



**European Committee
of the Regions**

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022 of the Commission for Economic Policy (ECON)

1. Introduction

The 2022 Work Programme of the ECON Commission was developed keeping in mind the CoR's overarching priorities for its current mandate¹, the Strategic Guidelines for 2022 developed by the CoP², as well as the European interinstitutional context, and in particular the *European Commission's Work Programme for 2022*³. It sets out the milestones for work to be carried out in 2022, ensuring continuity and coherence in delivering the CoR's political priorities.

The year 2022 will be a crucial year for the European Union and its local and regional authorities. It will be marked by the enormous efforts required to "rebuild better" after the COVID-19 pandemic and address the challenges of the green and digital transitions. Several large-scale processes will dominate the European context, such as the final stages of the Conference on the Future of Europe, the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Green Deal for Europe. At the same time, the European Commission has announced a number of important legislative initiatives for 2022, in line with the priorities agreed jointly by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

Against this background, the CoR has adapted its institutional approach to focus on the development and implementation of result-oriented planning, with a clear objective of increasing the relevance and visibility of the CoR's political action in the interinstitutional context. For this reason, the work programmes of the CoR commissions set out specific objectives in each policy area, as well as cross-

¹ In June 2020, shortly after its Constitutive Plenary Session of February 2020 and during a time of major disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the CoR defined its priorities for the current mandate in the Resolution *The European Committee of the Regions' priorities for 2020-2025 – Europe closer to the people through its villages, cities and regions* (RESOL-VII/004 – 2020-01392-00-00-RES-TRA).

² On 30 November, following a joint discussion with the commissions' chairs, the CoP adopted the Strategic Guidelines for the CoR's political activities in 2022.

³ COM(2021) 645 final and annexes, available at: [2022 Commission Work Programme – key documents | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/2022-work-programme-key-documents).

cutting priorities among the six commissions, and put forward a strategy to channel the CoR's political messages to the other EU institutions.

With a view to demonstrating and further developing the added value of the European Committee of the Regions as an advisory body, the CoR has been developing new and innovative tools to gather evidence and expertise in support of the CoR's strategic activities. It is essential that the CoR effectively tap into the wealth of experience of its members and the local and regional authorities they represent in implementing its priorities and strategic orientations. In this regard, the CoR's study programme will be designed to support the main objectives in the thematic planning of the commissions, as well as to address the horizontal research needs of the CoR. If needed, studies will also support the flagship projects and will include a foresight perspective and a clear outreach dimension, with outcomes that can easily be used in institutional and public communication.

In terms of policy-making, more attention should be given to "outlook opinions" where the European Commission could request input from the CoR at a very early stage, as well as the "follow-up of the opinions" in view of enhancing their impact. In the context of implementing the "active subsidiarity approach", the new working methods of the European Commission should upgrade the quality of cooperation between the CoR and the other EU institutions by focusing on the European added value of all initiatives, in line with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, and within the context of a revisited EU better regulation agenda.

In the context of longer-term multi-annual planning, relations with the Council and the incoming EU presidencies will continue to progress in 2022, with a view to optimising cooperation and political dialogue, particularly as regards the legislative planning and the delivery of the EU strategic agenda.

2. Priorities of the ECON Commission

The remit of the Commission for Economic Policy (ECON) covers the following fields:

- Economic Governance and the European Semester
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Governance
- Industrial Policy and Industry 4.0
- SME Policy and Entrepreneurship
- Economic and Monetary Policy
- Taxation Policy
- Internal Market and Digital Single Market
- International Trade and Tariffs (including WTO issues)
- Competition and State Aid Policy
- Local/Regional Finance and Investment
- Public Procurement
- Public Investment
- Public Services

2.1 Priority policy areas⁴

The ECON Commission will focus on the following priority policy areas, which have high priority on the EU agenda and a direct impact on local and regional authorities:

1. Strengthening the Single Market and fostering competition
2. Economic recovery towards a sustainable Europe
3. SMEs, entrepreneurship, industry and business taxation
4. Fostering digital transition at local and regional level
5. International trade and competition, including relations with the UK

2.1.1 Strengthening the Single Market and fostering competition

Local and regional stakeholders face many obstacles which are preventing them from fully reaping the benefits of the Single Market. The ECON Commission will therefore continue advocating the full enforcement of Single Market rules. It will do so by putting forward local and regional views on initiatives that aim to strengthen and deepen the Single Market through enforcement, barrier removal and new policies. This will go hand in hand with continuing to defend the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality in the design and implementation of Single Market policies.

The ECON Commission will continue to highlight inconsistencies in the implementation of single market rules by the Member States. It will also point out the frailty of the Single Market in times of crises and emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, the ECON Commission will consider the possibility of drawing up an opinion on the European Commission's legislative initiative for a Single Market Emergency Instrument (announced for March 2022). It will also carry out a follow-up in the Fit for Future Platform of the eProcurement opinion.

