Beat: Politics

European Parliament welcomes Commission's proposal about internal borders

To tackle legal obstacles

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USPA NEWS - MEPs of the Regional Development Committee in the European Parliament discussed new tool proposed by the European Commission to remove barriers in cross-border context. MEPs welcomed Commission´s proposal to tackle legal and administrative obstacles in Europe´s cross-border regions following up on their Bridge EU legislative initiative adopted last September.

The Commission expects that removal of only 20% of cross-border obstacles would boost regional GDP by 2% and create over 1 million jobs. The proposal builds up on the Bridge EU idea of member states setting up a Cross-Border Coordination Point (CBCP) whose role will be to assess requests by stakeholders on obstacles to be removed and to act as liaison between national authorities. Once a cross-border obstacle is identified and there is no other tool for the neighbors to use such as a bilateral agreement, they can apply the Cross-Border Facilitation Tool, a voluntary procedure to resolve administrative and legal obstacles. While all requests will have to be answered by national authorities, the removal of the obstacle will depend on the decision by the national authorities. The Commission also wants to set up a network of cross-border coordination points to facilitate exchange of best practices.

MEPs welcomed the Commission proposal responding to the Parliament's initiative. They believe this new version of the tool compared to the 2018 initiative takes into account all key issues expressed by the Council such as voluntary character of the instrument and its simplified form stepping in when no other tools are available. MEPs stress that it is important not to create additional administrative burden or costs and therefore there might still be a need to further simplify the Commission proposal. Yet, they stand ready to cooperate on the file with the European Commission to ensure its fast adoption by April and before the end of this legislature.

Internal border regions cover 40% of the EU's territory and account for 30 % of its population. Following Council´s failure to adopt its first-reading position on the proposed European Cross-Border Mechanism in 2018, Parliament has called on the European Commission to come up with a new legislative proposal aimed at removing cross-border obstacles in the EU. In response to Parliament´s call, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a Regulation on Facilitating Cross-Border Solutions in December 2023.

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