



European Committee  
of the Regions

SEDEC



## Opinion on place-based innovation for the green and digital transitions

### Towards an integrated EU policy approach

Cooperation between governments, industry, academia and civil society is the basis for regional innovation ecosystems.

The European Commission and other EU institutions should prioritise closing the innovation gap across EU regions in order for the twin green and digital transitions to be successful.

By creating stronger synergies between the EU Horizon programme for research, regional policy instruments and a range of other more specialised support mechanisms, we can increase the spread of innovation.



# What is at stake?

According to the conclusions of the EU Research Council of 11 December 2023, regions must be able to play a key role to make the EU's economy and society more innovative and competitive.

## Partnerships for Regional Innovation

The Partnerships for Regional Innovation (PRI) pilot project was launched in 2022 in **74 territories: 63 regions, 7 cities, 4 Member States and 6 networks**, in cooperation with the CoR SEDEC Commission and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre.

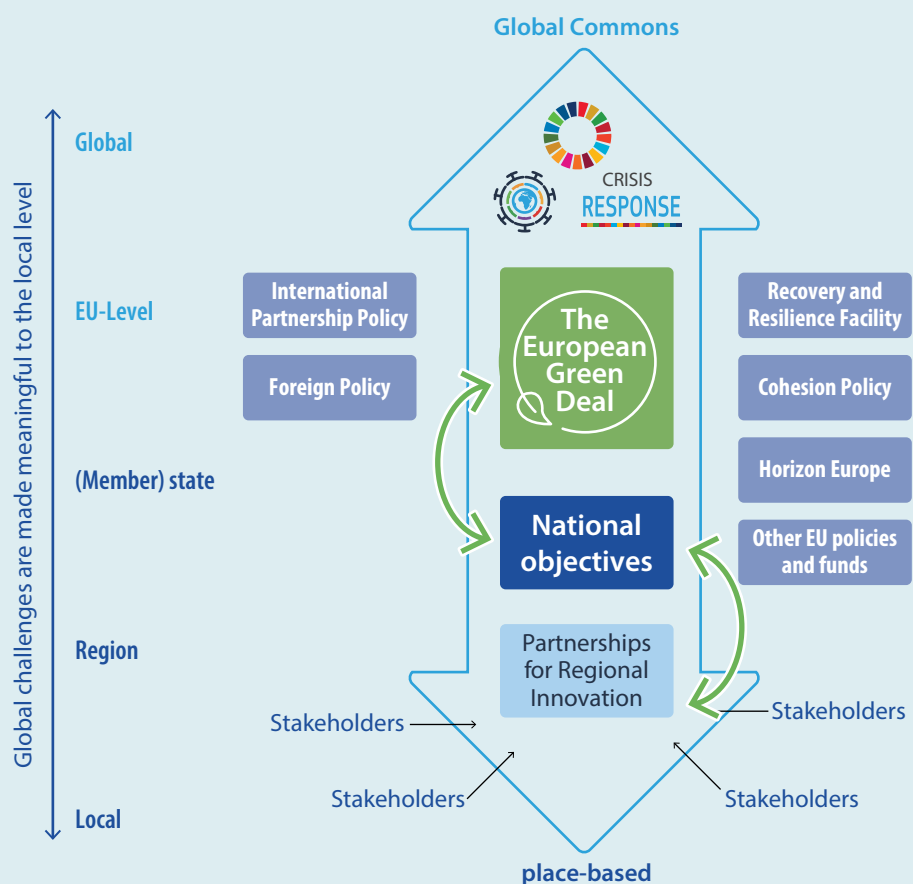
Since May 2022, the PRI pilot project has been a bridge between smart specialisation, the local/regional implementation of the Horizon EU missions, and regional activities under the European Research Area.

The PRI also encompasses and inspires industrial, employment, education and social policies. It seeks new ways of working across government departments and levels, with a focus on addressing territorial challenges.

