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## PROTOCOLS

### PROTOCOL (No 28)

#### ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

##### THE HIGH CONTRACTING PARTIES,

RECALLING that Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union includes the objective of promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion and solidarity between Member States and that the said cohesion figures among the areas of shared competence of the Union listed in Article 4(2)(c) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

RECALLING that the provisions of Part Three, Title XVIII, on economic, social and territorial cohesion as a whole provide the legal basis for consolidating and further developing the Union's action in the field of economic, social and territorial cohesion, including the creation of a new fund,

RECALLING that the provisions of Article 177 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union envisage setting up a Cohesion Fund,

NOTING that the European Investment Bank is lending large and increasing amounts for the benefit of the poorer regions,

NOTING the desire for greater flexibility in the arrangements for allocations from the Structural Funds,

NOTING the desire for modulation of the levels of Union participation in programmes and projects in certain countries,

NOTING the proposal to take greater account of the relative prosperity of Member States in the system of own resources,

REAFFIRM that the promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion is vital to the full development and enduring success of the Union,

REAFFIRM their conviction that the Structural Funds should continue to play a considerable part in the achievement of Union objectives in the field of cohesion,

REAFFIRM their conviction that the European Investment Bank should continue to devote the majority of its resources to the promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion, and declare their willingness to review the capital needs of the European Investment Bank as soon as this is necessary for that purpose,

AGREE that the Cohesion Fund will provide Union financial contributions to projects in the fields of environment and trans-European networks in Member States with a per capita GNP of less than 90 % of the Union average which have a programme leading to the fulfilment of the conditions of economic convergence as set out in Article 126,

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DECLARE their intention of allowing a greater margin of flexibility in allocating financing from the Structural Funds to specific needs not covered under the present Structural Funds regulations,

DECLARE their willingness to modulate the levels of Union participation in the context of programmes and projects of the Structural Funds, with a view to avoiding excessive increases in budgetary expenditure in the less prosperous Member States,

RECOGNISE the need to monitor regularly the progress made towards achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion and state their willingness to study all necessary measures in this respect,

DECLARE their intention of taking greater account of the contributive capacity of individual Member States in the system of own resources, and of examining means of correcting, for the less prosperous Member States, regressive elements existing in the present own resources system,

AGREE to annex this Protocol to the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.