In an effort to ensure the full use of the envisaged CoR better regulation toolbox, the ECON Commission will aim to build upon the link between the Single Market policies and the EU's better regulation agenda.

The ECON Commission will closely monitor the European Commission's new steps in the above-mentioned fields and push for the appropriate territorial dimension to be taken into account, especially in the review of competition policy.

Other areas on which the ECON Commission will focus are the regional inequalities caused by COVID-19 and by uneven State aid measures within the Single Market, public procurement markets and the protection of the Single Market. The ECON Commission will also closely follow the developments linked to the objective of achieving open strategic autonomy, especially in the fields of supply chains and access to raw materials as well as against unfair trade and competition practices by third countries, particularly caused by distorting foreign state subsidies.

⁴ An explanatory sheet for each proposed priority policy area is enclosed in Appendix III. These policy areas will also be the first to benefit from the thematic planning process.

2.1.2 Economic recovery towards a sustainable Europe

In the aftermath of the massive socio-economic crisis engendered by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is of the utmost importance to ensure an effective and geographically balanced recovery, while not setting aside the ambitions for sustainable development. The ECON Commission will thus work towards the integration of a strong territorial dimension in the economic recovery strategy, notably in the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) in the context of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). It will also promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a blueprint for sustainable recovery at local and regional level and voice the concerns of local and regional authorities in the broader EU economic governance debate.

To that end, in 2022, the ECON Commission will continue its monitoring of the RRF and NRRPs as well as building on the RRF implementation opinion by gathering evidence through a consultation of LRAs on NRRP implementation in early 2022 in the run-up to the European Commission's "review report" on the RRF. This review report could then give rise to a new opinion in the second half of 2022. The ECON Commission will also aim to strengthen its cooperation with the European Parliament on monitoring the RRF and NRRPs, aiming to continue regular participation in the European Parliament RRF Working Group, notably to present the results of the above consultation.

The ECON Commission will contribute to the long-term debate on EU fiscal rules via an opinion on the relaunched economic governance review, building on previous work and the recent study on the state of local and regional finances following the crisis. It will also be continuing its work to promote the delivery of the SDGs at local and regional level, through a study on LRAs' use of recovery funding for SDG localisation, which could lead to an opinion, also building on good partnerships with URBACT and the OECD, among others. Finally, the ECON Commission will showcase youth participation in community projects in the field of SDG localisation within the framework of the CoR contribution to the European Year of Youth 2022.

2.1.3 SMEs, entrepreneurship, industry and business taxation

The development of a strong and coherent industrial policy is crucial for building a resilient, innovative and competitive Europe. Policies at different levels should promote a stronger place-based and digital dimension to industrial policy. The ECON Commission will aim to raise the issues faced by local and regional authorities, especially in industrialised regions and cities in terms of the secure supply of critical raw materials and taking into account the exposure to international and geopolitical developments, especially the price and supply and demand volatility in the semiconductor area. Furthermore, the CoR will convey the CoR position on industrial policy in the European Commission's Industrial Forum and EU Industry Days.

The ECON Commission will continue its analytical and political work aimed at promoting the implementation of an adjusted SME strategy, facilitating access to finances, in particular for a digital/green transition, and addressing possible distortions from laxer State aid rules and also work to ensure closer cooperation between the CoR and LRAs with the SME envoy network and the EU SME envoy.

It will consider the possibility of issuing an opinion on the proposal for a Council Directive ensuring a global minimum level of taxation for multinational groups in the Union.

Furthermore, the ECON Commission will be monitoring and supporting policies that aim to ensure a level playing field for SMEs in the areas of taxation and digital transition as well in their transition to a green and circular economy. It will also work to highlight the youth entrepreneurship dimension in the ECON/EER work and activities, in particular looking at access to financing for young entrepreneurs, within the framework of the CoR contribution to the European Year of Youth 2022.

The ECON Commission will also aim for further strengthening of the cooperation with the European Commission with the new edition of the European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) label 2023, continued engagement in the SME Assembly and the follow-up of the EER collaboration project, developing the existing EER network into a feedback mechanism for SME and industrial policy.

2.1.4 Fostering digital transition at local and regional level

In 2022 the CoR will contribute to the key objective of promoting digital connectivity and digital transformation at local and regional level in both urban and rural areas, monitor digital divides and ensure adequate involvement of local and regional authorities as regards:

- connectivity: encourage an efficient and synergetic use of EU funding through Digital Europe, CEF – Digital, Cohesion Policy, NGEU (RRF) and multi-country projects; highlight the need for a comprehensive EU approach to the security and resilience of 5G networks;
- digitalisation of public services: contribute to improving e-government services and acknowledge their role in producing a pull effect for digital transformation on the whole of society;
- digitalisation of business/SMEs: promoting legislation to create a level playing field for SMEs and digital platforms in a well-functioning digital single market and supporting SMEs in digitalisation by developing stimulating ecosystems and hubs.