The next phase of PRI is set to start in the second semester of 2024.

### Partnerships for Regional Innovation in a Multi-Level Perspective

Source: Source: Pontikakis, D., González Vázquez, I., Bianchi, G., Ranga, M., Marques Santos, A., Reimeris, R., Mifsud, S., Morgan, K., Madrid, C., Stierna, J. Partnerships for Regional Innovation – Playbook, EUR 31064 EN Adapted from Nakicenovic et al. (2021) Adapted from Nakicenovic et al. (2021)



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Our regions and cities have demonstrated their role as key drivers of innovation. To maximise their potential, and to promote collaboration at all levels, we need more coordination and synergies between existing policies. We call for adequate funding to ensure better cooperation and the establishment of new pilot actions, also exploring the possibility of including enlargement countries. We must keep pace with global competition in innovation and unlock the unique and powerful innovation potential of EU regions.”

**Andrea Putzu (IT/ECR)**

Member of the Regional Council of Marche, Italy

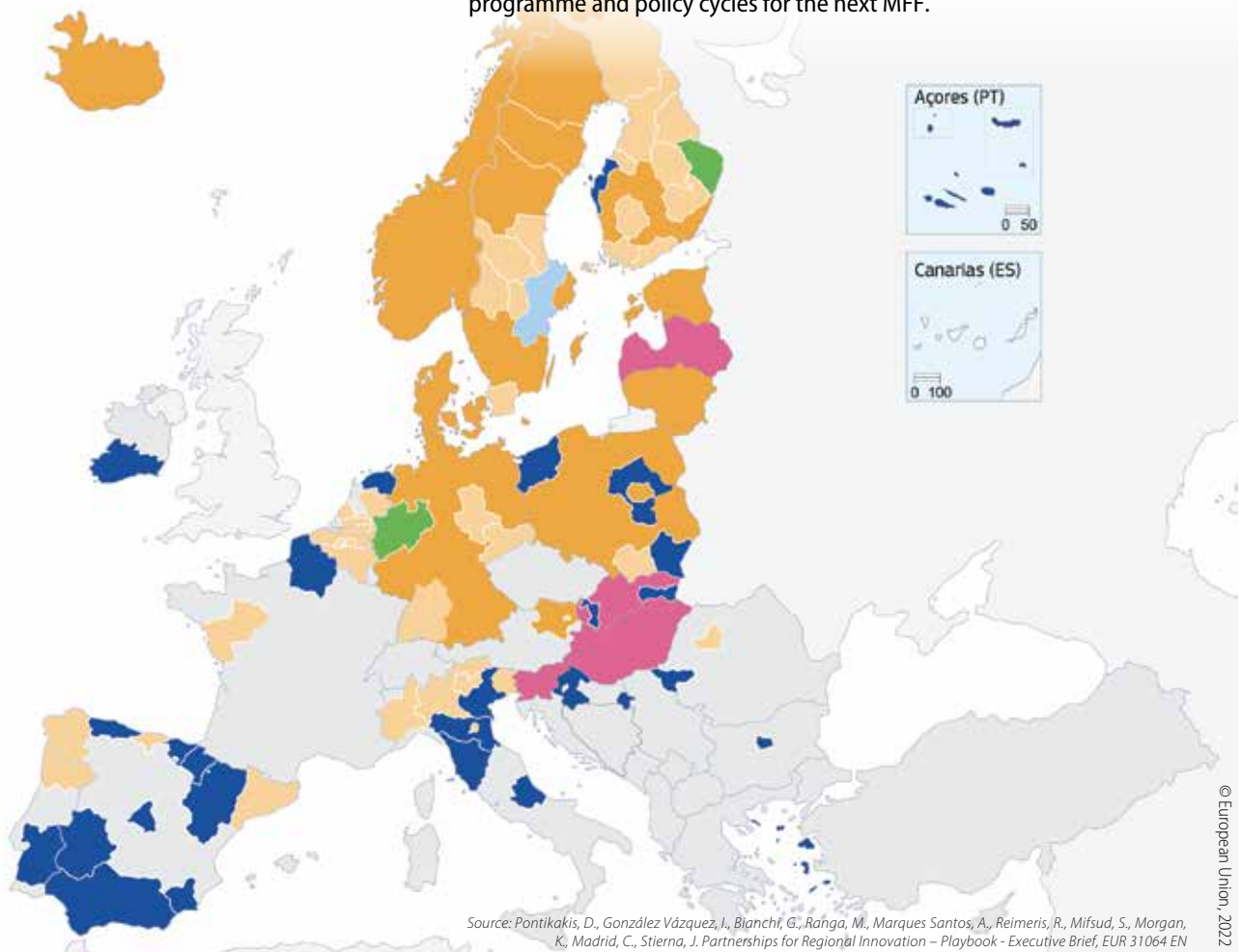
# The European Committee of the Regions calls for action

