

Michael Baun and Dan Marek (eds.)  
EU Cohesion Policy after Enlargement  
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“EU Cohesion Policy after Enlargement” brings experiences in the EU cohesion funds absorption, in the case of five old and five new EU member states, after the fifth wave of enlargement and cohesion funds reform in the year 2006. The book is coo-edited by Michael Baum, Marguerite Langale Pizer Professor of International Politics at Valdosta State University in the U.S. and Dan Marek, Jean Monnet lecturer in European Politics at the Department of Politics and European Studies, Palacký University in the Czech Republic.

The book examines cohesion policy in a response to Lisbonization, 2006 reform and Eastern enlargement imposed challenges in relatively wealthy, institutionally experienced old member states: United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, Spain and Greece and economically and regarding absorption capacities less advanced new member states: Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania and Romania.

The introductory article provides with the general cohesion policy framework and enables the embedding of most relevant issues raised in two groups of challenges. Old members face the utilization of reduced EU funds, while new member states just learn how to maximise usage of the EU funding. In the case of new member states, Baum and Marek connect the effective absorption of EU funds with absorption capacities and the ability to co-finance EU supported projects. Authors introduce readers with the meaning of Lisbon Agenda and explain what has historically precede to Lisbon Agenda, what are the goals and obligations apply to old and new members states in the light of Lisbonization in cohesion policy. Linking the impact domestic mediating factors and Europeanization have on countries regarding cohesion policy, as authors argue, depend on whether the country has just joined the EU, or is already a member for longer time period.

The second chapter written by David Allen provides with historical background for the implementation of cohesion policy, but divides it on the pre- and post-enlargement cohesion policy. Author discusses the role of the cities in the cohesion policy implementation process, the latent conflict between the national states and the Commission in the context of “Europe of regions” vs. ‘gate-keeping’ capacities of national states. Maybe the most important question regarding the general evolution of the EU cohesion funding after 2013 is being addressed through the assessment of cohesion policy both on multilevel governance and reduce of disparities between old and new members and within countries. The meaning of British ‘renationalization’ concept to the future role of cohesion policy is also included and elaborated.

Rachel Chapman introduces readers to the usage of cohesion funds in Great Britain. The author outlines problematic issues UK has faced with in the previous implementation periods, hence explaining the challenges UK deals with in 2007-2013 period. According to Chapman, the rationalization of cohesion policy implementation was triggered by reduce in the EU funding, 2006 reform, and some specific domestic context. Rationalization is observed through programme management, partnership and strategic programming. Chapman emphasises the alignment of objectives along with Lisbon agenda and domestic policy lines, arguing that the reduced funds have had impact in operationalization of relatively narrow goals - competitiveness, growth and jobs. Programme management, complexly organized at various territorial levels, is exemplified as arrangement in which both reduced funding, coming from the EU level, political devolution as endogenous domestic factor and Lisbonization exert significant influence. On the other side, partnership principle as NGOs and civil society organizations inclusion, is mostly impacted by domestic mediating factors and the reduce of funds through scaling the partners down and changes in partnership type, whereas Lisbonization, due to the 'goodness of fit' appears to have a weak influence. Chapman also defines British proposal of 'renationalization' according to which only the poorer, new countries should be eligible for assistance, while others, more economically advanced should deal with their own imbalances on the national level, but without Commission's interference.