The ECON Commission will also continue the political dialogue with the European Commission through the European Commission-CoR Broadband Platform on all aspects of a successful digital transition at local and regional level.

The ECON Commission will also prepare a foresight study on digital cohesion to expand the definition of "economic, social and territorial cohesion" with the notion of "digital cohesion" and to feed into the political work of the CoR on digitalisation and the Digital Decade, including the activities of the CoR-European Commission Broadband Platform. Through an ESPAS⁵ Ideas Paper on Digital Cohesion, the ECON Commission will contribute to a dialogue on trends in digital transformation among EU institutions.

Furthermore, it will also consider possible opinions on the proposals for a European Chips Act, a European Cyber Resilience Act and the Data Act, as well as continue the cooperation with ESPON

⁵ A European Strategy and Policy Analysis System, <https://espas.eu/>.

and other city networks and with the European Commission on the development of local indicators, to better monitor the digital transformation in cities and regions, together with relevant partners.

2.1.5 International trade and competition, including relations with the UK

The ECON Commission will continue to follow the developments of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the UK, follow up on concerns about its lack of territorial depth and future impact on cities and regions and their authorities, agencies and businesses as well as following the rollout of the Brexit Adjustment Reserve and disbursements.

The ECON Commission will also aim to improve its contacts with the European Commission's Chief Trade Enforcement Officer with the objective of a constructive cooperation defending the interests of regions and ensuring that a particular focus is placed on the implementation of Trade and Sustainable Development chapters.

It will also work to ensure that the territorial dimension of trade policy is given appropriate attention during trade negotiations and during implementation and continue to bring up, in an interinstitutional context, the important role of EU policies and instruments that support key investments in EU regions in helping all territories and SMEs reap the benefits of globalisation and cushion any possible negative impact.

In terms of concrete actions in the field of international trade, the ECON Commission will monitor the ongoing study on the impact of the new trade patterns with the UK on EU regions and sectors, including a follow-up to the Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR). It will also consider organising a workshop/webinar on the new trade relations with the UK and on open strategic autonomy.

2.2 Other thematic issues

Network of regional hubs for EU policy implementation review (RegHub)

The RegHub 2.0 Network will maintain full involvement in the European Commission's Fit for Future Platform, under the administrative management of the ECON secretariat.

The RegHub 2.0 Network's core task will continue to be to carry out stakeholder consultations through its contact points, in addition to those conducted for the Fit for Future Platform, and the results will be compiled into implementation reports that will feed into the political work of the CoR and be submitted to the other EU institutions.

RegHub will thus keep on contributing to the involvement of LRAs in the design and implementation of EU policies, through the proper application of active subsidiarity and the mainstreaming of multilevel governance principles.

3. Follow-up of opinions

The opinions of the European Committee of the Regions are the main political tools to convey the political viewpoint of CoR members to the other institutions of the European Union. In this new term

of office, the CoR and its constitutive bodies, as well as all services of the administration, will focus in particular on the follow-up of opinions and on thematic communication strategy in advance as well as following their adoption, in order to ensure that the messages of the CoR can achieve the greatest political impact in the EU decision-making process.

4. **Interinstitutional cooperation**

The ECON Commission will continue developing its relations and cooperation with the European Parliament. This will include exchanges with the relevant Committee chairs, discussions between rapporteurs, inviting members of the European Parliament to attend commission meetings, and participation of ECON rapporteurs in relevant European Parliament committee or working group meetings, all with a view to increasing the impact of ECON opinions. The ECON secretariat will constantly monitor the relevant European Parliament committees' work and identify upcoming opportunities to follow up on ECON opinions. In particular, the ECON Commission will aim to strengthen the cooperation with the European Parliament on monitoring the RRF and NRRPs and continue its regular representation in the RRF Working Group.

Particular focus will be put on the Committee for Economic and Monetary Affairs (ECON) and the Economic Dialogues it organises with the other EU institutions, the Committee for Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), the Committee on International Trade (INTA), the Committee for Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO) as well as the Committee for Environment, Public Health and Energy (ENVI) and the Committee for Development (DEVE) concerning SDG issues.

Moreover, through the RegHub Network there will be continued cooperation with the European Commission via its Fit for Future Platform and its secretariat-general's Better Regulation Unit, with the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) and with the Competitiveness Council (COMPET).

