



Tuesday, 8 October 2019. From 14:30 to 16:00  
 Venue: Copper Hall, SQUARE Brussels Meeting Centre  
 Code: 08WS554

# Future Cohesion Policy: How to face both global challenges and the need of structural reforms

Organised by Fundación Galicia Europa

Cohesion Policy financing is a stake until the European Council finally agree on the future Multiannual Financial Framework. In this workshop, we want to insist on the benefits this policy brings to our regions and debate on the new proposals for thematic concentration and the strengthen link with the European Semester. How these two restrictions on structural funds spending can fit together? Are Cohesion Policy allocations enough to respond at the same time to the objectives of a Smarter and Greener Europe and to the needs of structural reforms?

## Agenda

**Welcome address** by Alfonso Rueda, Vice-President of the Regional Government of Galicia.

### Speakers:

- Nicola De Michelis, *Director for Smart and Sustainable Growth and Programme Implementation IV. DG REGIO. European Commission* (tbc)
- Miguel Gil Tetre, *Head of Unit - European Semester, European Strategic Investments and Cohesion. Secretariat General. European Commission*
- Miguel Corgos López-Prado, *Director General for Planning and Budget. Galician Regional Ministry for Finance. Xunta de Galicia*
- Ester Silva, *Vice-President. Regional Coordination and Development Commission of North Portugal (CCDR-N)*

**Moderator:** Luis Simon, director of the Elcano Royal Institute's Office in Brussels



## Outline

Although the global Cohesion Policy amount will be most probably reduced, the orientation of the funds will be reinforced by obliging to allocate between 65% and 85% of ERDF and Cohesion Fund to the first two political objectives: 1. A Smarter Europe (innovation, digitisation, economic transformation and support to SME) and 2. a Greener, carbon-free Europe (energy transition, renewables and the fight against climate change). Together with the 6% of the ERDF dedicated to sustainable urban development, this would just leave a margin of 9-29% to invest in a more connected Europe (transport and digital networks) and a more Social Europe (quality employment, education, skills, social inclusion and equal access to healthcare).

On top of that, the future Cohesion Policy will have a strengthened link with the European Semester and Unions' economic governance, which means that its funds will be encouraged to support the reforms recommended within this economic coordination process. Being the level of enforcement not yet decided, this, however, poses several questions on whether these reforms are in line with the five political objectives or whether there is a risk of Cohesion policy being stripped out of considerable financial resources devoted to its traditional objectives. In February, the European Commission published for the first-time ideas on how Cohesion Policy funds can help implement European Semester recommendations in the forthcoming programming period. Getting together the thematic concentration -including ESF+ share of the total budget- and these first recommendations will undoubtedly represent a huge challenge for managing authorities. Not to mention the possibility of this becoming an additional bureaucratic burden.

The dialogue between the Commission and Member States on where the use of these EU funds should be targeted is to start soon. Since regional and local authorities should be privileged stakeholders for Member States in defining their positions, their inputs should be heard at an initial stage.

- **Will there be more real flexibility for funds' spending during next financial period?**
- **Will it be possible to introduce a regional approach in the European Semester?**
- **Is the current allocation method fair enough so that regions can meet the needs of both facing global challenges and implementing structural measures?**