



European Committee
of the Regions

Local and regional authorities engaged in the follow up of the Conference on the Future of Europe

Report



Conference
on the **Future**
of **Europe**

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Foreword

by **President ALVES CORDEIRO**
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“Democratic legitimacy of the European Union lies with the trust of citizens in their representatives elected at European, national, regional and local levels”

European Committee of the Regions, Resolution on the Conference on the Future of Europe, 12.02.2020

Since the launch of the idea of establishing a Conference on the Future of Europe, the European Committee of the Regions acted with a spirit of democratic responsibility with a view to bring the debate on the future of Europe in all regions and cities.

Over two years, with more than 140 local, regional and cross-border citizens' dialogues took place, engaging up to 10 000 citizens; with the contribution of its High-Level Group on European Democracy, the European Committee of the Regions took a vibrant role in this new experiment that was the Conference on the Future of Europe. The delegates to the Conference were very active and brought to the table the issues that matter in their own territories; they also strongly advocated for an enhanced role of our Assembly, and promoted the principle of subsidiarity.

Throughout the process, the European Committee of the Regions ensured a strong democratic legitimacy to this process, together with the hundreds of citizens, national and European representatives who took part to the Conference.

Now that the process is over and that conclusions have been adopted, it is time to shift from legitimacy to accountability.

As elected local and regional representatives and as the European Committee of the Regions at large, we have a duty to deliver on the recommendations of the Conference on the Future of Europe. As defenders of a permanent dialogue with citizens, we cannot expect to engage with them in a large process of consultation and then remain silent.

The strengthening the local and regional dimension within the EU is paramount to deliver on climate, health, rural development, cohesion, digital transformation and social justice. This is why we have developed this report where we highlight how to implement the citizens' proposals.

The Conference may be over, but our work continues to deliver a stronger and fairer Europe, closer to its citizens, especially in view of the next European elections in 2024.

On behalf of the European Committee of the Regions, we would like to thank our 30 delegates to the Conference on the Future of Europe, the members of the High-Level Group on European Democracy and its Chair President Herman Van Rompuy, all our partners in this process, as well as all the Members and the staff of the European Committee of the Regions for their incredible contribution.



**European Committee
of the Regions**

24 November 2022

Local and regional authorities engaged in the follow up of the Conference on the Future of Europe

1. Implementation of the COFE proposals in the nine policy areas

After a year of discussions and deliberations involving citizens, institutions at European, national, regional and local level, as well as civil society and social partners, the Plenary of the Conference on the Future of Europe (COFE) - where the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and local and regional authorities (LRAs) were represented by 30 delegates - agreed on its final 49 proposals.

Based on the citizens' recommendations adopted in the European and national citizens' panels, on the ideas posted in the COFE multilingual digital platform, and on the debates between all COFE plenary components in the framework of the nine thematic Working Groups and in the plenary, the proposals were presented to the Council Presidency and to the presidents of the European Parliament and the European Commission on 9 May 2022.

Each proposal is structured around an objective and detailed measures (328 in total) addressing nine policy areas, thus building a huge corpus of ideas that could lead to important reforms to make the EU more democratic, transparent, fairer and closer to the people¹.

The European institutions are now following up on the proposals.

In its June plenary session, the CoR adopted a resolution on [The outcome and follow-up of the Conference on the Future of Europe](#), with reactions and proposals, including on Treaty revision and COFE proposals relevant for the CoR and for cities and regions. The resolution is structured around three objectives:

1. anchoring European democracy at local and regional level and bridging with functioning participatory democracy;
2. increasing EU delivery capacity through active subsidiarity and the principle of multilevel governance;

¹ The nine policy areas are: Climate change and the environment; Health; A stronger economy, social justice and jobs; EU in the world; Values and rights, rule of law, security; Digital transformation; European democracy; Migration; Education, culture, youth and sport. The report on the COFE final outcome is available on the [multilingual digital platform](#).

3. reinforcing the territorial dimension of EU policies in achieving of overall cohesion objectives.

In light of the feedback event with the citizens taking place in December 2022, the CoR reports to the members of the COFE plenary and to the citizens that were involved in COFE's deliberation on its strategies, initiatives and activities aiming to follow up on the COFE proposals.

As the report shows, the CoR is carrying out many activities in all policy areas which meet the objectives of COFE proposals, while other activities and initiatives are planned in the short to medium term. This also shows the relevant territorial dimension of most of the proposals, whose implementation needs to be anchored to the local and regional level.

Moreover, the CoR June resolution highlights that Treaty revisions are needed to implement some of the proposals. The resolution welcomes the demand of the European Parliament (joined later by the President of the European Commission in her State of the EU address) to call for a convention for the revision of the Treaties and it considers that the possible future convention should fully involve the members of the CoR, to represent the voices of the over one million regionally and locally elected representatives in Europe.

The 2023 European Commission Work Programme is largely inspired by the outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe. Many legislative and non-legislative initiatives included in the Work Programme stem from citizens' recommendations. The 2023 programming will be translated in the CoR political agenda accordingly.

1.1 Climate change and the environment

The delegates in the Working Group on "Climate change and the environment" were: for the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) Muhterem Aras, President of the State Parliament of Baden-Württemberg (DE/Greens), and Olgierd Geblewicz, President of West Pomerania Region (PL/EPP); for local and regional authorities (LRAs), Manuela Bora, member of the Marche Regional Council (IT/PES).

Climate change and the environment have been among the most popular topics in the COFE multilingual digital platform, especially on themes dealing with climate action and energy transition. The final COFE report requests an accelerated green transition with immediate and concrete measures from the EU and governments, with a range of proposals such as fostering greener energy production and transport, altering consumption patterns, more sustainable agriculture, promoting biodiversity and the halting of pollution. In this context, the objectives of the local and regional levels have been met on issues such as recognition of the key role of LRAs in the green transition, the creation of urban development programmes for "greener cities", facilitating transport connectivity and mobility of rural and island regions and, lastly, ensuring better access to local and quality food.

Moreover, the objectives and measures proposed in the final report have been addressed by the CoR via the work in its Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy - ENVE on issues such as the Fit for 55 package, Re-Power and Circular economy package II. Upcoming initiatives like the Re-Power II package and the EU Save Plan, focusing on measures in the short term (behavioural change) and in the medium term (energy efficiency) will be addressed by the CoR by highlighting the role of regions and cities in developing and deploying energy saving measures suited to their territories, as well as the need for awareness campaigns, energy audits and energy management plans. Moreover, the CoR has established political platforms, such the Multilevel Energy and Climate Dialogues (which meet twice

a year) and the [Green Deal Going Local Working Group](#) (which meets at least three times a year) to deal with current and future topics related to climate change and the environment. The CoR Green Deal Going Local initiative complements this work by fostering communication and engagement of cities and regions in this field.

The CoR, in cooperation with the European Commission, set up in December 2021 the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform as a tool to achieve the zero-pollution ambition and to help deliver on the flagship initiatives and actions set out in the Zero Pollution Action Plan. The platform does effectively mainstream the zero-pollution agenda. It brings together stakeholders and experts of different policy areas, such as health, agriculture, research and innovation, transport, digitalisation and the environment. The CoR is supporting the implementation of zero pollution efforts within its Green Deal Going Local activities and campaign, ensuring that local and regional communities are fully involved in the Zero Pollution Ambition. By October 2022, the platform had met three times and its works were complemented by a high-level workshop organised during the EU Regions Week.

1.2 Health

The delegates in the Working Group on "Health" were: for the CoR, Roberto Ciambetti, President of the Veneto Regional Parliament (IT/ECR) and Isabel Diaz Ayuso, President of Madrid Region (ES/EPP); for LRAs Renaud Muselier, President of Region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (FR/EPP).

The COFE proposals in this area acknowledge the main priorities for the CoR and LRAs delegates on issues such as the recognition of the key role of regional and local authorities in healthcare, the facilitation of cross-border health care and cross-border cooperation and the equal quality and fair local prices for treatments and medicines. The above elements represent an important step towards a new health union that would take full account of the principle of subsidiarity.

In addition, the final proposals under the objective on "Healthy food and healthy lifestyle" mirror the position of the CoR as expressed in its opinions on Farm to Fork, EU action plan for organic farming, or Sustainable food, to mention but a few. The ongoing war in Ukraine and the food crisis, further fuelled by skyrocketing energy prices, make these measures particularly important. The CoR will actively invest in the issue of food sustainability and explore the regional solutions to mitigating the price explosion and ensuring food affordability for European citizens.

1.3 Stronger economy, social justice and jobs

The delegates in the Working Group on "Stronger economy, social justice and jobs" were: for the CoR, Christophe Rouillon, Mayor of Coullaines (FR/PES) and Władysław Ortyl, Marshal of the Podkarpackie Region (PL/ECR); for the LRAs Clotilde Armand, Mayor of Sector 1 Bucharest (RO/renew E.).

The final COFE proposals met the CoR and LRAs request to acknowledge the need for a review of the EU's economic governance framework and for the enhanced involvement of regional and local authorities in the European Semester, in order to improve its appliance and accountability. The latter, a longstanding request of the CoR, is dealt with in its Commission for Economic Policy - ECON, which will continue proposing concrete ways to make this involvement a reality.

In this context, the CoR has proposed that the enhanced involvement must be implemented through a "Code of Conduct", modelled on the Code of Conduct for Partnership in the structural funds. Such a

Code for the European Semester would improve both the efficacy of the process and its democratic legitimacy. Another proposal which met the CoR requests was the call to ensure the full implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its headline targets for 2030 at EU, national, regional and local levels.

Furthermore, the CoR has included gender equality in its priorities and key measures during its current five-year term (2020-2025). Under the priority "Bringing Europe closer to its people: strengthening EU democracy and working together on the future of our Union" the CoR prioritised key measures in view of promoting respect for gender equality and actively participating in combating gender stereotypes.

1.4 EU in the world

The delegates in the Working Group on "EU in the world" were for the CoR, Mark Speich, Secretary of State, North Rhine Westphalia Region (DE/EPP) and Concha Andreu, President of the Regional Government of La Rioja (ES/PES); for the LRAs, Verena Dunst, President of the Burgenland Regional Parliament (AT/PES) and Klaudia Szemereyné Pataki, Mayor of Kecskemét (HU/ECR).

While there is no reference to the role of LRAs in the proposals on external relations or development cooperation, they are mentioned when it comes to communication and outreach to citizens, as well as their involvement in EU international politics. It is also important to highlight the link that several proposals made between the defence of democracy, EU values and rights within the Union and their being guiding principles also in international relations. EU bodies and institutions are called to act as a sort of "ambassadors of our democratic model" in third countries, which matches what the CoR has been doing for a number of years in its cooperation with the candidate countries and potential candidates, as well as partner countries from the EU Neighbourhoods East and South through its external bodies such as joint consultative committees (JCCs) with, respectively, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia; its working groups for, respectively, Western Balkans, Turkey, and Ukraine; the Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP), and the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM).