With regard to the European Commission, the ECON Commission will further develop fruitful contacts with commissioners, and maintain and reinforce the relations it has developed with the relevant services. In the current organigram, these are in particular the Directorates-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (GROW), for Defence Matters (DEF), for Competition Policy (COMP), for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union (FISMA), for Economic and Financial Affairs (ECFIN), for Trade (DG TRADE), for Regional and Urban Policy (REGIO), for Structural Reform Support (REFORM), for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT) and Informatics (DG DIGIT). With regard to overarching issues, such as the SDGs, the ECON Commission will also continue its collaboration with the secretariat-general of the Commission (SG). As regards the European Semester, it will continue its collaboration with the European Semester Officers. With regard to SME policy, more systematic cooperation will be set up with the network of national SME envoys. The ECON Commission will continue following the work of these services and inviting their representatives to attend its meetings.

The ECON Commission will follow up on the work done to build good cooperation with the Council and the presidencies. It will also seek to promote further SDG implementation to the Council Working Group on SDGs.

The ECON Commission will further develop its relations with the European Investment Bank (EIB), focusing in particular on monitoring InvestEU and facilitating access to finance for SMEs and sharing good practices. The ECON Commission will continue to invite EIB representatives to meetings focused on different sectorial fields of relevance.

The ECON Commission will explore opportunities to substantiate its opinions by continuing its close cooperation with the **European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS)**, which provides additional analysis in line with the cooperation agreement between the CoR and the European Parliament.

Where appropriate, the ECON Commission will invite representatives from the rotating EU Presidency, relevant MEPs, in particular European Parliament rapporteurs, high-level representatives of the **European Commission** and the European Economic and Social Committee to its meetings.

5. Cooperation with other organisations and bodies

The ECON Commission will continue to work closely with relevant European and national associations of regional and local governments in organising conferences, seminars and other events, as well as involving them in its consultative political work through bilateral meetings with rapporteurs and stakeholder consultations. The existing cooperation with local and regional authority associations such as Eurocities, CEMR, CLRAE and CPMR, and with the European social partners (UEAPME, BusinessEurope, Eurochambres, ETUC, including EPSU, and SIG Europe) will be continued.

The ECON Commission will also maintain and strengthen partnerships with international organisations such as the OECD, UNDP, UCLG and Regions4 to reinforce the CoR territorial message on the SDGs.

6. Complementary activities

EER (European Entrepreneurial Region)

The European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) initiative has initiated a new five-year cycle, based on a revised framework, as adopted by the CoR Bureau in October 2019.

In 2022, up to three regions will be awarded with an EER label 2023 under the theme of "Entrepreneurship and resilient communities", stressing the role of local and regional actors in supporting a bottom-up entrepreneurial culture to "build back better" after the COVID-19 pandemic.

An annual EER conference will be organised on selected theme(s) of common interest and as an opportunity to welcome new EER awarded regions.

External meetings, seminars, conferences

The ECON Commission's external meeting and conference on "SMEs – a time to take stock on inspiring models for Europe's future on a sustainable, green and digital path" will take place in the city of Zwolle, in the Overijssel region, the Netherlands, on 22-23 September 2022.

The ECON Commission will also organise two study visits, one on "Regions facing the challenge of industrial transformation as a path to a sustainable recovery: the Region of Murcia's vision" in the Region of Murcia, Spain, on 8 April 2022 and another study visit on "Best practices for implementing EU aid for SMEs and entrepreneurship in the region of Thessaly in the context of COVID-19" in the City of Larissa, Thessaly, Greece, on 20 May 2022.

*

* *

N.B.: Annex and appendices overleaf.

APPENDIX I

List of documents already attributed to the ECON Commission to be dealt with in 2022

Reference of European Commission document	Title of European Commission document	Procedure	Scheduled adoption by the CoR
COM(2021) 823	The European Commission proposal for a Council Directive ensuring a global minimum level of taxation for multinational groups in the Union	Possible appointment of rapporteur on 25 February 2022	tbd

APPENDIX II

List of the principal legislative and non-legislative proposals corresponding to the political priorities of the ECON Commission for 2022⁶

Reference of European Commission document	Title of European Commission document	Procedure	Scheduled adoption by the CoR
A Europe Fit for the Digital Age			
	Cyber resilience Q3 2022	legislative, incl. impact assessment,	
	European Chips Act Q2 2022	legislative, incl. impact assessment,	
	Single market emergency instrument Q2 2022	legislative, incl. impact assessment	
An Economy that Works for People			
	Facilitating small and medium-sized enterprises' access to capital Q3 2022	legislative, incl. impact assessment, Article 114 TFEU	
	Initiative on harmonising certain aspects of substantive law on insolvency proceedings Q3 2022)	(legislative or non-legislative,	

⁶ The list is indicative and subject to change.