Roland Sturm and Ingo Schorlemmer give us an insight in, by federalism determined, regional policy in Germany. They find regional policy as always important in Germany because of the parallel functions of German regional policy and EU cohesion policy. Additionally there is an aid for small and medium sized enterprises which also comes from the federal government. German regional policy has major goal to create and protect jobs, and although regions are differently defined than the EU NUTS 2 regions, all the regions beneficiaries of national regional policy are as well in the East Germany. EU and German policies are coordinated; Commission defines reference points of regional policy and confirms amounts, territorial allocation and purposes of designated money. After 1990 differences between priorities of Commission and national policy raised and have caused empowerment of Länder government in comparison to central government, but still having Commission in charge when considering implementation. The authors observe coordination of national and EU level regional policy goals at the example of Baden-Württemberg in 2000-2006 and 2007-2013 period. In 2001-2006 decision makers were more flexible, the goals were less precise so there was an inflation of demands for acquiring EU assistance. In 2007-2013 period, due to the 2006 reform and reduce of funding, congruence in federal and Länder level Operational Programmes (OPs) and Lander OPs and National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF), was achieved through three strategies of consensus building: coordination, political culture and vagueness of expressed aims. Policymaking process was dominated by the civil servants who have the same education in low and therefore facilitate coordination and intergovernmental compromise in the time pressure, but also contribute to the lack of transparency and accountability. Sturm and Schorlemmer argue that consensus building and policy routines have not changed, but that reduced funding and Lisbonization have had proven to be challenging for bureaucracy. Concrete aims with clear indicators are perceived as novelty of 2007-2013 period and have, authors argue, imposed limits to flexibility of federal and Länder governments in the implementation of regional policy

Francesc Morata and Lucia Alexandra Popartan define Spain as the country which benefited the most from the EU cohesion policy. The article gives an overview of devolution process in Spain, elaborating which actors have influenced implementation of cohesion policy and what kind of networks of partnership have been created. Since in 2007-2013 period the new member countries are considered to be the needy ones,

cohesion privileges will be gradually terminated for Spain. The loss of cohesion funding in 2007-2013 period will have negative effects for most macroeconomic indicators, but one has to acknowledge that Spain has, along with the process of EU funds absorption acquired experience in managing EU support and has created networks of cooperation. In the face of reduced levels of funding, Spain has encouraged more cooperative modes of governance, which are oriented towards fulfilment of Lisbon Agenda goals; the relevance of local and intermediate levels of territorial administration in managing growth, education and innovation strategies reflected through factors such as local knowledge, and proximity and special economic, political and social interest. Authors conclude with an optimistic assessment that orientation towards Lisbon Agenda goals and multidimensionality of collaborative networks on all levels could be decisive in attaining better results with reduced funding.

The next chapter deals with Ireland, commonly perceived as EU funds utilization success story. Irene McMasters defines Ireland as a small country with a weak tradition of regional policy and regional governance. Ireland has managed to adapt its domestic structures to the demands of EU cohesion policy, but various stages domestic policies have also contributed in maximization of positive impacts of EU funds. Regionalization and decentralization of Ireland show that EU direct influence is highly questionable because the country was due to its size designated as single NUTS 2 region, EU support has targeted economic growth and development in general and neglected geographical component, centralist tradition and social partnership pattern have additionally complicated connection building with regional actors, and finally regionalization could also be perceived as an answer to changes in economy. The last round of cohesion policy Ireland perceives from the position on contributor, not beneficiary of EU funds, and according to the changed roles the system has adapt, but in basis kept previously attained characteristics in managing and implementing EU funds.

Greece, analysed by Christos J. Paraskevopoulos has undergone through significant infrastructural changes; administrative capacities were highly centralized and were a barrier in EU funds utilization. The article examines impacts of Europeanization on cohesion policy structures in the three programming periods which have preceded 2007-2013 period. First period (1989-1993) noted a shift from civic participation and commitment to decentralization and devolution programmes, to significant infrastructural progress and efficiency, accompanied with recentralization. In the second period (1994-1999) progress was noted in involvement of experts in policy making and technocratic planning and implementing policies, but within responsible ministries. Also, there appears to be evidence of learning process which had a slow pace because Greece lacked non-state actors investment and developed civil society. In 2000-2006 period Paraskevopoulos emphasizes institution restructuring on regional level and contra-effective centralization tendencies. In 2007-2013 period, changes in drafting National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) plotting occurred, while restructuring of Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs) and Strategic Operational Programmes (SOPs) has aimed to establish foundations for the 'knowledge economy'. To conclude, key challenge remains to be institution and administrative capacity building, while reduced funding does not entitles such an essential role.