The [European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the reconstruction of Ukraine](#) is a good example of LRAs potential enhanced role in relations with third countries. Launched by the CoR in June this year, the Alliance brings together local and regional authorities in Europe and in Ukraine, with a view to giving self-government a pivotal role in the reconstruction strategic planning, further implementing the devolution process and multi-level governance in Ukraine, improving good local/regional governance, including transparency, fighting corruption, protecting the freedom of local media, promoting e-government, and focusing on a sustainability-based reconstruction.

1.5 Values and rights, rule of law, security

The delegates in the Working Group on Values and rights, rule of law, security were: for the CoR Ilse Aigner, President of the Bavarian State Parliament (DE/EPP) and Paula Fernández Viaña, Minister for Interior, Justice and External Action of Cantabria Region (ES/Renew E.); for local and regional authorities, Karl-Heinz Lambertz, President of the Parliament of the German-speaking Community (BE/PES).

The COFE proposals in this policy area acknowledge the multilevel dimension of the protection of fundamental rights and the need to promote EU values and fundamental rights through local and regional authorities, which were among the objectives of the CoR and LRAs delegation.

In this context, the CoR CIVEX Commission will keep up its cooperation with the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), whose main output is the Annual Dialogue with the CoR CIVEX commission to discuss fundamental rights themes of relevance at regional and local level, sharing knowledge on existing fundamental rights good practices. Another important initiative is the [Mayor Paweł Adamowicz Award](#) for courage and excellence in the promotion of freedom, solidarity and equality. The laureate of the 2021 edition of the award was Henriette Reker, Lord Mayor of Cologne. The laureate of the 2022 edition of the award will be awarded in the CoR plenary session in February 2023.

Other relevant issues addressed by the proposals are the involvement of local authorities in annual conferences on the rule of law, to which the CoR is ready to contribute, as well as to possible outreach events on the EC Annual Rule of law report at national and regional level; the issue of media and disinformation, where – as shown by several CoR opinions and by a recent [study](#), local and regional authorities can play a great role in fostering media literacy and supporting local journalism and fact checking organisations; a more protective and citizen-oriented data treatment policy; anti-discrimination, equality and quality of life.

1.6 Digital transformation

The delegates in the Working Group on "Digital Transformation" were: for the CoR, Jelena Drenjanin, Vice-Mayor of Huddinge (SE/EPP) and Mirja Vehkaperä, Chairwoman of Oulu City Board (FI/renew E.); for the LRAs Yordanka Fandakova, Mayor of Sofia (BG/EPP).

The COFE proposals in this policy area acknowledge the promotion of digital cohesion in order to contribute to economic, social and territorial cohesion, the need for development of high-speed internet and mobile network connectivity in rural and island regions, as well as equal access to the internet. These issues were among the objectives of the CoR and LRAs delegation. In its June resolution on the COFE outcome and follow-up, the CoR reiterated its position on the importance of digital cohesion and recommended its mainstreaming across European Union policies, while calling for Article 175 TFEU to be reviewed accordingly². The CoR has also welcomed the [European Chips Act](#) and its ambition to reinforce the EU's competitiveness and resilience in semiconductor technologies, as this will be pivotal in achieving the digital transition.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning here the [Broadband Platform](#), jointly launched in 2017 by the CoR and the European Commission. It aims to help high-speed broadband reach all European regions, including rural and sparsely populated areas where there is not enough market-driven development. The mandate of the Broadband Platform is more important than ever today in view of the twin green and digital transformation, the challenges posed by COVID-19 and by the Russian aggression against Ukraine, and hence the need for municipalities and regions to become digitally resilient.

² This call for a revision of the Treaties has been reiterated by the CoR [opinion on Digital cohesion](#) (October 2022): " (...) the 'digital cohesion' concept calls for the recognition of the essential role that technology plays in our life, and requires the integration of the Cohesion objectives in the digital rights, principles and policies of the Union".

1.7 European democracy

The delegates in the Working Group on European Democracy were: for the CoR, Apostolos Tzitzikostas (EL/EPP), at the time President of the CoR, Governor of the Region of Central Macedonia, Greece, who was also appointed as a "rapporteur" for subsidiarity, and Vasco Alves Cordeiro, member of the Regional Parliament of the Azores, at the time first Vice President of the CoR, (PT/PES); for local and regional authorities, Aleksandra Dulkiewicz, Mayor of Gdansk (PL/EPP) and Hermano Sanches Ruivo (FR/PES), replaced in the course of the works by Arnaud Ngatcha, deputy Mayor of Paris (FR/PES).

European democracy was, together with climate change and the environment, the topic which attracted most contributions in the COFE multilingual digital platform. It is also a crucial topic for the CoR as it addresses both institutional issues, including the role of our institution, and relevant CoR political priorities and initiatives, aiming overall to bring the EU closer to its citizens and implement the principles of multilevel governance and active subsidiarity.

The COFE proposals coincide with most of the CoR and LRAs requests, acknowledging the multilevel dimension of European democracy and governance, the CoR-inspired concept of "active subsidiarity" and its long-standing request for a permanent mechanism of dialogue with the citizens.

The current and planned implementation initiatives of the CoR can be clustered into two groups.

First, initiatives aiming to strengthen citizens' participation and youth involvement in the European legislative process and its mainstreaming on the local and regional level, while strengthening the link between the citizens and their elected representatives at all levels. Key CoR planned actions concern the capacity building of deliberative democracy exercises for European local and regional authorities, a quality campaign for inclusive, deliberative and effective citizens' participation; strengthening the [CoR network of EU councillors](#) (currently 2000 members); further activation of the CoR [Young Elected Politicians programme](#) (YEPs); following up on the [European Charter for youth and democracy](#), an initiative launched jointly with the European Youth Forum; setting up of a sector named "FutureLab" focusing on innovative aspects and capacity building for local and regional representatives. All these streams of work aim to contribute to making our European democracy more resilient to challenges and threats such as disinformation, external interferences and attacks on our shared values (see also above, chapter II.5)³.

Secondly, the CoR is keeping up its institutional activities on [monitoring and promoting the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality](#) and its contribution to EU better regulation through its [Subsidiarity Monitoring network](#), and the creation of its Better Regulation and Active Subsidiarity Steering Group (BRASS- G), to ensure synergies between the forward and the backward-looking analysis of EU legislation that the CoR is providing to the other institutions.

Another important follow-up to consider is the possible Convention for the revision of the Treaties, demanded by the European Parliament and endorsed by the President of the European Commission. The CoR is already working to identify the treaty changes necessary for the implementation of the proposals relevant to the institution and to LRAs and will invest to this end in a political and institutional approach in support of the convening of a convention.

³ To mention only the most recent ones, please see the CoR opinions on the [European Democracy Action Plan](#) (July 2021), on [Reinforcing democracy and integrity of elections](#) (April 2022), on [Extending the list of EU crimes to hate speech and hate crimes](#) (due in November 2022).

1.8 Migration

The delegates in the Working Group on Migration were: for the CoR, Yoomi Renström, Member of Ovanåker Municipal Council (SE/PES) and Kata Tüttö, Deputy Major of Budapest (HU/PES); for local and regional authorities, Magnus Berntsson, Regional Minister of Västra Götaland (SE/EPP) and Cees Loggen, Regional Minister of North Holland (NL/Renew E.).

Several proposals in this policy area meet the CoR and LRAs delegates' ideas and suggestions, as they refer to involving local and regional authorities for a better integration of asylum seekers and refugees through education and training, and increasing funding/support to regional and local authorities for the integration of refugees and regular migrants. In this context, most CoR implementation initiatives, led by the CIVEX Commission, will take place within the [Cities and Regions for Integration network](#), which provides a political platform for European mayors and regional leaders to showcase positive examples of integration of migrants and refugees, share relevant information and promote diversity as an added value to building inclusive cities and ensuring social cohesion.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine provoked a huge wave of refugees into EU countries, with local and regional authorities at the frontline in the reception and support for Ukrainians fleeing their country. The CoR created an [Info-Support Hub](#) to support the EU's local and regional authorities who are welcoming, supporting and assisting the millions of refugees displaced because of war.

1.9 Education, culture, youth and sport

The delegates in the Working Group on "Education, Culture, Youth and Sport" were, for the CoR, Emil Boc, Mayor of Cluj-Napoca, (RO/EPP), François Decoster, Mayor of Saint Omer and member of Hauts-de-France Regional Council (FR/renew E.) and Kieran McCarthy, Member of Cork City Council (IE/EA); for the LRAs, Yordanka Fandakova, Mayor of Sofia (BG/EPP).

The COFE proposals in the policy area of education acknowledge many proposals of the CoR and LRAs delegation, such as the role of LRAs in strengthening existing EU-level exchanges and mobility programmes, the adoption of a certified minimum standard of education and the promotion of multilingualism and of minority and regional languages requiring additional protection.

The focus on learning foreign languages from an early age in order to facilitate the ability of European citizens to communicate with wider groups of their fellow Europeans and as a factor of European cohesion was already promoted in previous CoR opinions. Moreover, learning the language of the immediate neighbouring EU Member States in cross-border areas is of direct interest for the CoR in strengthening cross-border cooperation. These aspects will continue to be promoted through the work of the CoR on the European Education Area (to be established by 2025) and in the framework of the Joint Action Plan with the European Commission.

Moreover, in the policy area of youth, the COFE proposals met the views of the local and regional level on issues such as the special efforts needed to avoid a brain drain from some regions in the EU, as well as the introduction of a youth check of legislation when legislation is deemed to have an impact on young people. In this context, the CoR contributes to this endeavour through the CoR network of Young Elected Politicians ([YEPs](#)) and the co-drafting of a European Charter for Youth and Democracy together with the European Youth Forum. The development of activities in the context of the 2023 European Year of Skills will also have a dedicated focus to the role of skills training amongst young people to better fit their ambitions and the needs of the labour market.

The [CoR resolution on the Future of Cross-Border Cooperation](#) (July 2021) actively supports better facilitation of cross-border cooperation on mobility in education, training and employment, and called for education systems, including at universities, adult and vocational education institutes in border regions, to offer opportunities to learn neighbouring languages as early as possible and in the concept of "lifelong learning", a point that the COFE has also endorsed. To overcome the language barrier, the COFE final report supports the CoR's proposal to encourage the development of universal automated translation devices, particularly useful in cross-border areas.

Lastly, in the policy areas of culture and sport, the objectives of the CoR and LRAs delegation matched the COFE proposals on issues such as the recognition of specific local and regional cultural and production characteristics, as well as the inclusion of local and traditional sport as an aspect of European cultural diversity.