APPENDIX III

Explanatory sheet for each Priority Policy Area

Policy area	Strengthening the Single Market and fostering competition
CoR commission	ECON
Policy objectives, key challenges and impact indicators	<p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Putting forward local and regional views on initiatives aimed at strengthening and deepening the Single Market through enforcement, barrier removal and new policies. – Continuing to defend the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality as well as those of better regulation in the design and implementation of Single Market policies. – Highlighting the pivotal role of local and regional authorities in implementing measures aimed at mitigating the consequences of major crises and emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, for the functioning of the Single Market. <p><u>Challenges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Inconsistent implementation by the Member States and frailty of the Single Market in times of crises and emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. – Reinforce the implementation of the services directive after the withdrawal of key legislative files (services e-card and notification procedure). – Regional inequalities caused by COVID-19 and by uneven State aid measures and the often distortive effect of foreign subsidies within the Single Market. – Protecting the Single Market against unfair trade and competition practices by third countries. <p><u>Impact indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Take-up of key CoR positions in EU legislation and/or other (interinstitutional) documents. – Inclusion of local and regional angles in the design and implementation of EU Single Market policies.
Progress report summary on the fulfilment of the policy objectives in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Presentation of the CoR's work on the Single Market at the Council Growth and Competiveness Working Group (April 2021). – Adoption of the Single Market Programme regulation (April 2021). – Publication of the EC's Updated Industrial Strategy, which includes a chapter on the strengthening of the Single Market (May 2021). – Adoption of the Annual Single Market Report (May 2021).

Policy area	Strengthening the Single Market and fostering competition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Announcement of the legislative initiative for a Single Market Emergency Instrument. – Fit for Future opinion on eProcurement (CoR rapporteur/RegHub consultation). – Adoption of the opinion on the annual competition report (December 2021).
Proposed CoR measures and support activities in 2022 with timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Possible opinion on the European Commission's legislative initiative for a Single Market Emergency Instrument (announced for March 2022). – Follow-up in the Fit for Future Platform of the eProcurement opinion. – Making full use of the envisaged CoR better regulation toolbox to build upon the link between the Single Market policies and the EU's better regulation agenda. – Involving the CoR in the review of competition policy.
Key interinstitutional developments for follow-up and indicative timeline for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Annual Single Market Report. – Output from the Single Market Enforcement Task Force – with announced focus on cross-border issues. – Single Market Emergency Instruments (March 2022). – Developments in ECJ case law (ongoing).

Policy area	Economic recovery towards a sustainable Europe
CoR commission	ECON
Policy objectives, key challenges and impact indicators	<p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ensuring a strong territorial dimension in the EU economic recovery strategy, notably in the implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) in the context of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). – Promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a blueprint for sustainable recovery at local and regional level. – Voicing the concerns of local and regional authorities in the broader EU economic governance debate. <p><u>Challenges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Further improving the CoR's visibility in high-level policy debates. – Producing compelling analytical evidence to support the CoR objectives and bring the necessary value added. <p><u>Impact indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Take-up of, and references to, CoR analyses, policy proposals and recommendations. – Participation in events, surveys and other activities. – Stronger relationships with other organisations and bodies.
Progress report summary on the fulfilment of the policy objectives in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Significant impact of the CoR in relation to the RRF, whose final regulation includes an obligation to report on LRA involvement. Building close links with the EP through the RRF Working Group, both at working and political level. – Successful impact of our work on SDGs (joint CoR-OECD survey, opinion, events) manifested by a strong CoR presence in related EU debates (Council, Brussels Economic Forum) and strong relationships with external partners in the field (UN, OECD, Eurocities, Regions4, CEMR). – Successful presentation of the CoR's second "Barometer", highlighting the territorial impact of the crisis.
Proposed CoR measures and support activities in 2022 with timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Monitoring the RRF and NRRPs: building on the RRF implementation opinion (adopted in December 2021) by gathering evidence through a consultation of LRAs on NRRP implementation in Q1 2022 (one year after the joint CoR-CEMR consultation on NRRP preparation) in the run-up to the European Commission "review report" on the RRF. This review report could then give rise to a new opinion in the second half of 2022.