The article about Poland and issues it faces in using EU funding is written by Grzegorz Gorzelak and Marek W. Kozak who emphasize historically influenced development of regional policy, which now concentrates in big cities and mostly in the Western part of Poland. Additionally, more developed regions are better managed on the local and regional level. Until 1999 reform which organized country in 16 new regional units (*Województwo*), designed as NUTS 2 regions for the EU cohesion policy purposes, there was barely any measures and instruments which could be marked as regional. In 2004-2006 period Po-

lish government has created Integrated Regional Operational Programme (IROP) for the entire Poland which focused on development of infrastructure, human resources development and local development. Further regionalization in programming and implementation brought improvements and increased EU assistance absorption capacity. In the 2007-2013 period, assessment of developmental policies is labelled with poor institutional framework, which has impacted public administration efficiency as well. Poorest regions receive greater share of their GDP from the EU funds, which symbolizes trade-off between efficiency and equity, remaining unclear whether this will lead to the desired knowledge-based economy. Although Poland has achieved 6% GDP growth after accession, current cohesion policy implementation is inefficient; achievement of higher growth rate and maximization in utilization of EU resources clearly requires institutional reform.

Dan Marek and Michael Baun describe the major challenges of cohesion policy implementation in the third largest EU funds recipient, Czech Republic. The chapter begins with elaboration of Czech effort to prepare for the EU funds usage in the pre-accession period. Authors emphasize the lack of institutional and administrative capacities, independent regional developmental policy and inter-ministerial coordination. These inefficient structures were first tackled in 1997 by development of 14 self-governing *kraje*, i.e. eight NUTS 2 regions, followed by the preparation of National Development Plan (NDP) which revealed debates between more concentrated vs. regional decision making processes. 2004-2006 period has showed that government's preparedness for the EU funds was far from adequate, administrative and institutional problems continued to be the highest barrier in policy implementation in 2007-2013 period as well. The Commission has criticised lack of horizontal coordination between Ministry of Regional Developments and other ministries managing numerous Operational Programmes which were occasionally overlapping. Additionally, Czech cohesion policy implementation is labelled as both 'politicized' and 'regionalized' because opposition accuses government for non-efficient use of structural funds and regions demand larger role in administration of EU resources.

Gyula Horváth's chapter presents Hungary as first post-communist country which has adopted regional development plans, but has lacked institutional and administrative capacities to capitalize its leading position in regional policy. Central Hungary and Budapest have used the flow of FDI and managed to restructure extremely successfully, whereas Northeast, Southeast and Great Plain struggle with heavy industry restructuring and decline in agriculture. Differences in standard of living across Hungary also reflect the need of implementing policies such as improvement of transport networks, creating job opportunities and development of local skills in less advanced regions, and in general conditions in which all regions can benefit from the economic growth. Problems emerge in rather unclear distribution of responsibilities between new regional bodies and government institutions. Horváth argues that regions should be endowed with more operational and strategic – planning functions which would enable more regionally diverse development paths.

Vitalis Nakrošis, presents the development of cohesion policy implementation in Lithuania. As entire Lithuania forms a single NUTS 2 region, centralized system in pre-accession period has proved to be extremely appropriate. However, in post-accession period, Lithuania has faced difficulties in absorption of EU post-accession assistance which have caused criticism both from Commission and opposition. Barrier to more efficient implementation of cohesion policy derives from small administration and requires deregulation, simplification and reform of civil service and more appropriate programmes. This would, Nakrošis argues, improve the implementation of cohesion policy and indirectly competitiveness of Lithuanian economy. However, cohesion policy implementation has already encouraged improvements in quality of governance in Lithuania which is visible through design of around 3000 projects which absorb entire EU funding in 2004-

2006 period. Lithuania has already tackled development of monitoring and evaluation instruments, now resulting with more efficient and strategic use of funds in Lithuania. Lisbonization in the implementation of cohesion funds is partially achieved on the broad aims level, but at the level of measures, there is less coherence between cohesion policy in Lithuania and Lisbon Agenda.