2. Communication and outreach activities

The CoR held more than 150 events – local, regional, trans-national and cross-border citizens' dialogues – reaching out to more than 10 000 citizens, local and regional representatives, and stakeholders. The ideas and recommendations from these events were uploaded to the multilingual digital platform of the Conference and provided input to high level debates. Events were also organised alongside the opening of the COFE, with the European associations, during the European Week of Regions and Cities and through a joint project with the German Bertelsmann Stiftung called "From local to European" in which, after several capacity building workshops, regions and cities held dialogues using innovative participatory processes, randomisation of participants and online tools.

Responding to the need for further improvement of European democracy, stronger inclusivity and a mainstreaming of civic participation, as well as an embedding of participation in political processes at all levels, the CoR is working together with several partners (local and regional authorities, international organisations, and the Bertelsmann Foundation) on the support of political decision makers and administrators from European regions and cities. The project will use of the networks and the platforms/flagship events of the CoR, including the Young Elected Politicians and Local Councillors networks.

The objective of the common project is to support CoR members, political decision makers and administrations from European regions and cities in the transition to a better and more inclusive participatory democracy.

The project has three modules:

- **Module 1) Capacity building among members of the European Committee of the Regions, Young Elected Politicians, Members of the Local Councillors network, as well as the participants of previous deliberative democracy exercises (through a series of workshops);**
- **Module 2) Piloting and linking deliberative processes with selected dossiers of the work of the European Committee of the Regions and anchor them in the legislative cycle;**
- **Module 3) A quality campaign** for inclusive, deliberative and effective citizen participation through a Citizen Participation charter of political organisations.

Conference on the Future of Europe - key achievements for regions and cities

Climate change and the environment



Objective:

Ensuring a just climate transition to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050 along with its cities and regions

What we achieved:

- Recognition of key role of regional and local authorities in the green transition
- Creation of urban development programs for “greener cities”
- Facilitating rural and Island regions transport connectivity and mobility
- Ensuring better access to local and quality food

Health



Objective:

Achieving a new “Union of Health” that takes into full account the principle of subsidiarity

What we achieved:

- Recognition of the key role of regional/local authorities in healthcare,
- Facilitate cross border health care and cross border cooperation
- Ensuring equal quality and fair local prices for treatments and medicines

A stronger economy, social justice and jobs



Objective:

Territorial cohesion is fundamental for achieving sustainable growth in the EU

What we achieved:

- Better involvement of regional and local authorities in the European Semester
- Ensuring a full implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights at all levels
- Including headline targets at regional and local level for equal opportunities and social protection
- Supporting demographic resilience transition: no regions lagging behind
- Strengthening cross-border cooperation and cross-border mechanism to enhance cohesion and resilience
- Developing innovation system at regional level

EU in the world



Objective:

Recognition and involvement of Local and regional authorities in the external strategy of EU

What we achieved:

- Role of local and regional authorities to improve awareness on EU values and functioning at international level
- Reducing dependency on foreign actors through regional policy

Rule of law - values and rights - security



Objective:

Reinforcement of European values and rule of law at all levels of governance to strengthen EU democracy as a fundamental value

What we achieved:

- Recognition of the Multilevel dimension of fundamental rights
- Promoting EU values and fundamental rights through local and regional authorities

Digital transformation



Objective:

Digital cohesion is fundamental to ensuring cohesiveness in the EU as an additional dimension of social, economic and territorial cohesion

What we achieved:

- Ensuring digital cohesion and equal access to digital infrastructures
- Ensuring internet connectivity in rural areas
- Facilitating cross border digital transactions
- Improving coordination of local regional and national cybersecurity centres
- Implementation of data privacy legislation at all levels

European Democracy



Objective:

The model of a “House of Democracy” based on a 3-dimensional legitimacy: European, national, regional/local

What we achieved:

- Involving regional and local authorities in a permanent citizens’ participation process
- Communicating on EU topics in local and regional elections
- Creating a system of EU Local Councillors
- Organizing systematic citizens’ assemblies at local and regional level to debate on EU topics
- Ensuring a better involvement of subnational level in the implementation of EU law
- Enhancing the role of European Committee of the regions
- Promoting active subsidiarity and Multilevel governance as key principles
- Extending to regional parliaments the right to suggest new EU legislative proposals

Migration



Objective:

A comprehensive system managing long-term migration in consultation with the authorities of cross-border regions

What we achieved:

- Involving local and regional authorities for a better integration of asylum seekers and refugees through education and training
- Increasing financial/support to regional and local authorities for the integration of refugees and regular migrants

Education – Culture – Youth and sports



Objective:

Strengthening a common European identity at all levels, and promotion of European values through education

What we achieved:

- Enhancing European identity through education
- Support to local authorities in setting up local youth councils and introduce a youth check of legislation
- Promote multilingualism, regional languages and traditional sport
- Recognition of local and regional cultural and production peculiarities
- Adopting specific measures to avoid brain drain from regions
- Promote mobility exchanges and strengthen the European Solidarity Corps, Erasmus+ and DiscoverEU activities through regions and cities and the CoR

ANNEX I: Table on the CoR's implementation of the proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe

Following COFE plenary session's endorsement of 49 proposals, this table presents a set of implementation measures to be initiated or pursued by the CoR. These are generally included in the six thematic commissions' work programmes for 2023, or they have been already taken into consideration in the CoR's agenda. They correspond to the priorities identified in the CoR's resolution on the 2023 work programme of the European Commission. Other measures will require Treaty changes and interinstitutional developments that are clearly identified as longer-term objectives for the European Committee of the Regions.

1. Climate change and the environment

No	Proposal/Measure	State of play	Way forward
2.3 4.6	Enhance the role of municipalities in urban planning and construction of new buildings supporting blue-green infrastructure in order to promote biodiversity and urban forest. Require urban development programs for “greener cities” with lower missions with dedicated free zones in cities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR has been very active in urban planning and is cooperating closely with the European Commission to promote initiatives such as the Green City Accord and the European Year of Greener Cities, in order to promote biodiverse cities over 2020. - At the same time, the CoR is supporting the New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative and considers that the NEB serves as a key opportunity to harness the creative potential of regions and municipalities, and thereby create accepted and sustainable solutions that will make the Green Deal a success. - To make the above a reality, the CoR has also established a joint action plan with the European Commission (Commissioner Gabriel). - The CoR is very active in the process of implementing the "EU missions" ("100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030" to bring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR is supporting the EU Nature Restoration Targets and the revision of the TEN-T for closer involvement of local and regional authorities in the ongoing development of local and regional authorities' Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans. - Concerning the New European Bauhaus (NEB), the CoR will pursue the implementation of its proposal on the NEB Lab voucher scheme to provide cities and regions with the necessary support in organising a NEB lab in their constituency.

		concrete solutions by engaging citizens and "Adaptation to Climate Change: 150 Regions and Communities resilient by 2030").	
3.1	Accomplish and whenever possible speed up the green transition, in particular through more investments in renewable energy, in order to reduce external energy dependency, recognizing also the role of local and regional authorities in the green transition.	<p>- Green Deal Going Local is a flagship initiative of the European Committee of the Regions that aims to place cities and regions at the heart of the EU's transition to climate neutrality. Via its Green Deal Going Local Working Group, the CoR is addressing the issue of a green, just and inclusive transition in its legislative and non-legislative work.</p> <p>- The CoR is also co-managing the Zero Pollution Stakeholders Platform and in cooperation with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre the CoR continues its work on the Local Innovation Camps.</p> <p>- The CoR cooperates with the OECD to accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through studies, surveys, roundtables and coaching.</p> <p>- The CoR (via its RegHub) has produced a special report on overcoming obstacles to transport, digital and green infrastructure deployment, which was cited in the Commission's 2021 Annual Burden Survey.</p> <p>- The CoR established a Multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogue on COP27.</p>	<p>- With the Cities Energy Saving Sprint, a joint initiative of the European Commission and the Covenant of Mayors, the CoR will encourage cities to take measures that will immediately reduce their energy consumption.</p> <p>- In cooperation with the European Commission's JRC, the CoR will continue its work on the Local Innovation Camps.</p> <p>- The CoR proposes a sound legislative framework to assess and fight energy and mobility poverty and will work to become a member of the Energy Poverty and Vulnerable Consumers Coordination Group.</p> <p>- The CoR will contribute to evaluating the legislation on the low-carbon roadmap.</p> <p>- The CoR will continue advocating for the proposals to enhance the role of regions and cities in the New European Bauhaus.</p> <p>- The CoR works to further align European, national, regional and local</p>

			efforts on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
3.3	Reduce dependencies on oil and gas imports through energy efficiency projects, support for affordable public transport, high-speed rail and freight network, expansion of clean and renewable energy provision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As an official position, the CoR supports the COFE objective of enhancing European energy security and achieving the EU's energy independence, leaving no region behind, providing its citizens with sufficient, affordable and sustainable energy. - The CoR calls for measures to promote the attractiveness of public transport, notably by addressing affordability, and at the same time highlights the importance of working towards a harmonised EU indicator on this aspect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regarding the potential of the rail sector for delivering EU policy priorities, the CoR will promote a modal shift to rail in both the passenger and freight sectors, notably the urgent need to ensure a level playing-field between transport modes. - The CoR will continue to advocate for direct access to EU funds for local and regional authorities implementing Green Deal projects, paying special attention to regions with isolated energy systems.
3.5	Invest in technologies to produce renewable energy, such as efficient production and use of green hydrogen, especially in sectors which are difficult to electrify.	- Regarding the European Research Area industrial technology roadmap for low-carbon technologies in energy-intensive industries sites, the CoR RegHub network is considered to be a potential partner in a community of practice in facilitating first-of-a-kind (FOAK) installations for low-carbon industrial technologies (planning and permitting).	- Via its RegHub platform, the CoR will seek further cooperation with the European Commission and the European Research Area on the low-carbon roadmap.
3.8.	Ensure a just transition, protecting workers and jobs, through adequate funding for the transition and further research, through reform of the tax system with fairer taxation and anti-tax fraud measures, and through ensuring inclusive governance approach in policy making at all levels (e.g. ambitious measures to	- The CoR launched the Automotive Regions Alliance in June 2022. This network of regions is engaged in ensuring the successful transition of the European automotive and supply industry and aims to bring together regions with a strong automotive and supply sector that want to play	- The CoR will pursue its commitment vis-à-vis the Automotive Regions Alliance and will monitor the EU's policy for a just and sustainable transition in the context of coal and energy intensive regions.

	reskill/upskills, strong social protection, keeping public service in public hands, safeguarding occupational health and safety rules).	an active role in the decarbonisation of the transport sector and contribute to the objectives of the European Green Deal while strengthening regional industrial ecosystems and value creation, as well as ensuring economic and social cohesion in every European territory impacted by the transition.	- The CoR is committed to a just transition fund 2.0 beyond 2027 that includes automotive regions.
4.1.	Support public transportation and develop a European public transportation network, especially in rural and island regions, which is efficient, reliable and affordable, with extra incentives for public transportation usage.	<p>- Regarding the New Urban Mobility Framework, the CoR emphasises the need to improve connectivity with peri-urban and rural areas and to promote the uptake of innovative solutions such as on-demand public transport services in these areas.</p> <p>- The CoR recently adopted its political recommendations on the Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy and commissioned a study on <i>Rural proofing – a foresight framework for resilient rural communities</i>, which can be consulted via this link.</p> <p>- Via its RegHub platform, the CoR has produced a special report on overcoming obstacles to transport, digital and green infrastructure deployment. It stipulates, among other things, the need to better fund and improve links between the TEN-T core network and the comprehensive network, in particular in cross-border areas, including through the inclusion of non-rail transport in TEN-T, and by granting</p>	<p>- The CoR will continue its support and work under the rural pact and the implementation of rural proofing.</p> <p>- The CoR will deliver on urban mobility/delivering local mobility needs and EU decarbonisation goals, which includes examples of innovative public transport solutions deployed in rural areas.</p>

		intermodal and small-scale infrastructure access to public funding.	
6.3.	Promote and facilitate dialogue and consultation between all levels of decision-making, especially with young people and at the local level ⁴ .	- The CoR has established new ways of engaging dialogues on citizens' participation on climate change and environmental issues. In that respect, the CoR is organising Climate Pact satellite events at the local level, provides support to the CoR's Climate Pact ambassadors, and promotes Zero Pollution pledges via the Climate Pact.	- The CoR will continue to be active on green budgeting, for example promoting an increase in green participatory budgeting as a way of empowering citizens, in particular local youth councils. - In the context of the Climate Pact, the CoR will continue to organise and share the conclusions of local events through the ambassadors.

