



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Summary of the Partnership Agreement for Belgium, 2014-2020

Overall information

The PA covers four funds: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF).

The PA focus on the following priorities:

- Promoting innovation friendly business environment by enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, improving innovation and research performance and developing an e-economy,
- Developing human capital growth and improved labour market participation by reinforcing all levels of education, increasing access to employment of the most vulnerable groups in society (in particular the young and long-term unemployed) and promoting social inclusion,
- Encouraging sustainable and efficient use of natural resources through promotion of energy efficiency and a low carbon economy, protection of the environment and adaptation to climate change,

Belgium has chosen to finance investment under 8 thematic objectives defined in the Regulations. Details on thematic objectives are presented in Table 1.

Negotiation process

1. Informal negotiations

Submission of informal PA on 15 November 2013

Informal Commission observations sent out 20 December 2013

2. Formal negotiations

Formal version Belgian PA entered in SFC on 23 April 2014

First Commission observations sent on 7 July 2014

Meeting with the Belgian regions and coordinator on 5 September 2014

Second version of Belgian PA received on 15 October 2014

ISC fast track launched on 15 October 2014

IS meeting fast track 22/10/2014

Final version including the modifications requested at the FT meeting sent on 24/10/2014

3. Main issues

- Cohesion policy is fully devolved to the three Belgian regions. Hence the difficulty to arrive at a "Belgian" Partnership agreement.
- First official version was completely lacking a Belgian dimension in its analysis and choices made. The final document submitted by Belgium now contains an aggregation at Belgian level of the analysis and the thematic objectives chosen.
- The PA is a compilation of the information contained in the programmes of the three Belgian regions.
- Main topics such as assessment of *ex ante* conditionalities (EACs) will be carried out on OP level.

