

CEE Bankwatch Network
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Bulgaria:
Centre for Environmental
Information and Education
(CEIE)
For the Earth

Czech Republic:
Centrum pro dopravu a
energetiku (CDE)
Hnutí Duha

Estonia:
Estonian Green Movement–FoE

Georgia:
Green Alternative

Hungary:
National Society of
Conservationists – Friends of
the Earth Hungary (MTVSZ)

Latvia:
Latvian Green Movement

Lithuania:
Atgaja

Macedonia:
Eko–svest

Poland:
Polish Green Network (PGN)
Institute of Environmental
Economics (IEE)

Serbia:
Center for Ecology and
Sustainable Development
(CEKOR)

Slovakia:
Friends of the Earth – Center
for Environmental Public
Advocacy (FoE–CEPA)

Ukraine:
National Ecological Centre of
Ukraine (NECU)

CEE Bankwatch Network's
mission is to prevent
environmentally and socially
harmful impacts of
international development
finance, and to promote
alternative solutions and public
participation.

To:
General Affairs Council
Council of the European Union
Rue de la Loi 175,
B-1048 Brussels

February 18, 2011

Dear Ministers

In advance of the upcoming EU General Affairs Council on February 21, we urge you to actively support reforms to the Cohesion Policy that would better align it with the EU's goal of developing a sustainable, green economy. In particular we draw your attention to some key aspects of a recent Commission communication "Regional policy contributing to sustainable growth in Europe 2020" (SEC (2011) 92 final) that are worth your consideration.

This communication stresses both the benefits and indeed the necessity of modifying existing Cohesion Policy programmes in order to better accommodate priorities of today's Europe, one that is predicated on energy savings and a resource-efficient economy. We support the Commission's view that increasing both the quality and quantity of Cohesion Policy spending is necessary in the following priority areas:

- energy savings and production from renewable sources;
- biodiversity preservation and ecosystem services; and
- eco-innovation in enterprise;

In addition, the Communication recommends important instruments to apply throughout the Cohesion Policy and project cycle, specifically:

- obligatory green public procurement rules that will foster resource efficiency in all EU-funded projects; and
- reinforcement of partnership principles, including capacity-building for environmental NGOs involved in the shaping of the Cohesion Policy.

We firmly believe that these priorities must not only be a focal point of the current programming period but as well in the post-2013 Cohesion Policy. In light of constraints on the EU budget, public money must not be spent in areas that are not strategically important, ineffective or contradictory to other EU policies and objectives. We therefore urge support for a forward-looking Cohesion Policy, one that will set our countries on the path towards sustainable development.

Brook Riley

Climate justice and energy campaigner
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Markus Trilling

EU funds campaign coordinator
CEE Bankwatch/ Friends of the Earth Europe