Policy area	Economic recovery towards a sustainable Europe
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strengthening cooperation with the European Parliament on monitoring the RRF and NRRPs (with RRF WG, EGOV, EPRS); continuing regular representation in the RRF WG, notably to present the results of the above consultation. – In monitoring NRRP implementation, showcasing the relevance of youth policies and investments for the next generation, in particular through relevant events on this topic within the context of the European Year of Youth 2022. – Contributing to the long-term debate on EU fiscal rules via an opinion on the relaunched economic governance review, building on previous work and the recent study on the state of local and regional finances following the crisis. – Continuing to promote the delivery of the SDGs at local and regional level, through a study on LRAs' use of recovery funding for SDG localisation, which could lead to an opinion, also building on good partnerships with URBACT and the OECD, among others. – Showcase youth participation in community projects in the field of SDG localisation within the framework of the CoR contribution to the European Year of Youth 2022. – Contributing to a third edition of the "EU annual regional and local Barometer" report gathering fresh facts and figures at territorial level with regard to economic developments; to be done by commissioning studies and working in close cooperation with partner organisations such as the OECD, the JRC or ESPON.
Key interinstitutional developments for follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The usual European Semester timeline will be followed, starting with the Annual Sustainable Growth report (November 2021), along with the key milestones related to the RRF. – Opinion (revised) on Economic governance review (February-April 2022). – CoR Summit in Marseille – focus on recovery (March 2022). – European Commission "Review report" on the RRF (July 2022) and possible opinion. – 2022 Barometer, President's State of the Regions speech (October 2022).

Policy area	– SMEs, entrepreneurship, industry and business taxation
CoR commission	ECON
Policy objectives, key challenges and impact indicators	<p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Promoting a stronger place-based and digital dimension to industrial policy and raise the issues faced by local and regional authorities, especially in industrialised regions and cities in terms of the secure supply of critical raw materials and taking into account the exposure to international and geopolitical developments, especially the price and supply and demand volatility in the semiconductor area. – Promoting the implementation of an adjusted SME strategy, facilitating access to finances in particular for a digital/green transition and addressing possible distortions from laxer State aid rules. – Ensuring closer cooperation between CoR/LRAs and SME envoy network and the EU SME envoy. – Supporting policies that ensure a level playing field for SMEs in the areas of taxation and digital transition. – Supporting European industry and SMEs in their transition to a green and circular economy. – Strengthen synergies between SME support and the European Digital Innovation Hubs in Europe's regions. – Highlight youth entrepreneurship dimension in the ECON/EER work and activities, in particular looking at access to financing for young entrepreneurs, within the framework of the CoR contribution to the European Year of Youth 2022. <p><u>Challenges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Coping with territorially uneven pace of recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on local and regional economic and industrial ecosystems. – Ensuring a territorially-inclusive strategy for Europe's industrial future, in line with the European Green Deal, EU Digital Decade and Fit for 55 package; and a further focus on the territorial dimension of industrial and SME strategies by the European Commission. – Contributing to the work of the "Green Deal going local" Working Group. – Endeavouring to foster greater recognition of the LRAs' role in reducing regulatory burdens and supporting the processes of digitalisation and green transition of SMEs, including with relevant capacity-building and funding initiatives. – Analysing the impact at EU level and relevance to LRAs of the international agreement on business taxation brokered by the OECD.

Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SMEs, entrepreneurship, industry and business taxation
	<p><u>Impact indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Take-up of key CoR positions in EU legislation and/or other (interinstitutional) documents. – Increased awareness at EU level of regional perspectives on industry and entrepreneurship issues and provisions in enacted legislation, where relevant. – CoR participation in relevant fora like the newly set up Industrial Forum and the European Raw Materials Alliance.
Progress report summary on the fulfilment of the policy objectives in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – More CoR involvement in forward-looking debates on the next generation of European policies on industry, SMEs and entrepreneurship. – Planned adoption of a revised opinion on the new Industrial Strategy, and active follow-up to the adopted opinion on the SME strategy. – Follow-up to legislative work by means of events, organised with the EER regions and with partners (Eurochambres, OECD) on key aspects of industrial and SME policy. – Success of the COSME-funded collaboration project with 18 EER regions involved. – Close cooperation with DG GROW on SME and industry matters (EER and EEPA) and ECON contribution to the annual SME Assembly.
Proposed CoR measures and support activities in 2022 with timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continued active ECON participation in the Green Deal Working Group: monitoring of the impact of the Fit for 55 package on EU industry and SMEs. – Follow-up to the opinion on Updated EU Industrial Strategy. – Assessing the need for an opinion on the planned Fair Taxation package. – Assessing the need for an opinion on SMEs' access to finance. – Considering a study on <i>Facilitating the adoption of green and digital technologies by SMEs at local and regional level</i>, to carry forward ongoing work in this area and feed into the external ECON meeting and conference on SMEs. – Further strengthening of the cooperation with the European Commission with the new edition of the European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) label 2023, continued engagement in the SME Assembly and the follow-up of the EER collaboration project; developing the existing EER network into a feedback mechanism for SME and industrial policy. – Active participation in the European Commission-led Industrial Forum and the EU Industry Days (active involvement through ECON Commission managed session with ECON rapporteur) as well as participation in the work of the task forces that have been set up. – Furthering cooperation with Member States in the Friends of Industry group