2. Health

No	Proposal/Measure	State of play	Way forward
8.1	The creation of a European health data space , which would facilitate exchange of health data; individual medical records could be made available – on a voluntary basis – through an EU individual electronic health passport, in compliance with data protection rules.	- In a report on the Implementation of the Cross-border Healthcare Directive in the European regions (2020), the CoR's RegHub assessed how the directive had been taken up by regional authorities in the EU and presented successful examples of implementation, challenges and obstacles. Based on the findings of the report, the CoR presented recommendations with a view to the framework of the Fit4 future platform and the simplification of EU laws and reducing unnecessary costs. The	- The CoR will pursue its political commitment to a digital health passport and a robust framework for health data transfers.

⁴ In the framework of proposal no. 6: "Foster knowledge, awareness, education, and dialogues on environment, climate change, energy use, and sustainability".

		European Commission presented its follow-up in the 2021 Annual Burden Survey .	
10.2 10.6	<p>Recognising the need to take full account of the principle of subsidiarity and the key role of local, regional and national players in health matters, ensure there is the ability to act at EU level when the right to health is best addressed there. To allow faster and stronger decision-making on key subjects and to improve the effectiveness of European governance towards the development of the European Health Union (such as, for example, in the event of a pandemic or for rare diseases).</p> <p>Ensure that treatments and medicines across the EU are of equal quality and of fair local cost, including through tackling existing fragmentation of the Internal Market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The last two years, the CoR has supported the objective of a Health Union and has pointed out the need for the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response authority (HERA) to develop, in partnership with the other relevant EU bodies, a health security vulnerability scoreboard, building, together with the Member States and regions, response programmes for the various kinds of emergencies and stress-test programmes for health systems. - The CoR monitors respect for the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality in the health sector. - The CoR has identified mental health as the key emerging health challenge in the post-COVID era and it has presented a sample of local and regional approaches in its State of regions and cities in the EU report (October 2022). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will also follow up, in cooperation with the European Commission (DG Health) on the implementation of the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive. - The CoR will contribute to the European Commission's initiative on a comprehensive approach for mental health by presenting local and regional approaches. - The CoR intends to contribute to increasing the level of protection for Europeans and to work at local and regional level to raise awareness and to screen the best strategies. - The CoR will work with the European Commission to update the existing European quality framework for long-term care services, in order to keep pace with the latest developments in long-term care provision and related skills requirements, and with a view to facilitating the mobility of care service providers.

3. Stronger economy, social justice and jobs

No	Proposal/Measure	State of play	Way forward
11.3	<p>Reviewing the EU's economic governance and the European Semester in order to ensure that the green and digital transitions, social justice and social progress go hand in hand with economic competitiveness, without ignoring the economic and fiscal nature of the European Semester. In addition, there is a need to better involve social partners and the local and regional authorities in the implementation of the European Semester in order to improve its application and accountability.</p>	<p>- In the COFE discussions, the CoR strongly supported the proposal to review the EU's economic governance framework and the European semester in order to better promote its main economic and fiscal coordination objectives alongside the just, green and digital transitions, as well as social justice.</p> <p>- Furthermore, the CoR calls for the explicit reintegration of the Sustainable Development Goals into a reformed European semester, with a view to ensuring a place-based, sustainable recovery.</p>	<p>- The CoR will continue to argue for a stronger role for local and regional authorities, which must be implemented through a "code of conduct" in order to ensure their involvement in the European semester, modelled on the Code of Conduct for Partnership in the structural funds. Such a code of conduct for the European semester would improve both the efficacy of the process and its democratic legitimacy.</p> <p>- The CoR will evaluate the progress of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) in order to see the added value for local and regional authorities and to further develop its views. It will also evaluate the progress of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals</p> <p>- The CoR will continue to call for a role in reviewing economic governance.</p>

12.5	<p>Promoting policies for a strong industrial base and innovation in key enabling technologies, and a forward-looking climate policy coupled with industrial competitiveness with a strong social dimension, based on social dialogue and well-functioning industrial relations.</p>	<p>- The CoR has long argued in favour of a place-based approach to EU industrial policy. More specifically, the CoR has emphasised the need for a strategic vision for industry, rooted in a place-based approach, and that a place-based approach requires well-functioning cooperation networks and clusters as well as inter-regional cooperation. The CoR has also underlined that this cooperation is crucial for reaching a critical mass in co-investment for the deployment of innovation in industrial value chains across Europe and that pan-European and inter-regional collaboration has an important role in realising the potential of the circular and carbon neutral economy.</p>	<p>- The CoR will continue to monitor the developments under all pillars of the industrial strategy.</p>
12.6	<p>Giving special attention in all new initiatives to SMEs, the backbone of our economy. The “Think Small First” principle must be respected in all EU’s legislative proposals and a SME test should be reinforced in the Commission's impact assessment in accordance with clear principles while fully respecting social and environmental standards and consumer rights.</p>	<p>- The CoR will continue to support the improvement of regional SME policy through its European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) award as well as through its network of previously awarded EER regions. The EER award is a project that identifies and rewards EU regions and cities which show an outstanding and innovative entrepreneurial policy strategy, irrespective of their size, wealth and competences. Regions and cities with the most credible, forward-thinking and promising vision plan are granted the label "European Entrepreneurial Region" for a specific year.</p>	<p>- The CoR will continue its activities on the EER award and evaluate the competitiveness check that could be introduced in the Better Law-making toolbox.</p> <p>- The CoR will advocate for BEFIT to be used as a way to cut red tape for companies and strengthen cross-border competition.</p>
12.14 4.4.	<p>Promoting digital cohesion to contribute to economic, social and territorial cohesion as defined</p>	<p>- The joint CoR-European Commission Broadband Platform, launched in 2017, aims to</p>	<p>- The CoR will continue its cooperation with the EC via its Broadband Platform.</p>

	<p>in the Treaty of the functioning of the European Union. Develop high-speed internet and mobile network connectivity in rural and island regions⁵.</p>	<p>help high-speed broadband reach all European regions, including rural and sparsely populated areas where there is not enough market-driven development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considering digital cohesion, the CoR argues that digital skills and digital infrastructure are key for the development of all the other dimensions of the Digital Compass and thus recommends that the European Commission undertake and commit to a dedicated long-term strategy, resources and coordination mechanisms, leveraging large scale projects based on Member State cooperation, in order to ensure every citizen has up-to-date digital skills and infrastructure. - The CoR commissioned a study on <i>Rural proofing a foresight framework for resilient rural communities</i>, which can be consulted via this link. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will continue its work regarding the objective of digital cohesion, ensuring that there is no gap between urban and rural areas. - Integration of rural proofing in the Better Regulation toolbox. - The CoR will establish its views in its future proposals on the European Critical Raw Materials act. - The CoR intends to cooperate with the European Commission to move toward a Digital Compass that takes into account the territorial dimension in practice.
<p>12.15</p>	<p>Strengthening cross-border cooperation in order to enhance cohesion and resilience within and beyond regions by fostering the European cross border mechanisms and similar tools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR manages the European groupings of territorial cooperation register (EGTCs). - The CoR strongly supports the call for the strengthening of cross-border cooperation in order to enhance the cohesion and resilience of border regions, and supports the reference to the European Cross-Border Mechanism Regulation, which has the potential to significantly improve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will continue promoting cross-border cooperation. - The CoR will work with European Commission (DG ENER) to enhance the involvement of local and regional authorities in cross-border energy projects. - The CoR will cooperate with the European Commission and the relevant

⁵ Proposal no. 4.4. on connectivity in rural and island regions is grouped with 12.4, even though it is listed under "Climate change & the environment" in the COFE final report.

		<p>cross-border cooperation and the livelihoods of citizens living in border regions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In recent years, the CoR has promoted cross-border renewable energy projects involving local and regional authorities, partnerships for regional innovation (PRIs) and cross-border health threats. 	<p>European authorities to reinforce the opportunities for cross-border healthcare cooperation and for a statute for European cross-border associations.</p>
12.16	<p>Enhancing and promoting the possibilities for cross border training in order to upskill the European workforce and increase competitiveness and boosting citizen's economic literacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR has established strong cooperation with the European Commission through the implementation of the Joint DG EMPL/EaFA (European Alliance of Apprenticeships) action plan. - The CoR will enhance its current work on skills, VET and apprenticeships, especially through the enhanced cooperation with DG EMPL. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will actively promote the local and regional dimension during the 2023 European Year of Skills. - The CoR will enhance its cooperation with the European Labour Authority, focusing on the issues of labour mobility and undeclared work, currently under negotiation.
13.6	<p>Ensuring gender equality, in line with the 2020-2025 EU Gender Equality Strategy. The EU should continue measuring the gender equality through a gender equality index (i.e. attitudes, salary gap, employment, leadership, etc.), monitor the strategy yearly and be transparent with the achievements; and encourage the sharing of expertise and best practices and set up a possible direct citizen-feedback mechanism (e.g. an Ombudsperson).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR has included gender equality in its priorities and key measures during its current five-year term (2020-2025). Under the priority "Bringing Europe closer to its people: strengthening EU democracy and working together on the future of our Union", the CoR prioritised key measures with a view to promoting respect for gender equality and actively participating in combatting gender stereotypes. - The <i>Strategy for a gender balance in Members' participation in the CoR</i>, adopted in 2019, makes the CoR efforts to achieve gender parity in its ranks a reality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will continue its efforts to mainstream gender equality in EU policies and programmes and for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5. - The CoR supports the realisation of a <i>Charter for Gender Equality for the 2024 EP Elections</i>, in order to promote the participation of women as voters and candidates in the forthcoming European Parliament elections. - In the context of the European semester, the CoR will argue for setting tangible objectives relating to gender