- allow Regional Innovation Valley projects to build upon ongoing R&I activities in each region, which could count as part of their co-funding;
  - continue the Partnerships for Regional Innovation pilot project, stressing the need for future EU support and remaining open to more regions;
  - provide targeted financial support to key regional innovation stakeholders – including universities – seeking to leverage regional innovation potential, in line with the green and digital transitions;
  - ensure that the Horizon Europe Framework Programme for Research and Innovation does more in the future to strengthen regional innovation hubs and ecosystems.
- **The CoR calls for additional and increased financing for Regional Innovation Valleys and PRI networks**, keeping in mind that the European Commission, with the NEIA, is seeking to promote more innovation co-investments, fostering other funding leverages (COFUND) via HE EIE and the ERDF I3 instrument.
  - The CoR encourages Member States and local and regional authorities to adopt a "whole of government" approach to innovation-driven territorial transformation.
  - Cities and regions can combine the territorial mission approach with place-based solutions to implement EU policies.
  - The European Research Area should play a key role in strengthening place-based innovation ecosystems in the EU by supporting collaborative structures.
  - Continued cooperation between regions and the EU institutions is key for developing intra-regional partnerships and fomenting inter-regional cooperation for innovation.

## The CoR also calls on the EU institutions to

- address the fragmentation of EU instruments to support place-based innovation with separate governance mechanisms for each policy domain;
- facilitate an enabling environment for participatory and deliberative processes in designing innovation strategies;
- support place-based innovation in all EU regions in view of the next EU programme and policy cycles for the next MFF.

- Single region
- Multi-level and cross-border regions
- Cross-border regions
- Multi-level and multi-region
- Multi-region
- Member State



Source: Pontikakis, D., González Vázquez, J., Bianchi, G., Ranga, M., Marques Santos, A., Reimeris, R., Mifsud, S., Morgan, K., Madrid, C., Stiern, J. Partnerships for Regional Innovation – Playbook – Executive Brief, EUR 31064 EN



Scan for the full report on  
Innovation for place-based  
transformations from the JRC



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Publications Office  
of the European Union

Electronic version:  
QG-09-24-039-EN-N  
ISBN 978-92-895-3056-9  
doi:10.2863/280327

Printed version:  
QG-09-24-039-EN-C  
ISBN 978-92-895-3055-2  
doi:10.2863/74537

The opinion was adopted unanimously on 31/01/2024  
at the plenary session of the European Committee of the Regions.

**Rapporteur**

**Andrea Putzu (IT/ECR),**  
*Member of the Regional Council of Marche, Italy*

Created in 1994, after the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of 329 regional and local representatives from all 27 Member States, representing over 447 million Europeans.

Its main objectives are to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council have to consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. It can appeal to the Court of Justice of the European Union as a means of upholding EU law where there are breaches to the subsidiarity principle or failures to respect regional or local authorities.

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**Edited by Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture of the European Committee of the Regions**

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