexibility	The added value is mainly felt in terms of social inclusion and competitiveness. ESF application has been tackling the regional low skills and educational attainment levels, supporting learning and confidence building. Funds have been spent to	The crisis is starting. Unemployment is increasing. There is a lack of public funds to support activities addressed to disadvantaged people, community tensions are increasing. Criminal behaviour is increasing. Economic migrants in the region are returning to their home countries.

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Region	Main fields of application of ESF	EU priorities	Governance and coordination	Added value of ESF	Impact of crisis
...Somerset continued			to respond to changing needs. People at risk of unemployment are ineligible for support within the current priorities. A more decentralised approach in future to support a wider range of priorities should be achieved. In practical terms there is a limited coordination between the ESF and ERDF.	deliver pre-programmed work and have not made sufficient inroads into communities experiencing real needs.	In December a task force was created to monitor the Somerset downturn and develop the Somerset's Recovery Plan. The reduction in the availability of regional funding limits the availability of match funding for ESF projects. Dorset/Somerset ESF contract has received additional funds.
Stockholm	Education and LLL; Employment policies; Social inclusion (including immigrants).	Satisfactory.	National. Within the national priorities regional levels make their own regional programming and handle the respective implementation. National priorities are adapted to the regional context. Each region is given its own global grant. ESF and ERDF are managed in the same partnership, administered by separate authorities. They work closely but problems and disparities occur. Melting together ESF and ERFD can be a good idea.	The added value is mainly in social cohesion, competitiveness has some importance, and territorial cohesion is less relevant. Working with ESF has emphasised common regional responsibility for social inclusion. Is the ESF a good tool or would it be more efficient to keep the money in Sweden from the beginning rather than transferring it to the EU just to get it back this way?	The crisis in Stockholm has a small impact in comparison with other Swedish regions. However unemployment is growing, mainly among young people, social tensions between ethnic groups tend to grow with unemployment. To fight against the crisis larger and more strategic projects have been initiated.

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Region	Main fields of application of ESF	EU priorities	Governance and coordination	Added value of ESF	Impact of crisis
Uusimaa	R&D; Employment policies; Social inclusion of immigrants.	Satisfactory.	National and regional. One national ESF programme that is divided to national and 4 regional parts. National priorities are adapted to regional programme parts. Need to simplify procedures, implementation of ERFD and ESF is too complicated and expensive.	ESF is important to improve social cohesion, territorial cohesion and competitiveness. Without it the region would not be able to finance business incubators on as large a scale as now and also support for immigrants would have been lower.	The impact of the crisis is starting. Total unemployment rate is increasing mainly unemployment of young people. To fight against the crisis state and municipalities are trying to speed up public investments concerning infrastructure building and housing renovation. The crisis is affecting the implementation of ESF because it is difficult to find public and private funding. OP will be adapted to match the social impacts of the crisis.

3. The ESF after 2013

Region	Scenario 1 "Sharp cuts in EU budget and ESF"	Scenario 2 "Barca Scenario"	Scenario 3 "Revolutionary Scenario"
Aberdeenshire	The region would probably not be eligible for ESF. Support to citizens with disabilities and other furthest from the labour market would be cut.	This scenario would maintain the status quo; no major changes to the current activities are foreseen.	This scenario depends on the level of autonomy given to regional level and on the cooperation between DGs. The region feels that it is important that all regions have access to the funds and are allowed to tailor them to the needs of their localities and citizens with a view to supporting territorial cohesion.
Aquitaine	Region probably would compensate the loss of ESF with regional funds. LLL remains a priority for the Region.	No change.	The issue is whether there can be articulation between ERDF/ESF on numerous projects. Anything which can help alleviate the bureaucracy of ESF management must essentially be considered as an objective in itself. The ESF is not used primarily for this cause, not to be confused with the essential rigour of the use of EU funds.

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Region	Scenario 1 "Sharp cuts in EU budget and ESF"	Scenario 2 "Barca Scenario"	Scenario 3 "Revolutionary Scenario"
Asturias	This scenario would constraint the activities that have a strong support of ESF such as training and support to employment.	This scenario is quite similar with the current situation.	This scenario would reduce the administrative requirements and speed up the implementation of the funds. Merging ESF and ERDF could suppose a reduction of the weight of social policies.
Devon	No comment.	No comment.	No comment.
Emilia-Romagna	More public and private resources will be necessary to support training, employment and social policies. Better integration between employment policies and social inclusion policies should contribute to support social inclusion.	Social inclusion is a priority to Emilia-Romagna. This scenario will help maintain a high level of investment in this topic in line with European strategy.	Emilia-Romagna region has built up a regional system for management structural funds. The revolutionary scenario wouldn't cause any problem to the region; it is ready to deal with new management methods.
East of England	This scenario would mean that the only funding available would be national funds; it is less regional in its approach. Reduction in visibility for the EU.	Same level of funding would be available to the region but focus would be in social issues rather than in economic activities. May be this scenario would result in more regional influence over the development of the regional programme and a closer link to regional strategies.	This scenario would enable regional partners to increase the focus of the funding on regional needs. It would be possible to foster the coherence between the competitiveness and employment elements of the regional programme. Less bureaucracy.
Gävleborg	Sustainability of regional action in favour of training, employment and social inclusion would be affected.	Would be a positive scenario for the region if the regional development programme could be the base for decision.	Regions could better influence policies.
Hampshire	Difficult to maintain level of support to those not in work or furthest from the labour market.	No comment.	Two pots (ESF and ERDF) should remain with complementary activities where appropriate.
Podlaskie	This scenario means the increase of the unemployment rate.	It will contribute to the development of the region.	This scenario seems to be very interesting. It would be a new and fresh challenge for all regions. It wouldn't be necessary to melt ESF and ERDF.
Skåne	It is not possible to say that any substantial activities would be cut.	No changes regarding the present situation.	It would be an adequate scenario for the region. Better coordination between the 2 funds is positive.

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Region	Scenario 1 "Sharp cuts in EU budget and ESF"	Scenario 2 "Barca Scenario"	Scenario 3 "Revolutionary Scenario"
Somerset	This scenario would prevent the region from addressing many of its skills deficiencies and would reduce the region's ability to contribute to the future EU growth and competitiveness.	This scenario would allow regions to play a more active role in the design and implementation of the OP.	It is the most favoured scenario for the region. ESF and ERFD combined would match better the priorities of the region and address regional needs in a more flexible way.
Stockholm	This scenario would reduce the circulation of money from Sweden to Brussels and back to Sweden again. This is an issue in discussion within the region.	No comment.	This scenario would allow a more flexible situation with focus on objectives rather than technical regulation.
Uusimaa	This scenario would end all ESF which would hinder actions to employment, training and social inclusion.	More or less the current situation.	It would be a big challenge but also an opportunity to simplify procedures.

Note - For more in-depth information please see responses from each region available on the CPMR website.