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR's ongoing initiative "For more women in politics" aims to achieve better gender representativeness among local and regional politicians. - The CoR participates in the European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity awards, highlighting local and regional authorities' efforts to introduce robust inclusion strategies at local level. 	<p>equality through the country-specific recommendations and by including specific measures in the national reform programmes.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Ensuring the full implementation of the European pillar of Social rights at EU, national, regional and local level while respecting the competences and the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and to include a Social Program Protocol in the Treaty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the COFE discussions, the CoR advocated for the full implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and its headline targets for 2030 at EU, national, regional and local levels, while respecting the division of competences and the principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and the existing competences at national, regional and local level as well as the autonomy of the social partners. - The CoR also supports the COFE proposal of including a "social progress protocol" in the Treaties, which would imply reviewing Article 3 TEU as well as Articles 9, 151, and 152-157 TFEU. - The CoR has established enhanced cooperation with the European Commission (DG EMPL) on "The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights from a local and regional perspective" and for a "A strong social Europe for just transitions". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will continue its cooperation with the European Commission (DG EMPL) for the implementation of the action plan for 2022 - The CoR will contribute to the delivery of the strategy and tools for a multilevel implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. - In 2023, the CoR will express its views on the Work Directive, the "adequate minimum income" and the European Care Strategy. - The CoR will actively participate in the European Year of Skills 2023 (EYS) and cooperate with the European Commission (DG EMPL) on the EYS 2023. - In 2023, the CoR will focus its work on "housing first" and homelessness.

		- The CoR is participating in the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (EPOCH) and its Steering Board.	
15.9	Ensuring the sustainable development and the demographic resilience of the regions that are lagging behind in order to make them more vibrant and attractive including through the cohesion policy.	- For a long time, the CoR has highlighted the need to measure and tackle the negative effects of demographic change in the EU regions. It insists that the demographic transition should be dealt with urgently and efficiently, and stresses the dangers for the economy, and for democracy as a whole, of the rising social, economic, territorial, and digital inequalities, leading to brain drain, among other things. It emphasises the need to increase the attractiveness of depopulated, ageing regions via investment and support, in particular for young people and families, and to pay attention to those regions with population imbalances derived from high population densities, especially in peripheral and island areas.	- The CoR is committed to investing in a long-term vision for rural areas and to the implementation of the Rural Pact. - The CoR will pursue its work to make rural proofing part of the CoR Better Regulation toolbox. - The CoR is engaged in stimulating smart interterritorial cooperation and citizens actions in local development strategies.
16.1	Harmonizing and coordinating tax policies within the Member States of the EU in order to prevent tax evasion and avoidance, avoiding tax havens within the EU and targeting offshoring within Europe, including by ensuring that decisions on tax matters can be taken by qualified majority in the Council of the EU. On the other hand, there are recommendations from citizens' panels that state that taxation is a matter for individual countries, which have their own objectives and circumstances.	- The CoR argues that the work done so far in preparing legal measures to combat tax base erosion and profit shifting outside the EU could also have beneficial effects for local and regional situations as well, not only in terms of higher tax revenues available to the Member States, but also with a view to ensuring greater fairness and competitiveness of SMEs.	- The CoR will closely follow the developments on the directive on ensuring a global minimum level of taxation for multinational groups in the European Union.

16.6	Strengthening oversight of the absorption and use of EU funds, including at local and municipal level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considering that the absorption of funds is scrutinised by the Court of Auditors, the European Commission and the European Parliament, the CoR activities on good governance and decentralisation can help to build the capacity of local and regional authorities to use the funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will advocate for an overarching simplification of the instruments and delivery system of EU funds. - The CoR will work on overcoming the fragmentation of EU funds. - The CoR will develop its cooperation with the Court of Auditors.
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4. EU in the world

No	Proposal/Measure	State of play	Way forward
18	Reducing dependency of EU from foreign actors in energy. We propose that the EU reach more autonomy in the field of energy production and supply, in the context of the ongoing green transition (...).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR is actively involved in awareness raising initiatives, such as the European Union Sustainable Energy Week. It also organises multilevel climate and energy dialogues on various energy-related topics - Other relevant initiatives include: Cities Energy Saving Sprint, a joint initiative for cities to immediately reduce energy consumption and be better prepared for the upcoming winter by using a simple energy saving toolkit; and the 100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR is committed to advocating for a permanent Green Deal legislative framework that better embeds the Sustainable Development Goals.
22	The EU, in particular at the international level, should improve its accessibility for citizens through better information, education, citizen participation and transparency of its action notably by strengthening links with citizens and local institutions to improve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR has set up external bodies to foster cooperation. These include: the joint consultative committees (JCCs) with, respectively, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia; its working groups for, respectively, the Western Balkans, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The action of the CoR's external bodies as awareness raising channels will be further developed.

	transparency reach of the citizens and communicate and consult better with them about concrete EU institutions at regional and international level.	Turkey , and Ukraine ; the Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP), and the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM).	
24	The EU as a strong actor on the world scene in relationship building.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR has set-up external bodies to foster cooperation. These include: joint consultative committees (JCCs) with, respectively, North Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia; its working groups for, respectively, the Western Balkans, Turkey, and Ukraine; the Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP), and the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM). - Seven days after Ukraine received EU candidate-country status, the CoR launched the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine. This includes EU and Ukrainian associations of local and regional authorities and aims to coordinate their joint efforts to support the recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine. 	<p>In 2023, the priorities for CoR's external relations will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - supporting Ukraine and its reconstruction, notably through its European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine, which should be included in the European Commission's Ukraine Reconstruction Platform; - embedding the two new candidate countries, Ukraine and Moldova, into its enlargement work and supporting the creation, in 2023, of a Joint Consultative Committee with Albania; - reflecting on the future of the Eastern Partnership from a local and regional perspective, in view of geopolitical changes in the area; - focusing the work of ARLEM on "resilience" along 3 lines: Inclusive cities, Climate action, and Energy and food security. - co-organising the "Cities and regions for international partnerships" forum with the European Commission.

<p>25.1 38.1</p>	<p>Ensuring that the values and principles enshrined in the EU Treaties and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights are non-negotiable, irreversible and sine qua non conditions for EU membership and accession. EU values must be fully upheld in all Member States also so they can act as an international standard and pole of attraction through diplomacy and dialogue. Enlargement of the EU should not undermine the EU acquis with relation to fundamental values and citizens' rights⁶. (...) In its relationship with external countries, the European Union should firstly strengthen common democratic values in its borders. Only after achieving this, the European Union can be an ambassador of our democratic model in the countries that are ready and willing to implement it, through diplomacy and dialogue⁷.</p>	<p>- The CoR holds its Enlargement Days to support the activities of its joint consultative committees and to develop awareness of EU values and democratic principles. - In the framework of ARLEM's activities, the CoR was involved in the EuroMed Capital for Dialogue Award 2021, an initiative of the Anna Lindh Foundation to promote intercultural dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region.</p>	<p>In 2023, the CoR will pursue its activities towards: - capacity building for public administrations in partner countries, good governance and good administration, including tackling corruption and promoting stronger decentralisation; Further actions could refer to new joint initiatives to foster culture-led development; The CoR also will continue to build strong ties with its neighbours and with third countries via its "Cities and regions for international partnership" forum.</p>
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5. Values and rights, rule of law, security

No	Proposal/Measure	State of play	Way forward
<p>25.3</p>	<p>The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights should be made universally applicable and enforceable. In addition, annual conferences on the rule of law (following the Commission' Rule of law Report) with delegations from all Member States involving randomly selected and diverse citizens, civil servants, parliamentarians, local authorities, social partners and</p>	<p>- The CoR cooperates with the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), with whom it organises an annual dialogue to share best practices and knowledge on fundamental rights themes of local and regional relevance. - In cooperation with the City of Gdańsk and Icorn, the CoR has set up the Mayor Paweł</p>	<p>- The CoR will contribute to the Annual Conference on Rule of Law and to the outreach activities at national level on the European Commission's Annual Rule of Law Report. - Based on the pilot project on mapping, the CoR, in cooperation with the</p>

⁶ The proposal is listed under "EU in the world" for its content, even though in the COFE final report it is under "Values and rights, rule of law, security".

⁷ The proposal is listed under "EU in the world" for its content, even though in the COFE final report it is under "European democracy".

	civil society should be organised. Organisations, including civil society, which promote the rule of law on the ground should also be further supported.	Adamowicz Award , which awards excellence in the promotion of freedom, solidarity and equality. - The CoR has launched a pilot project on "Promoting European values through education and culture", which provides a map with over 100 examples of activities that promote awareness about European values at local and regional level, as a part of the EU's wider goal of strengthening European identity through education and culture.	European Commission, will continue to develop the map of best practices, establishing a community of tools for promoting European values through education and culture.
26.1⁸	Implementing in full the existing data privacy legislation and reviewing it to evaluate, if necessary, the establishment of stronger enforcement mechanisms for entities processing personal data, currently under competence of independent national data protection authorities respecting the principle of subsidiarity (...).	- The CoR is active in promoting digital cohesion in the EU and with the activities of the CoR/European Commission Broadband Platform. - The CoR is open to the idea of creating "personal data spaces", with more possibilities for individuals to control who can access and use data, and of enhancing the portability right for individuals under Article 20 GDPR.	- The CoR intends to consolidate the CoR/European Commission Broadband Platform.
27.4	Promoting citizens' media literacy and awareness about disinformation and unintentional dissemination of fake news, including through mandatory school trainings. Member States should also be encouraged to provide adequate human and financial resources to this end.	- The CoR study on Developing a handbook on good practice in countering disinformation at local and regional level shows, including by analysing specific examples, how cities and regions can contribute to tackling disinformation.	- The CoR will express its views on the European Media Freedom Act in an opinion due in March 2023. - The CoR will promote exchanges of best practices, awareness raising and capacity building with respect to tackling disinformation at local and regional level.

⁸ The issue of data protection is also addressed by the proposals on Digital transformation.