Policy area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SMEs, entrepreneurship, industry and business taxation
	<p>with a potential joint event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strengthening cooperation with partners (Eurochambres, OECD, SME United, EURADA) and the provision of policy input based on regional aspects of the SME green and digital transformation. – Study visit "Regions facing the challenge of industrial transformation as a path to a sustainable recovery: the Region of Murcia's vision" in the Region of Murcia, Spain, on 8 April 2022 (tbc). – Study visit "Best practices for implementing EU aid for SMEs and entrepreneurship in the region of Thessaly in the context of COVID-19" in the City of Larissa, Thessaly, Greece, on 20 May 2022 (tbc). – ECON external meeting and conference on "SMEs – a time to take stock on inspiring models for Europe's future on a sustainable, green and digital path" in the city of Zwolle, in the Overijssel region, the Netherlands, on 22-23 September 2022.
<p>Key interinstitutional developments for follow-up and indicative timeline for implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Single market emergency instrument (legislative, incl. impact assessment, Q1 2022). – The European Commission proposal for a Council Directive ensuring a global minimum level of taxation for multinational groups in the Union COM (2021) 823. – Legislative proposal on Facilitating small and medium-sized enterprises' access to capital (Q3 2022).

Policy area	Fostering digital transition at local and regional level
CoR commission	ECON
Policy objectives, key challenges and impact indicators	<p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The prominent role of digital technology in COVID-19 resilience and response has highlighted shortcomings in digital infrastructure and digital literacy, and has made the digital divide between cities and regions ever more pronounced. Therefore, the key objective will be to promote digital connectivity and digital transformation at local and regional level in both urban and rural areas and to ensure adequate involvement of local and regional authorities when it comes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • connectivity: encourage an efficient and synergetic use of EU funding through Digital Europe, CEF – Digital, Cohesion Policy, NGEU (RRF) and Multi-Country Projects; highlight the need for a comprehensive EU approach to the security and resilience of 5G networks; • digitalisation of public services: contribute to improving e-government services and acknowledge its role in producing a pull effect for digital transformation on the whole of society; • digitalisation of business/SMEs: promoting legislation to create a level playing field for SMEs and digital platforms in a well-functioning Digital Single Market and supporting SMEs in digitalisation by developing stimulating ecosystems and hubs. – Continue political dialogue with the European Commission through the EC-CoR Broadband Platform on all aspects of a successful digital transition at local and regional level. – Further deepen the engagement on improving the monitoring and measuring of digitalisation at local and regional level to better understand progress, needs and challenges through a contribution to the implementation of the "Join, Boost, Sustain" initiative and on the European Digital Innovation Hubs. – Contributing to a fair and balanced development of the collaborative economy while respecting territorial specificities. – Highlight and remedy the deepening digital divides and raise awareness of relevant aspects for LRAs. – Highlight the importance of giving focus to young people's involvement and participation in our forthcoming work on digital cohesion within the ECON and the Broadband Platform, in particular looking at harnessing digital skills and literacy of youth to ensure that no one is left behind in achieving digital transformation throughout the EU. <p><u>Challenges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A growing digital divide, reinforced by the COVID-19 pandemic shock. – Large EU funding programmes insufficiently channelled to LRAs. – EU SMEs cannot close digitalisation backlog/gap.

Policy area	Fostering digital transition at local and regional level
	<p data-bbox="453 331 660 360"><u>Impact indicators</u></p> <ul data-bbox="453 376 1410 607" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="453 376 1410 443">– Take-up of key CoR positions in EU legislation and/or interinstitutional documents. <li data-bbox="453 459 1410 526">– Inclusion of local and regional angles in the implementation of EU digitalisation measures and related legislation. <li data-bbox="453 542 1410 607">– Completion of the new local and regional digital indicator framework (LORDI) and use in DESI/Digital Decade reporting.
<p data-bbox="188 658 421 846">Progress report summary on the fulfilment of the policy objectives in 2021</p>	<ul data-bbox="453 658 1410 1384" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="453 658 1410 725">– Adoption of the opinions on the DSA/DMA by rapporteur Rodi Kratsa and on the European Digital Identity by rapporteur Mark Weinmeister. <li data-bbox="453 741 1410 1055">– The publication and promotion of the study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on digital transformation by business, in particular SMEs, and what type of support is required by LRAs (including e-services); joint survey/consultation of regions/cities and regional/local chambers of commerce on the digital transformation state of SMEs, and support required by LRAs. The study has fed into debates on SME digitalisation, on European Digital Innovation Hubs and on monitoring digital transformation (regional DESI index) at the European Commission. <li data-bbox="453 1070 1410 1227">– Development and broadening of the scope of the EC-CoR Broadband Platform to all aspects of a successful digital transition at local and regional level and 3 meetings held of the Broadband Platform, re-engaging its members. <li data-bbox="453 1243 1410 1310">– Achieved progress on development of LORDI and cooperation with ESPON and different city networks. <li data-bbox="453 1326 1410 1384">– Continued CoR engagement in the field of the collaborative economy through relations with EP, CEPS task force and opinion on the DSA/DMA.
<p data-bbox="188 1435 421 1585">Proposed CoR measures and support activities in 2022 with timeline</p>	<ul data-bbox="453 1435 1410 1995" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="453 1435 1410 1630">– ECON foresight study on digital cohesion to expand the definition of "economic, social and territorial cohesion" with the notion of "digital cohesion" and to feed into the political work of the CoR on digitalisation and the Digital Decade, including the activities of the CoR-EC Broadband Platform. <li data-bbox="453 1646 1410 1749">– Continue the cooperation with ESPON and other city networks and with the EC on the development of local indicators, to better monitor the digital transformation in cities and regions, together with partners. <li data-bbox="453 1765 1410 1832">– Strengthening of policy input based on regional perspectives related to the digital transformation, in particular also on e-services. <li data-bbox="453 1848 1410 1915">– Strengthening policy dialogue and cooperation with EC DG CNECT on connectivity issues, through the Broadband Platform. <li data-bbox="453 1930 1410 1995">– Development of the work on the relevance of increased use and sharing of data by local and regional administrations (data policy).

