

Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999 (repealed)

TITLE I

OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL RULES ON ASSISTANCE

CHAPTER II

Objectives and missions

Article 3

Objectives

1 The action taken by the Community under Article 158 of the Treaty shall be designed to strengthen the economic and social cohesion of the enlarged European Union in order to promote the harmonious, balanced and sustainable development of the Community. This action shall be taken with the aid of the Funds, the European Investment Bank (EIB) and other existing financial instruments. It shall be aimed at reducing the economic, social and territorial disparities which have arisen particularly in countries and regions whose development is lagging behind and in connection with economic and social restructuring and the ageing of the population.

The action taken under the Funds shall incorporate, at national and regional level, the Community's priorities in favour of sustainable development by strengthening growth, competitiveness, employment and social inclusion and by protecting and improving the quality of the environment.

2 To that end, the ERDF, the ESF, the Cohesion Fund, the EIB and the other existing Community financial instruments shall each contribute in an appropriate way towards achieving the following three objectives:

- a the Convergence objective, which shall be aimed at speeding up the convergence of the least-developed Member States and regions by improving conditions for growth and employment through the increasing and improvement of the quality of investment in physical and human capital, the development of innovation and of the knowledge society, adaptability to economic and social changes, the protection and improvement of the environment, and administrative efficiency. This objective shall constitute the priority of the Funds;
- b the Regional competitiveness and employment objective, which shall, outside the least-developed regions, be aimed at strengthening regions' competitiveness and attractiveness as well as employment by anticipating economic and social changes, including those linked to the opening of trade, through the increasing and improvement of the quality of investment in human capital, innovation and the promotion of the knowledge society, entrepreneurship, the protection and improvement of the environment, and the improvement of accessibility, adaptability of workers and businesses as well as the development of inclusive job markets; and
- c the European territorial cooperation objective, which shall be aimed at strengthening cross-border cooperation through joint local and regional initiatives, strengthening

transnational cooperation by means of actions conducive to integrated territorial development linked to the Community priorities, and strengthening interregional cooperation and exchange of experience at the appropriate territorial level.

3 Under the three objectives referred to in paragraph 2, assistance from the Funds shall, according to their nature, take into account specific economic and social features, on the one hand, and specific territorial features, on the other. The assistance shall, in an appropriate manner, support sustainable urban development particularly as part of regional development and the renewal of rural areas and of areas dependent on fisheries through economic diversification. The assistance shall also support areas affected by geographical or natural handicaps which aggravate the problems of development, particularly in the outermost regions as referred to in Article 299(2) of the Treaty as well as the northern areas with very low population density, certain islands and island Member States, and mountainous areas.

Article 4

Instruments and missions

1 The Funds shall contribute, each in accordance with the specific provisions governing it, towards achieving the three objectives referred to in Article 3(2) as follows:

- a the Convergence objective: the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund;
- b the Regional competitiveness and employment objective: the ERDF and the ESF; and
- c the European territorial cooperation objective: the ERDF.

2 The Cohesion Fund shall also intervene in those regions not eligible for support from the Convergence objective under the criteria set out in Article 5(1) which belong to:

- a a Member State eligible for support from the Cohesion Fund under the criteria set out in Article 5(2); and
- b a Member State eligible for support from the Cohesion Fund under the criteria set out in Article 8(3).

3 The Funds shall contribute towards the financing of technical assistance on the initiative of the Member States and the Commission.