29	Anti-discrimination, equality and quality of life. Take action to harmonize living conditions across the EU and improve EU citizens' socio-economic quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The topic of anti-discrimination, equality and quality of life has been addressed in many recent CoR political recommendations emphasising that the right to equal treatment and opportunities between genders and/or vulnerable groups must be ensured and promoted in all areas. These recommendations also highlighted the need to promote the inclusion of all citizens, ensure the exercise of their rights on an equal basis, and prevent discrimination and social marginalisation. - The CoR takes a comprehensive approach, which is crucial for delivering fair and sustainable solutions for all citizens, ensuring that no one is left behind, as called for under the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. - The CoR is involved in the 2022 "European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity" award. This award highlights local and regional authorities' efforts to introduce robust inclusion strategies at local level, including a specific award for local authorities that foster Roma inclusion. 	<p>The CoR will engage in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promoting diversity by advocating for inclusivity and equality measures and by preventing and combating discrimination based on gender, racial and ethnic origin, religion, disability and age, and discrimination on any ground in decision-making at European, national, local and regional levels. - providing EU-wide criteria on anti-discrimination in the labour market and incentivising private companies to recruit people that are usually most subject to discrimination (e.g. young people, older people, women, minorities). - promoting awareness and action at local and regional level on the fundamental EU values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, which must be protected and respected, even in times of emergency.
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6. Digital transformation

No	Proposal/Measure	State of play	Way forward
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<p>31</p> <p>32</p> <p>35.7</p>	<p>Equal access to the internet: everyone in Europe should in practice have access to the internet and to digital services and that the sovereignty of the EU’s digital infrastructure is enhanced.</p> <p>Data literacy and skills that empower people: the EU to ensure that all European citizens can benefit from digitalisation, by empowering them with the necessary digital skills and opportunities.</p> <p>Building a data infrastructure based on European values; implement the ‘digital first’ and ‘once only’ principle and facilitate digital and secure access to data for innovation and business; encouraging the digitalization of public services.</p>	<p>- The CoR considers that digital cohesion is a component of economic, social and territorial cohesion and that it has to be addressed as a public service good.</p> <p>- The CoR has established relevant cooperation in this area with the European Commission via its Broadband Platform.</p> <p>- The CoR is of the view that digital skills and digital infrastructure are key for the development of all other dimensions of the Digital Compass and thus recommends that the European Commission undertake and commit to a dedicated long-term strategy, resources and coordination mechanisms, leveraging large scale projects based on Member State cooperation, in order to ensure every citizen has up-to-date digital skills and infrastructures.</p>	<p>- The CoR proposes to cooperate with the European Commission to move toward a Digital Compass that takes into account the territorial dimension in practice.</p> <p>- The CoR will continue its cooperation with the European Commission via its Broadband Platform.</p>
<p>31.3</p>	<p>Advance the deployment of digital and electrical infrastructure both in public and private spaces to enable use of electric and autonomous vehicles.</p>	<p>- In a relevant RegHub special report on overcoming obstacles to transport, digital and green infrastructure deployment, the CoR advocates simplifying and increasing State aid for refuelling infrastructure and adequate energy provision installations to support the conversion to lower-emission (e-)vehicles.</p>	<p>- The CoR will continue to analyse current legislation and will scrutinise its implementation at local and regional level.</p>
<p>31.6</p>	<p>Improving digital access to and accessibility of essential public and private services for citizens and businesses, for example when it comes to administrative procedures, and ensure inclusive access and support such as through help desks in relation to these services.</p>	<p>- In a relevant Fit for Future Platform opinion on the implementation of the INSPIRE Directive (December 2021), the CoR highlights the need to update the Directive with respect to data specifications and meta data, and to improve the opportunities of its use beyond environmental</p>	<p>- Via its RegHub platform, the CoR will contribute to the Fit for Future Platform opinion on the European Interoperability Framework (due in December 2022).</p>

		<p>policies; adopted December 2021, this report was considered in the European Commission's follow-up in the European Commission's 2021 Annual Burden Survey.</p>	
<p>31.7 32</p>	<p>Harmonising high quality digital standards and improving secure mobility of data to facilitate crossborder interoperability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In a relevant Fit for Future Platform opinion on the implementation of eProcurement tools and procedures (December 2021), the CoR stresses the importance of ensuring that platforms and eProcurement solutions are interoperable and compatible with various national databases. - Commission follow-up in the European Commission's 2021 Annual Burden Survey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will continue to analyse of current legislation and will scrutinise its implementation at local and regional level.
<p>34.1</p>	<p>Better explaining data protection rules (GDPR), increasing transparency and improving communication by creating guidance on informed consent texts that use simple and clear language understandable by everyone, including more visual ways to provide consent to data use, accompanied by an information campaign and ensuring needed skills for those processing data and advising those who need assistance.</p>	<p>Regarding the Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act, the CoR highlighted the need to build up effective cooperation between Member States' authorities in order to establish "digital services coordinators", share data and enforce applicable rules, and also points out that local and regional authorities should be included in the process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will follow up on the developments relating to the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act.
<p>35.6</p>	<p>Achieving a strong and competitive digital economy and spread the benefits of digital transformation equitably across Europe by focusing on technology and innovation as drivers of growth, by driving world class transformative research and making room for innovation ecosystems throughout all regions by improving the operating environment of SMEs and start-ups and fair access to funding and by doing away</p>	<p>The CoR is involved in various processes, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the digital innovation hubs (DiHs/EDiHs), - pilot projects on partnerships for regional innovation (PRIs), - the Knowledge Exchange Platform (KEP), - the European Institute of Technology (EIT) Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). 	<p>The CoR will push its activities regarding these processes and will monitor and implement the joint action plan in the European Commission Steering Group meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will work on the development of the concept of territorial missions and the allocation

	with legal or other burdens hindering cross border activities.	Furthermore, the CoR is engaged in the New European Bauhaus initiative, especially through the joint action plan with the European Commission.	of EUR 170 million from 2023 onwards.
35.10	Introducing a European common digital identity to facilitate cross-border digital transactions and services with a framework of European standards and guidelines providing the necessary safeguards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR backs the idea of a European digital identity wallet, which would enable citizens to prove their identity, including while on the move, so they can access online public administration services, swap digital documents or simply prove a personal identity attribute, such as their age. - The CoR emphasises the need to ensure that all users are autonomous and not subject to discrimination, and therefore recommends that the Communication state clearly that there must be no indirect coercion to use the European digital identity wallet when services are offered to natural persons. It is a matter of principle that use is a voluntary act. 	- The CoR will follow up on the implementation of this initiative.

7. European democracy

No	Proposal/Measure	State of play	Way forward
36	Increase citizens' participation and youth involvement in the democracy at the European Union level to develop a 'full civic experience' for Europeans, ensure that their voice is heard also in between elections, and that the participation is effective. That is why the most appropriate form of participation should be considered for each topic, for example by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR advocates for the development of a permanent and place-based mechanism of dialogue with citizens. - In cooperation with the Bertelsmann Foundation, the CoR supported 23 cooperation projects between 67 cities and regions for structured citizens' dialogues contributing to the COFE. The project resulted in recommendations on how to take citizens' participation into EU policy-making. 	- The cooperation with the Bertelsmann Foundation will continue and will be developed around three modules: 1) Capacity building among members of the CoR, YEPs, members of the CoR EU Councillors network as well as the participants from previous deliberative democracy exercises; 2)

36.4	Improving and streamlining existing citizen's participation mechanisms at the European, national and local level to make them secure, accessible, visible and inclusive.	- More than 150 events – local, regional, trans-national and cross-border citizens' dialogues – were held, reaching out to over 10 000 citizens, local politicians, and stakeholders and providing input to the COFE multilingual digital platform.	Piloting and linking deliberative processes with selected dossiers of the work of the CoR and anchor them in the legislative cycle; 3) Developing a Citizen Participation Charter together with other political organisations.
36.5	Including organized civil society and regional and local authorities and existing structures such as the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions in the citizen's participation process.	- The CoR's Young Elected Politicians programme (YEPs) is a network of politicians aged 40 and under holding a mandate at regional or local level in the EU. Via the network, they can get in contact with other young politicians, attend trainings on EU topics, and participate in activities organised by the CoR.	- This pilot action also aims to provide evidence of the added value of involving the regional and local dimension in the citizens' panels that the European Commission is planning to set up ahead of key policy proposals.
36.7	Holding citizens' assemblies periodically on the basis of legally binding EU law to enhance stronger citizen's participation in EU policies and direct citizen's involvement in events similar to the COFE organized at European, national and local level.	- Together with the European Youth Forum, the CoR launched a process involving youth organisations to co-draft a European Charter for Youth and Democracy .	- The CoR will work intensively to ensure the legacy of the 2022 European Year on Youth and will monitor the European Charter for Youth and Democracy and its promotion vis-à-vis the 2024 European elections.
36.11	Summarize elements of citizens' participation in an EU Charter for the involvement of citizens in EU-affairs.	- During the 2022 European Year of Youth (EYY) the CoR contributed to the core objective of enhancing youth democratic participation at all levels of government. The CoR also participated in the groups of stakeholders and EYY national coordinators. - EuroPCom, an event organised by the CoR in close cooperation with the other EU institutions, is the largest annual European conference for European, national, regional and local experts in public communication, aimed at developing knowledge on best practices in communication on EU issues.	- The CoR networks such as YEPs and the EU Councillors (see proposal no. 36.6) will be enhanced and kept up, including with a view to the European elections 2024. - EuroPCom 2023 will focus on democracy and the link between

			representative and deliberative democracy; EuroPCom 2024 will focus on the preparations for the European elections.
36.6	Create a system of local EU councilors as a way to reduce the distance between the EU institutions and the European citizens.	- The CoR network of EU councillors is made up of regional and local politicians in charge of EU affairs in their constituency. Members of the network receive specific information through dedicated tools, invitations to CoR events, links to political debates at the CoR, and opportunities for exchanges and networking with CoR members and other EU councillors.	The CoR network of EU councillors will be further developed in synergy with the European Commission's BELC network of locally elected representatives from across the Member States, with the aim of communicating the EU on the ground.
36.8	Provide enhanced structural support, financial and otherwise, for civil society, especially for youth civil society and support local authorities in setting up local youth councils; this could be achieved through a specific pillar in the European Democracy Action Plan for involvement of civil society and social partners, and a dedicated civil society strategy.	- Together with the European Youth Forum, the CoR launched a process involving youth organisations to co-draft a European Charter for Youth and Democracy . - During the 2022 European Year of Youth (EYY) the CoR contributed to the core objective of enhancing youth democratic participation at all levels of government. The CoR also participate in the groups of stakeholders and EYY national coordinators. - The CoR has established a memorandum of understanding with the European Youth Forum. - The CoR participated in the European Youth Capital award and the European Volunteering Capital competition, as a member of the jury.	- The CoR will work intensively to ensure the legacy of the 2022 European Year on Youth and will monitor the European Charter for Youth and Democracy and its promotion vis-à-vis the 2024 European elections. - The CoR will seek more systematic consultation with youth civil society on its legislative and non-legislative work. - The CoR will develop a handbook. Exchanges of best practices on local youth councils' initiatives will be developed.

