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Presentation in Session 1: Proposals for the reform of EU Cohesion Policy 2007-2013

This presentation aims to provide an update on the proposals for EU Cohesion Policy for the period 2007-2013, informed by the recent publication of the Commission's new Financial Perspective and the Third Cohesion Report.

The Financial Perspective proposes how much money will be allocated under the headings of:

Sustainable growth

Preservation and management of natural resources

Citizenship, freedom, security and justice

The EU as a global partner

The Cohesion policy will be funded by heading (1b) cohesion for growth and employment. A Rural Development Fund and a new Environment Fund are suggested under heading (2).

The Third Cohesion Report aims to streamline the delivery of the Structural Funds (now reduced to the European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund). Three themes – innovation, accessibility and the environment – would be spread across three objectives:

Objective 1: Convergence “supporting growth and job creation in the least developed Member States and regions”

Objective 2: Regional competitiveness and employment “anticipating and promoting change”

Objective 3: European territorial cooperation “promoting the harmonious and balanced development of the European territory”

Important changes have also been suggested in the way that the funds are should be managed, leading to more responsibility passed on the Member States, especially in the regions with Objective 2 programmes. The presentation addresses some of the implications for environmental protection.