The case of Romania is last considered in this book; the chapter written by Jozsef Benedek and Réka Horváth analyses the special case of Romania, which has together with Bulgaria missed the window of opportunity and entered the EU in 2007, which has, authors argue, influenced its preparedness for cohesion policy implementation. The cohesion policy has played a great role in establishment of regional policy; regions were supposed to be strengthened by design of eight NUTS 2 regions, but they have insufficient power in decision making and are financially dependent on to the central government. Regional disparities in Romania are reproduced on NUTS 2 region level and established in historical development. It is expected that EU funds will result with more convergence between regions, but country, at least according to 2005 reports, still faces similar problems with limited administrative capacity to absorb EU assistance as well as most of the fifth wave enlargement countries.

The finishing chapter presents concluding remarks of editors, Dan Marek and Michael Baun, in which they provide answers for some non-resolved questions, underline the most important findings and at the very end offer their vision of the future EU cohesion policy. Old members are mostly observed through the way of dealing with reduced funding, all of them mainly facing significant difficulties, Greece being the only country more influenced with Lisbonization than funding cuts. New members have, as expected, faced difficulties in implementing EU funds, especially due to lack of administrative and institutional resources, but have made progress in decentralization and introduction of multi-level governance structures. Further, Marek and Baun analyse influence of Lisbonization and domestic factors on cohesion policy implementation, emphasizing that mediating factors have greater influence in old, richer EU countries where there is 'goodness of fit' to EU requirements and less dependence on EU resources. The future of cohesion policy in after 2013 period will be influence by proposals of main contributors to the EU budget to reduce EU spending and opposing suggestions by the beneficiaries. Great Britain will probably revive 'renationalization' proposal. Also, clear contribution of EU funds in achieving Lisbon and Gothenberg goals could play significant role in keeping or restructuring EU cohesion policy funds. Authors argue that it is highly unlikely that cohesion policy in post-2013 period will significantly differ from its present form, due to the intergovernmental nature of bargaining and politics in the EU and existence of regional disparities, possibly even amplified by the future enlargements.

Overall, "EU Cohesion Policy after Enlargement" presents first overview of European Union cohesion policy implementation in ten selected new and old member states. It handles with issues and key challenges that both groups face after enlargement; each country's report observes both pre-, and post-enlargement situation, as well as pre- and post-reform period. Book includes reports on developed countries such as Germany and United Kingdom, then main beneficiaries of EU funds till 2007, Ireland, Spain and Greece. Even old member states analysed in the book differentiate among themselves according to development and utilization of funding. Second group represents new members, which also differentiate according to accession year, size, growth and absorption capacities.

Country reports are very coherent within themselves, provide data interpreted by independent experts often included in the implementation of cohesion policy in their countries and there seem to be no grey areas in the articles. The only incoherence, also tackled by the authors, can be found in the otherwise excellently structured chapter about Greece, where Christos J. Paraskevopoulos argues that Lisbon Agenda is incorporated

in Greek goals, although large-scale infrastructure project described in book do not seem to be easily combined with Lisbonization. Beside this minor detail, articles are very clearly structured and enable non-problematic absorption key data.

Articles obviously address different issues in different countries, but all of them follow the same pattern, providing reader with a more complex image of a whole, just observed from different perspectives. The book is structured similarly to collecting of individual pieces of a puzzle and comprehending only at the end which image were you dealing with. Articles provide very detailed, in depth studies of one of the most important EU policy and rely on recent data, enabling readers to compare and make own conclusion without having to 'dig' for necessary information themselves.

I would recommend the book firstly to all scholars interested in EU funds, because it provides a thorough image of cohesion policy implementation in selected countries. The book also offers some general conclusions regarding issues dealt by new and old countries, which can be used as valid for other structurally similar EU countries. Moreover, the book can be used by policy makers and civil servants in candidate and potential candidate countries, in learning process and can provide help in avoiding some of the less successful models of funds absorption. Finally, the book is definitively recommendable to students or public policy, international relations and political economy which can rely on accuracy of the provided data.

To sum up, EU Cohesion Policy after enlargement is a very good overview of implementation process in 5 new and 5 old countries, especially plausible in differencing pre and post-enlargement and 2006 reform policy climate.