



**The Community Strategic Guidelines for Cohesion Policy 2007- 2013 –
report by Constanze Krehl MEP for REGI Committee
Plenary vote – Thursday 18 May**

Briefing by the Coalition for Sustainable EU Funds

A clean and healthy environment is fundamental to people's quality of life and is part of the legacy we pass on to our children through our vision of sustainable development.

Cohesion Policy must continue to contribute to the protection and improvement of the environment, at the same time as delivering the Lisbon growth and jobs agenda. It is essential that the Community Strategic Guidelines build on current legislative requirements and environmental best practice.

Natural resources form the foundation of the EU's wealth and underpin its economy in urban and rural areas. The economic rationale for environmental investment could not be clearer: it is fundamental for providing environmental services such as clean water in a cost effective way; it lays the foundations for the long-term sustainability of economic growth (e.g. reducing dependence on road transport) and wellbeing; while at the same time stimulating innovation and high quality job creation.

The European Parliament has in the past fought hard to achieve a high level of ambition in the EU's legislative framework by adopting Directives for Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Natura 2000 (Birds and Habitats Directives) and the Water Framework Directive. The challenge now is to continue with this high level of ambition in the development and implementation of Cohesion Policy.

NGOs welcome Mrs Krehl's report on the Community Strategic Guidelines as adopted by the REGI Committee, which we hope will inform the Commission's revised proposal for the Guidelines. Priority recommendations for the vote are listed below.

Please support paras: 9, 18, 20, 21, 22, 46

Explanation of recommendations:

- Add **Natura 2000, the Water Framework Directive and the EU's 6th Environmental Action Programme** to the list of priority environmental investments. (Section 4.1.2)
- Require Member States to show how they intend to **finance environmental needs**, such as Natura 2000, which must be co-ordinated at the level of national strategic reference frameworks. (Chapter 3 - concentration of resources)
- Ensure that **Strategic Environmental Assessment** is fully applied to all draft operational programmes and – as a matter of best practice – to the national strategic reference framework. Ensure results of SEA are fed into the operational programmes.
- With regard to **partnership**, recommend that training, capacity building and the coverage of direct costs linked to the duties of partners are covered through Technical Assistance. (Section 3.5)
- Prioritise an **integrated and sustainable development approach** to investment at all levels across the convergence, regional competitiveness and territorial co-operation objectives and the territorial dimension.
- Add requirement for thorough cost and benefit analyses and environmental impact assessments of **transport infrastructure projects** and encouragement for projects that decrease traffic. (Section 4.1.1)

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