Policy area	Fostering digital transition at local and regional level
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Possible opinions on the legislative proposals of the European Chips Act, the European Cyber Resilience Act, the Data Act and the Single Market Emergency Instrument.
<p>Key inter-institutional developments for follow-up and indicative timeline for implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Possible opinion on Digital Cohesion – Publication of the Data Package (Data Act + Database Directive) (Q1 2022) and possible opinion – European Cyber Resilience Act (legislative, incl. impact assessment, Q3 2022) – European Chips Act (legislative or non-legislative, Q2 2022)

Policy area	International trade and competition, including relations with the UK
CoR commission	ECON
Policy objectives, key challenges and impact indicators	<p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Follow the developments of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the UK, follow up on concerns about its lack of territorial depth and future impact on cities and regions and their authorities, agencies and businesses as well as following the rollout of the Brexit Adjustment Reserve and disbursements. – Engaging with the Chief Trade Enforcement Officer in constructive cooperation so as to bring up and defend the interests of regions; ensuring that a particular focus is placed on the implementation of Trade and Sustainable Development chapters. – Ensuring that the territorial dimension of trade policy is given appropriate attention during trade negotiations and during implementation. – Continuing to bring up, in an interinstitutional context, the important role of EU policies and instruments that support key investments in EU regions in helping all territories and SMEs reap the benefits of globalisation and cushion any possible negative impact. <p><u>Challenges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Protecting Member States against unfair trade and competition practices by third countries (especially having in mind possible retaliation stemming from the introduction of a carbon border adjustment mechanism). – Deteriorating trade relations with the UK. – Low uptake of trade agreements by SMEs. – Enhancing through key investments the competitiveness of those EU territories that are not ready to face international openness and competition. <p><u>Impact indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Take-up of key CoR positions in EU legislation and/or interinstitutional documents. – Appropriate support for EU regions affected by the new trade patterns with the UK. – Recognition of the territorial dimension in EU trade agreement and trade defence mechanisms (through the BAR and the EGF). – Ensuring increased transparency on trade policy-making, with the continuation of the Expert Group on Trade Agreements, even if under a different format, and with an upgraded role for the CoR. – Involving the CoR in the review of competition policy.

Policy area	International trade and competition, including relations with the UK
Progress report summary on the fulfilment of the policy objectives in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Adoption of the opinion on <i>the Brexit Adjustment Reserve</i> by rapporteur <i>Loïg Chesnais-Girard (FR, PES)</i> – Follow-up of the opinion on <i>Trade Policy Review</i> – Close cooperation with the EP when drawing up the opinion on the Brexit Adjustment Reserve – Opinion on the annual competition report
Proposed CoR measures and support activities in 2022 with timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Launch of a CoR study (December 2021) on the impact of the new trade patterns with the UK on EU regions and sectors, including a follow-up to the Brexit Adjustment Reserve-BAR. – Workshop/webinar on the new trade relations with the UK. – Workshop on Open Strategic Autonomy (including the recent trends on on-shoring/near-shoring) and the place of regions in the discussion about creating European champions, possibly accompanied by an EPRS analysis.
Key inter-institutional developments for follow-up and indicative timeline for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Possible opinion on fair taxation (Proposal on implementation of the OECD global agreement on re-allocation of taxing rights (legislative, Article 115 TFEU). – Possible opinion on the revised competition policy (block exemption and merger control and market definition).