

REINFORCING ECONOMIC POLICY COORDINATION

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1. In the context of the reinforcement of the stability and growth pact (SGP), "when a Member State is subject to an excessive deficit procedure, the Commission proposes a new system of financial sanctions and incentives to complement the use of deposits and fines". Do you think the principle proposed of applying financial sanctions to guarantee the respect to the Stability and Growth Pact is appropriate?

Finanzielle Sanktionen können geeignet sein. Da finanzielle Sanktionen in der Regel jene mit der stärksten Wirkung sind, kann diese Frage mit Ja beantwortet werden.

2.

The European Commission proposes a range of measures to improve the coordination of economic policies within the EU. These measures basically are:

- the creation of a European Semester – a mechanism for harmonisation and review of budget procedures
- a scoreboard of macroeconomic indicators facilitating identification of structural imbalances
- EU-wide surveillance of structural reforms in Member States ensuring sufficient progress coordinated with the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy

What major roles do you foresee for local and regional authorities in the coordination of economic policies within the context of the abovementioned measures? What measures would you suggest to improve budgetary procedures in your own country?

In Österreich gibt es bereits bisher den bewährten "innerösterreichischen Stabilitätspakt", der die Bund-Länder-Beziehung diesbezüglich koordiniert.

Es soll klare, gemeinsam zwischen Bund und Ländern formulierte Zielvorgabengebungen, Mittel und Wege, diese zu erreichen, sollen die Länder selbst festlegen.

3.

Do you see any implications for the budgetary process of local and regional authorities resulting from the implementation of the European Semester*? How could local and regional authorities best respond to the new framework? In your assessment, will you need better feedback from the national level in order to plan and manage the budget in a timely fashion?

**European Semester – a single framework for surveillance of national budget procedures and debt levels as well as the idea of extending surveillance to macroeconomic imbalances.*

Informationen werden im Rahmen des innerösterreichischen Stabilitätspakts ausgetauscht. Es gilt, sinnvolle Meßgrößen zu finden, die schnell und mit geringem Aufwand aufbereitet und ausgewertet werden können und dadurch eine gute Grundlage für gemeinsam zu treffende Entscheidungen sind.

4.

One of the measures the Commission proposes in the Communication is EU-wide surveillance of structural reforms in Member States ensuring sufficient progress coordinated with the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy. In order to have effective surveillance of structural reforms, it is important to identify obstacles to achieving the Europe 2020 objectives and the five headline targets (employment, social inclusion, research and innovation, education, energy and climate change). Based on the National Reform Programmes of the Member States, the Commission will assess how each country progresses towards its national targets under Europe 2020. In case of insufficient progress, country-specific recommendations could be issued. The Commission may also directly address a warning to the relevant Member State.

What specific measures would you propose to involve local and regional authorities in the surveillance of the structural reforms in line with the Europe 2020 strategy?

Durch verschiedene Koordinationsinstrumente auf fachlicher Ebene (Strategie 2020) sowie den innerösterreichischen Stabilitätspakt werden Informationsgrundlagen geschaffen, Strukturreformen mit der Strategie 2020 in Einklang zu bringen.

5.

In many cases, economic policies are implemented at regional and local level. National budgetary planning can also depend very much on local and regional authorities. Therefore, the consequences of decisions taken at EU and national level can have a dramatic effect on local and regional budgets. In your opinion, is the role of local and regional authorities in the implementation of economic policies and budgetary planning sufficiently taken into account by the European Commission in its proposals to reinforce the coordination of economic policies*? If not, how do you think it should be taken into account?

*COM(2010) 250 and COM(2010) 367

Zusammenarbeitsmechanismen zwischen EU-Bund-Land für die Berücksichtigung von Länderinteressen haben sich in Österreich etabliert und funktionieren gut (z. B. durch die EU-Ziel- und Regionalförderprogramme).

6.

The European Commission is considering the possibility of deploying "the EU budget as complementary leverage in terms of ensuring respect of the key macro economic conditions of the SGP. Sanctions should not affect end beneficiaries of EU funds but rather payment to Member States or payments for which Member States act as an intermediary". [...] "In cases of non-compliance with the rules, incentives can therefore be created by suspending or cancelling part of current or future financial appropriations from the EU budget. Resources cancelled should remain within the EU budget". In your opinion, can the proposal to use Cohesion Funds as a tool to encourage Member States to comply with the Stability and Growth Pact be considered as complying with the subsidiarity principle, or is it in any way an infringement of it? Do you believe this measure is in compliance with the proportionality principle?

[No Answer Entered]

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