36.9	Introduce a youth check of legislation , including both on impact assessment and a consultation mechanism with representatives of young people when legislation is deemed to have an impact on young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Together with the European Youth Forum, the CoR launched a process involving youth organisations to co-draft a European Charter for Youth and Democracy. - During the 2022 European Year of Youth (EYY) the CoR contributed to the core objective of enhancing youth democratic participation at all levels of government. The CoR also participate in the groups of stakeholders and EYY national coordinators. 	- The CoR will reflect to integrate a youth check on legislation in its Better Regulation toolbox.
37.5	Bringing Europe closer to citizens by improving contact points and dedicated hubs, or “ Houses of Europe ”, at local level to provide resources, information and advice to citizens on EU matters.	- The CoR liaises with European Commission (DG Comm/Europe Direct info centres).	The CoR will strengthen its cooperation with the European Commission (DG Comm/Europe Direct info centres) to support its networks on the ground, such as YEPs and the EU councillors.
38.4	Stimulate the inclusion of EU topics in public debates via political parties not only during European elections but ahead of national regional and local elections as well	According to their protocol of cooperation, the European Parliament and the CoR work together on the communication campaign for the European elections.	- The CoR will advocate for an Erasmus programme for local and regional politicians, which would allow elected representatives to enhance their knowledge about EU affairs through visits, trainings and exchanges with EU institutions.
39.2	Improve the EU’s decision-making process in order to ensure the EU’s capability to act, while taking into account the interests of all Member States and guaranteeing a transparent and understandable process for the citizens, in particular by (...) 2. Ensuring transparency of decision making by allowing	- The CoR Network of Regional Hubs for EU Policy Implementation Review (RegHub) provides the EU institutions with technical implementation reports about the fitness of EU law at local and regional level. RegHub contributes to the European Commission's Fit for Future Platform for the	- CoR activities on better-regulation activity will be enhanced thanks to its governance structure, notably via the Better Regulation and Active Subsidiarity Steering Group (BRASS-G).

	independent citizens' observers to closely follow the decision-making process.	evaluation and review of EU law. So far, RegHub has produced five implementation reports, has contributed to five Fit4Future opinions and has delivered a special report on how to overcome obstacles to transport, digital and green infrastructure deployment.	
40.1	Active subsidiarity and multi-level governance are key principles and fundamental features for EU functioning and democratic accountability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR monitors and promotes the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality through its Subsidiarity Monitoring Network and specific tools such as the subsidiarity and proportionality grid. - The CoR is an active member of the European Commission's Fit4Future Platform, a high-level expert group that helps the Commission in its efforts to simplify laws and reduce unnecessary administrative burden and costs. The CoR also assesses the territorial impact of the European Commission's proposals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The new CoR governance scheme in relation to Better Regulation and Active Subsidiarity (BRASS - G) will focus on providing feedback on EU legislation throughout its life-cycle. - The CoR will advocate for the principle of multilevel governance and partnership beyond the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) to be codified in an interinstitutional code of conduct. - The CoR's work on subsidiarity and better regulation will be consistent with the initiatives on citizen participation, which will be open to the members of the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network.
40.2	The EU should review the mechanism allowing national Parliaments to assess whether new legislative proposals at the European level do not intrude on their legal competences and to be granted the possibility to suggest a legislative initiative to the European level. Such	- The CoR has established structured cooperation with the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE).	- The CoR will enhance its cooperation with Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE), including with a view to making joint

	mechanisms should also be enlarged to all regional parliaments within the EU that have legislative power.		proposals with regional parliaments on Treaty changes.
40.3	Reform the Committee of Regions to encompass adequate channels of dialogue for regions as well as cities and municipalities, giving it an enhanced role in the institutional architecture where matters with a territorial impact are concerned;	The CoR adopted a resolution on COFE outcomes in June 2022, supporting the European Parliament's call for a convention to revise the Treaties and asking that CoR members be fully involved in the process. It has also drafted a legal analysis on the Treaty change needed to implement the COFE proposals relevant for the CoR and local and regional authorities. Moreover, the CoR has already formulated specific proposals with a view to enhancing its institutional role, both with and without Treaty changes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR cooperation protocols with the European Parliament and the European Commission should be revised, in order to enhance the CoR's role and involvement in the legislative process. - The CoR will propose Treaty amendments and will promote pilot actions on key legislative files.
40.4	Systematic use of subsidiarity definition commonly agreed by all EU institutions could help to clarify whether decisions have to be taken at European, national and regional level.	The CoR-inspired subsidiarity grid is increasingly used by the European Commission in its impact assessments and evaluation of the EU legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The further use of the subsidiarity grid will be promoted among EU institutions. - The CoR will promote the notion of "active subsidiarity" among the EU institutions and the Member States. - The CoR will focus on Treaty amendments relating to the governance aspects of subsidiarity (e.g. role of the CoR in the ex-ante legislative phase, stronger recognition of the proportionality principle).

8. Migration

No	Proposal/Measure	State of play	Way forward
43.3	Increasing EU financial, logistical and operational support also for local authorities and regional governments for the management of the first reception which would lead to a possible integration of refugees and regular migrants in the EU or repatriation of irregular migrants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR works on awareness raising and capacity building for local and regional authorities on integration issues via the its Cities and Regions for Integration Network - The CoR set up a Info-Support Hub for Ukrainian refugees and calls for a local "EU-Ukraine refugee facility to ease the use of funds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will keep up the activities of the Cities and Regions for Integration Network and strengthen the activities in support of Ukrainian refugees. - The CoR cooperation with the European Commission (DG Home) will focus on capacity building events for Integration Network members.
45.1	EU ensures, also with the involvement of local and regional authorities and the contribution of civil society organizations that every asylum and refugee during the process of the residence procedure attends language, integration courses, professional training and activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many activities are developed in close cooperation with the OECD. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In cooperation with DG HOME, the Council of Europe Development Bank, the OECD, Eurochambres and the European associations of local and regional authorities, the CoR will co-organise peer-learning events focused on best integration practices. - A "partnership integration" with the European Commission's DG Home is ongoing.

9. Education, culture and sport

No	Proposal/Measure	State of play	Way forward

<p>46.1</p> <p>46.3</p>	<p>Coordinate the level of all different education programmes in the European Union with acceptance of the national, regional and local contents, and create closer links between the education systems, including via organising equivalence of diplomas. A certified minimum standard of education in core subjects should be adopted commencing in primary school. Shared competences in the field of education should be introduced, at a minimum in the field of citizenship education and the exercise of that competence by the EU shall not result in Member States being prevented from exercising theirs. Professional degrees and training should be validated and mutually recognised in all EU Member States. The European Union should also champion the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and the youth organisations that provide it, as well as learning periods abroad.</p> <p>Support the training of teachers, to learn from best practices and use up to date innovative and creative teaching techniques that reflect the evolution of teaching methods, including practical activities, building also on the lessons to be drawn from the COVID-19 pandemic and other kinds of crises, as well as promote opportunities for mobility.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR has established a Joint Action Plan with the European Commission (DG for Education and Culture, DG for Research and Innovation, and the Joint Research Centre) in November 2020. - The CoR is actively participating in the 2022 European Year of Youth. - The CoR put forward similar ideas on reinventing Erasmus, supporting young people, recognition of qualifications, and lifelong language learning, and calls for EU action to ensure that all young people in the EU who are interested in vocational training have access to it. The CoR also calls for a minimum qualifications and skills guarantee and for mutual recognition of higher education, upper secondary education and training qualifications between Member States. - Regarding the objective of achieving the European Education Area by 2025, the CoR has always stressed that investing in areas such as teacher training, effective teacher selection, recruitment and assessment procedures and making teaching more attractive, especially in rural areas, is crucial in order to maintain the standards and competitiveness of the Member States' education systems and to strengthen the EU's position as a major international player. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will contribute to the implementation of its recommendations regarding "The Future of Youth Policy in the EU" in the context of the 2022 European Year of Youth. - The CoR will continue its cooperation with the European Commission under the joint action plan.
<p>47.7</p>	<p>Specific policies are needed to avoid a brain drain from some regions and countries within the EU due to insufficient opportunities being available for young people, while making Europe more attractive to prevent</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With regard to Horizon Europe, the CoR is pushing for Widening the Seal of Excellence measures for less advanced regions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will continue its engagement on presenting proposals on challenges and solutions regarding brain drain and

	<p>the drain of European talents and workforce to third countries to prevent the hampering of territorial cohesion particularly as regards those areas which have an acute loss of young talent including through EU funding.</p>	<p>- The CoR is investing in skills and training under its current work on skills, VET and apprenticeships, especially through the enhanced cooperation with DG EMPL/EAfA (European Alliance of Apprenticeships).</p>	<p>notably with a public consultation on Brain drain – mitigating challenges associated with population decline.</p> <p>- The CoR will continue to implement the Joint DG EMPL/EAfA-CoR action plan for 2022.</p>
48.1,	<p>Promote European exchanges in different fields, both physically and digitally, including educational exchanges, twinning, travel and professional mobility (including for teachers and local elected politicians). Such exchanges should be made accessible across Member States for all, regardless of their age, level of education, background and financial means. With this overall aim, the EU should inter alia strengthen existing EU level exchange and mobility programmes, such as the European Solidarity Corps, Erasmus+ and DiscoverEU, and ensure more widespread and diverse participation in these programmes and consider adding also new elements, such as an additional objective of civic service fostered through volunteering (for the European Solidarity Corps) and ‘cultural passes’ (for DiscoverEU). The local and regional authorities, under the auspices of the Committee of the Regions have a key role to play in this matter.</p>	<p>- The CoR is following up on the European Education Area (EEA) and the European Strategy for Universities, especially in the framework of the joint action plan with Commission Gabriel's department.</p> <p>- The CoR is investing in skills and training under its current work on skills, VET and apprenticeships, especially through the enhanced cooperation with DG EMPL/EAfA (European Alliance of Apprenticeships) and the opinion on the European Skills Agenda.</p> <p>- The CoR has called for an Erasmus for medical professionals.</p> <p>- CoR has always argued for multilingualism and the promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity, notably in the context of the European Education Area (EEA) and the European Strategy for Universities.</p>	<p>- The CoR will pursue its commitment to promoting and protecting multilingualism and cultural diversity.</p> <p>- The CoR will continue to implement the Joint DG EMPL/EAfA-CoR action plan for 2022.</p> <p>- The CoR will continue its work with the European Commission and the European Parliament to ensure local and regional authorities can participate in the EEA governance framework.</p>
48.2	<p>(...) Promote multilingualism minority and regional language require additional protection. EU should</p>		

	consider setting-up an institution promoting language diversity at the European level.		
48.4	Protect European cultural heritage and culture, including through recognising local and regional cultural and production peculiarities , new initiatives to safeguard and celebrate it, mobility to promote cultural heritage exchange, and the promotion of existing measures such as Creative Europe, the New European Bauhaus, Sister City Programmes and European Capitals of Culture in line with the Sustainable Development Goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR was fully involved in the legacy of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage and the development of the Cultural Heritage Partnership as well as in the New European Bauhaus initiative. - The CoR commissioned a study on World Heritage Agricultural Landscapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will advocate for the implementation of the New European Bauhaus (NEB) Lab voucher scheme. - The CoR is implementing the joint action plan with Commissioner Gabriel's department. - The CoR is mobilised for a new EU Work Plan on Culture 2023-2026 to help mainstream cultural policies.
49.1	Put emphasis on values, especially gender equality, fairness and inclusiveness that can be concretely reflected through sport practice throughout education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The European values are fully covered in the Joint Action Plan between the European Committee of the Regions and the European Commission's DG for Education and Culture, DG for Research and Innovation, and Joint Research Centre (November 2020). - The CoR is working on a pilot project on promoting European values through education and culture (mapping best practices, including through sport). - The CoR actively participates in the European Week of Sport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will continue advocating for the establishment of a community of tools to promote European values through education and culture, which would also include sports activities.
49.4	Improve attention given not just to professional and commercial sports but also to local and traditional sport , as an aspect of European Cultural Diversity and cultural heritage promotion, and champion support for sports in a non-professional setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR is cooperating with the European Commission (DG EAC) on the SportHub Alliance for Regional Development in Europe (SHARE). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The CoR will contribute to the HealthyLifestyle4All initiative.

