

# Geography

## Part Three: France and the European Union

### Chapter 6: The European Union EU STRUCTURAL FUNDS



#### Photograph vocabulary:

Digger  
Traffic lights  
Bridge  
roadworks

The European Union Structural Funds program distributes €347bn across 271 regions in 28 countries over periods of seven years. Around a third of EU spending is distributed through Structural Funds. This funding program represents the second biggest source of funding after the Common Agricultural Policy.

Equivalent to what Britain spends on health and defense over two years, this colossal funding program backs more than 600,000 projects, ranging from bridges across the Danube to the training of McDonald's burger flippers in Sweden. In an attempt to promote economic development and heal

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cold war divisions, Europe's leaders are aiming to bind the region's peoples more closely together and raise living standards, not just in impoverished backwaters but also in the developed heartland by stimulating overall demand for goods and services. From the thousands of kilometers of roads they drive on, to the museums they visit, even the fitness classes they attend, millions of Europeans are enjoying the fruits of EU largesse. "It is an inherent part of the European idea, and the European project," says Johannes Hahn, the commissioner in charge of the EU's directorate general for regional policy who oversees the structural funds program. The budget in this study ran from 2007 to 2013 and included 646,000 projects. The Structural Funds include the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund. All member states must co-finance these funds with their own budget: the wealthier a member state, the greater the amount of co-financing it contributes. Poorer regions receive most support from the Structural Funds, but all European regions are eligible for funding under the various programs.

The money is used to boost development in regions lagging behind, to rejuvenate industrial regions in decline, to help young people and the long-term unemployed find work, to modernize farming and to help less-favored rural areas. Money also goes towards research, creating sustainable jobs and economic growth, environmental protection and investment in infrastructure.

The largest of the three funds, which come under the Structural Funds umbrella, is the European Regional Development Fund. This is worth €201bn. Its role is to promote investment and even out the regional differences of the EU. There is also a focus on the environment, particularly for renewable energy projects. The European Social Fund aims to improve employment in the EU by funding vocational training and creating jobs. With €75bn, it focuses on improving employment and helping the disadvantaged. The Cohesion Fund, worth €70bn and it aims to strengthen economic and social links between the EU states. It is used mainly to finance transport infrastructure and environmental projects. Only the poorest states are eligible for these funds.

**Adapted from: <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2010/11/24/euro-post-3/>**

### EU Structural Funds Exercises

Niveaux de compétence.	0% - 25% : compétence très peu maîtrisée.	50% : compétence moyennement maîtrisée.	75% : compétence en grande partie maîtrisée.	100% : compétence pleinement acquise.
<b>Demonstrating my understanding of a more complex document</b>	De 0 à 3	De 4 à 6	De 7 à 9	De 9 à 10
<b>Level of English in my responses</b>	De 0 à 3 Weak	De 4 à 6 Improving	De 7 à 9 Good	De 9 à 10 Excellent
<b>Total</b>				

- 1) Describe what the photograph shows and explain what EU structural funds are.
  - 2) Explain the phrase ‘impoverished backwaters’ in the second paragraph.
  - 3) Cite three examples of structural funds project identified in the second paragraph.
  - 4) What type of EU state contributed the most to the structural funds budget and what type of EU state benefits the most from these funds?
  - 5) Explain the phrase ‘regions lagging behind’ in the fourth paragraph. Use the map in your booklet to identify and the location of one such region.
  - 6) What is the objective of the Cohesion Fund and what kind of projects does it support? Where?
  - 7) (Use the map for this question) Describe in detail, using compass directions and state names where appropriate, the location of the less developed and more developed regions of the EU. Explain how structural funds try to ‘even out’ these differences using all you have learnt from the text.
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