ANNEX II: Contributions from European associations of local and regional authorities

Association of European Border Regions ([AEBR](#)):

Thanks to its structure, principles and direct links to local democratic institutions and processes throughout the EU, all of the AEBR's core and programme activity contributes to a "Europe closer to citizens", in which citizens and their rights are at the heart of processes for improving EU cohesion and integration. As such, the AEBR represents a whole-systems mechanism for the advancement of the COFE proposals, rooted in the specific features of border regions and the cross-border consistency and cohesion of the European project. It is an essential dimension through which the Future of Europe principles and proposals can be implemented in practice, forming a critical mass that gives expression to the ambitions of the COFE.

Throughout Europe, the AEBR leads the implementation of several key initiatives providing direct interventions across a range of themes raised not only in the plenary and workshops of the COFE, but also more specifically those addressed in the context of the 49 proposals.

The first of these is IVY, a youth development initiative which the AEBR runs on behalf of the European Commission. IVY provides opportunities for young people to volunteer and gain essential skills, aptitudes and competencies in the specific and specialist area of cross-border territorial cooperation across the EU and, as such, represents a significant contribution to the "succession planning" necessary for border regions to play their full role in the future of EU cohesion and integration. IVY also creates networks of young people involved in cross-border cooperation across the entire EU and external borders.

The second example of how the AEBR provides an ongoing framework for delivery across a range of COFE themes is the "b-solutions" initiative, which it runs on an ongoing basis on behalf of DG REGIO. "b-solutions" focuses on the creation of an evidence base for solutions to cross-border legal and administrative obstacles across the territory of the EU. Through further development support, mediation, facilitation and brokerage, it also contributes to the implementation of a range of solutions on harmonisation, citizen mobility, and economic and social integration across borders.

The totality of the AEBR's work, its networks and its membership provide an important basis for the potential border-region-specific delivery of a vast majority, if not all, of the 49 proposals of the COFE. 30% of the EU's citizens live in a border region, and 40% of EU territory is a border region. Before, during and after the COFE, the AEBR will continue to attend to the fabric of participative democracy for development, expressions of citizenship, and the translation of the European project into a context that not only takes account of the complexities of border regions but also celebrates them, modelling applied approaches to their development as the crucial interlocking by which Europe and its Member States become more connected and institutional co-operation is deepened across all our borders.

Assembly of European Regions ([AER](#)):

The Assembly of European Regions has continuously worked to ensure that the views of European regions were an integral part of the Conference's discussions and findings. Now that the Conference on the Future of Europe has come to an end, AER member regions have compiled a set of recommendations for shaping a future European Union that delivers better value for its territories and citizens. Within the AER, we consider that the COFE should be the precursor to a permanent mechanism of citizen

engagement and consultation in the EU. Regional and local authorities must be involved in the EU structures of decision-making in a meaningful way. In this regard, the AER will keep advocating for the enhancement of the EU architecture in a way that truly delivers the principles of subsidiarity, partnership and multi-level governance. The promotion of democracy and good governance is one of the AER's main priorities, as stated in the AER's political priorities for 2020-2025. In spring 2022, coinciding with the end of the COFE, the AER adopted its position paper on European regions promoting democracy and good governance.

Following the proposals from the COFE citizens' panels:

- the AER will continue to promote best regional practices in the area of deliberative participatory democracy and citizen participation, as it did during the Forum on New Forms of Democratic Engagement.
- the AER will continue striving for the promotion of fair and inclusive labour markets through its flagship Eurodyssey programme, an exchange programme between European regions, which allows young job seekers to benefit from a traineeship placement abroad.
- the promotion of diversity, inclusion and equal opportunities is a key area of interest for the AER. Through the Intercultural Regions Network and the EU-Belong project, the AER provides support for regions to design, implement and evaluate diversity and inclusion strategies based on the principles of equal opportunities, recognition of diversity, and positive interaction between people from different origins.
- the AER will keep advocating for the full engagement of regional governments in the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and hold policy debates and high-level conferences.
- the AER will make sure that European and global climate and environmental strategies and policies reflect the needs and demands of regions. The AER has adopted position papers on *Sustainable Mobility & Connectivity*, and on *Tackling the Climate Emergency: Regions leading the race to 2050*.

Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE):

The spring of 2022 was marked by the conclusion of the work of the Conference on the Future of Europe: this exercise of participatory democracy, which was carried out at EU level, was a unique opportunity for citizens of the various constituent regions of the EU to contribute to the future of European democracy.

Many member assemblies of CALRE were closely involved in the COFE, be it through organising various events or adopting resolutions. In particular, the following were organised: round tables, citizens' panels, workshops, hackathons and cross-border dialogues, the reports of which were posted on the COFE's multilingual digital platform.

At the same time, representatives of the member assemblies of CALRE took part in the work in the COFE plenary and expressed the voice of regional assemblies with legislative powers.

Finally, the presidency of the CALRE ensured regular follow up of COFE activities, in particular by inviting Herman Van Rompuy, chair of the High Level Group on European Democracy at the European Committee of the Regions to the first annual meeting of the Standing Committee, and, to the following meeting, Karolina Zubel and Jan Bazyli Klakla, co-authors of the report on *The territorial dimension of*

the Conference on the future of Europe and its follow-ups, written for the CoR's Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX commission).

The presidency now ensures that regional contributions are duly taken into account by the European institutions and will monitor future developments, including the feedback event with citizens.

Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR):

The CEMR warmly welcomed the launch of the COFE and expressed its willingness to involve Europe's local and regional governments in the debate from the outset, in close cooperation with the European institutions. In order to ensure that the positions of local and regional governments are taken into account as much as possible, the CEMR and its members were mobilised in several ways.

The CEMR adopted a [position paper on the future of Europe](#) entitled *Sustainable and vibrant territories for a leading Europe*, which aims at "empowering local and regional Europe, while promoting a more inclusive and sustainable future for all citizens and generations to come". The position paper was published on the COFE's multilingual digital platform.

In addition, the CEMR organised events to discuss the future of Europe from a local and regional perspective, involving local and regional representatives and citizens⁹.

Finally, in cooperation with the CoR and the other representative associations of local and regional governments, the CEMR was able to nominate delegates to the COFE plenary conference, where we proposed ideas for a more local future of Europe.

Following the adoption of the Final Report by the COFE Joint Presidency, the CEMR reiterates its commitment to working with all EU institutions to implement the citizens' recommendations at all levels in order to ensure a sustainable and local future for Europe.

The CEMR encourages the institutions to provide an annual report on the implementation of the citizens' recommendations. The CEMR also calls for citizens and local and regional governments to be involved in the discussions relating to the revision of the European Treaties by replicating the format and framework used for the COFE plenary conference.

Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)

At its General Assembly in Agios Nikolaos, Crete, Greece on 27-28 October 2022, the CPMR adopted a strong [political declaration](#) calling for regions to play a central role in the renewal of the European project. In a context of global instability, there is a risk that regional disparities in Europe will increase, thereby threatening the good functioning of the single market and support for the European project and its institutions. In this sense, the CPMR strongly believes that the answer to the challenges we face, at all levels, is more European cooperation, not less, and a political project that puts people first and regions at the core. The declaration points to the importance of place-based European policies that reach citizens from all corners of Europe.

⁹ [Future of Europe: Time for a local shift](#), opening political debate of the 2021 CEMR retreat, 29 September 2021; [The future of Europe from a citizen-driven perspective with Local and Regional Governments](#), opening political debate of the 2022 CEMR policy committee, 20 January 2022; [The Future of Europe: The Vision of Local Governments](#), 5 May 2022.

The declaration specifically includes a section about the follow up to the COFE. It stresses that, should a convention for the revision of the EU Treaties be convened, regional and local authorities should play a key role in its preparatory work and implementation. The CPMR also states that the possible reform should consider including a clear definition of "do no harm to cohesion" in the EU Treaties as a principle to be respected across all EU policies and embedded in relevant EU legislation. This would ensure that the new generation of policies is fully shaped according to a place-based and multilevel governance approach. CPMR regions also stress that it is paramount to tackle energy security, energy poverty and the climate crisis simultaneously by supporting a green, sustainable, territorially balanced and socially fair energy transition and by fully harnessing the potential of the transport and maritime sector for a climate-neutral future. It will also be vital to keep solidarity at the core of the European project and to include "climate cohesion" as an additional key objective, so that no EU region gets left behind due to its vulnerability to climate change. Last but not least, a single EU investment policy should be developed for beyond 2027, governed by a common legal and strategic framework and with cohesion policy as its core, while ensuring adequate means and flexibility to engage with non-EU regions, especially for funds under shared management, in order to harness the full potential of peripheral and maritime regions.

The CPMR will keep involving young people in its reflections on the future of Europe and in its own actions, as they are the future and a key source of fresh inspiration.

[EUROCITIES](#)

Eurocities, a network bringing together over 200 cities all over Europe, is committed to the successful implementation of the proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe. As a first step, Eurocities conducted an analysis of those proposals and recommendations that address urban areas in particular and that are linked to Eurocities' strategic objectives and thematic working groups. Together with its members, Eurocities initiated a discussion on how they can build on their analysis and further contribute to the follow-up of the Conference and promote its principles in this new phase. On the basis of the specific indications that will be provided during the COFE feedback event in December, Eurocities will further define its long-term strategy in order to support the implementation of proposals and recommendations in our cities and in the EU.

Counting on our cities' wealth of experience with participatory democracy and democracy, Eurocities is ready to support and partner up with the European Commission and other stakeholders to develop and implement permanent EU participatory mechanisms. Eurocities is convinced that an ex-post assessment of the COFE, conducted in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, should be the basis for any further action. At the same time, we will continue promoting the principles of the COFE by bringing our innovative participatory practices for cities to the attention of the EU institutions.



Download the report on the European Committee of the Regions' implementation of the proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe

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European Committee of the Regions



Conference on the **Future of Europe**

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