



**European Committee
of the Regions**

CoR Activities in 2018

Report on the Impact of CoR Opinions

June 2019



**European Committee
of the Regions**

Brussels, 14 June 2019

191st MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS BUREAU

- 25 JUNE 2019 -

ITEM 10A)

**COR ACTIVITIES IN 2018
REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF COR OPINIONS**

Submitted by the Secretary General

FOR DEBATE

SUMMARY	
Bureau meeting: 191	Date: 25/6/2019
Item 10a) CoR Activities in 2018 Report on the impact of CoR opinions	
Type: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Document for information / debate <input type="checkbox"/> Document for decision <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendation to the Assembly	
Short description: This main report is the attachment to the <i>Report on the impact of CoR opinions: executive summary</i> document.	
The Bureau is invited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • take note of the report. 	
Remarks: N/A	

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	5
2	Detailed impact report presented by the Committee 5 political priorities	6
2.1	A fresh start for the European economy.....	6
2.1.1	The future of cohesion policy beyond 2020	6
2.1.2	Post-2020 MFF proposal and reform of own resources	8
2.1.3	Structural reforms, partnership and cohesion in the "investment-oriented" European Semester 9	
2.1.4	Interregional investment.....	11
2.1.5	Civil protection	14
2.1.6	Climate change and energy transition	14
2.2	The territorial dimension of EU legislation matters.....	16
2.2.1	European Pillar of Social Rights	16
2.2.2	Digital Single Market	18
2.2.3	Fisheries/Maritime Affairs.....	19
2.2.4	Rural Agenda	20
2.2.5	Health Policy	21
2.2.6	Food policy	21
2.2.7	Implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU	22
2.2.8	Territorial and cross-border cooperation, EGTC and missing transport links	23
2.3	A simpler, more democratic Europe	25
2.3.1	Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA)	25
2.3.2	Subsidiarity and proportionality.....	25
2.3.3	Industrial Policy.....	27
2.4	Stability and cooperation within and outside of the European Union.....	29
2.4.1	Integration of migrants	29
2.4.2	Neighbourhood and the world	30
2.4.3	Peer-to-peer capacity building.....	31
2.4.4	Environmental policy and circular economy	32
2.4.5	Space policy.....	35
2.4.6	UK withdrawal from the EU.....	35
2.5	Europe of the citizens is Europe of the future	37
2.5.1	Future of Europe	37
2.5.2	Education, Culture and Youth.....	38
3	Conclusions – Outlook	41

4	Annex	42
4.1	Annex 1: List of opinions included in this report	42
4.2	Annex 2: List of opinions adopted in 2018	46
4.3	Annex 3: Meetings in 2018 in figures.....	50
4.4	Annex 4: References of the 6 Committee Commissions' contributions to the Impact Report 2018	51

1 Introduction

As a consultative body to the European Institutions, the impact of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) depends on the ability of the Committee and its members to provide the necessary input towards the legislative process at the right time..

To achieve this, it is important to combine the long term political priorities of the CoR with the day-to-day dialogue and cooperation with the other EU institutions.

2018 was the fourth year of the CoR sixth term of office 2015-2020. Its mission is to involve regional and local authorities in the European decision-making process and thus to encourage greater participation from our fellow citizens.

The CoR's political action is based on the belief that cooperation between European, national, regional and local levels is essential if we are to build an ever closer and more mutually supportive union among the people of Europe. The principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and multi-level governance have underpinned the CoR's efforts to ensure that Europe's regions and cities are treated as fully-fledged partners in EU law-making, and 2018 was a landmark year in this regard with the CoR's successful participation in the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and "Doing Less More Efficiently".

The CoR intervenes at several stages of the EU law-making process and works closely with national, regional and local authorities and builds alliances with other Institutions in order to contribute efficiently to the future of a Europe that takes citizens' concerns and needs into account.

Given the multitude of challenges for local and regional authorities, it is also essential for the CoR that cities and regions are sufficiently supported and empowered through EU policies and funds. In this context, cohesion policy plays a key role to ensure that no citizen is left behind, wherever they live.

In 2018, the CoR adopted 78 opinions and demonstrated its support for the European Parliament and the European Commission in the legislative work, in policy challenges as well as in cross-cutting topics. Content wise, the main impact analysis was prepared through debates organised in each of the six CoR commissions and is detailed in the present report.

2 Detailed impact report presented by the Committee 5 political priorities

2.1 A fresh start for the European economy

Creating jobs and sustainable growth in cities and regions to provide a better quality of life for citizens

2.1.1 The future of cohesion policy beyond 2020

Main impact:

- cohesion policy will remain available for all regions in Europe, which was one of the main concerns of the CoR;
- the three categories of regions (less developed regions, transition regions, developed regions) will be maintained;
- a reinforced European Social Fund Plus, mostly managed under shared management, will remain part of Cohesion policy and will be governed by the set of rules outlined in the Common Provisions Regulation;
- there are credible steps for simplification, more differentiation and more flexibility;
- the people-to-people and small-scale project funds for cross-border cooperation have been recognised as of added value and with the important role in building up trust between citizens and institutions by overcoming border obstacles and integrating border areas and their citizens;
- the principle of multi-level governance has also been maintained in the Common Provisions Regulation.
- concerning the current Common Provisions Regulation, in case the legislation would be adopted without substantial changes, for the first time the CoR threatened to use its right to bring a case before the Court of Justice of the European Union on the basis that a proposed EU law – once in place – would not comply with the subsidiarity principle.

With the presentation of the legislative proposals for the new cohesion policy post-2020¹ by the European Commission on 29 May 2018, the long-standing work of the CoR on the future of cohesion policy beyond 2020, which started with a study and reflection project on the matter back in 2015, reached a first culminating point. Thanks to the continuous political and communication efforts of the CoR promoting the political recommendations of its landmark opinion on "**The future of cohesion policy beyond 2020**"² and its opinions related to the simplification of cohesion policy, in particular the

¹ Proposal for the Common Provisions Regulation (COM(2018) 375 final), proposal for a Regulation on the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund (COM(2018) 372 final), proposal for a Regulation on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (COM(2018) 374 final), Proposal for a Regulation on the European Social Fund Plus (COM(2018) 382 final)

² COTER-VI/015 – "The future of cohesion policy beyond 2020" - rapporteur Michael Schneider (DE/EPP)

opinions on the "**Simplification of ESIF from the perspective of Local and Regional Authorities**"³ and on "**Final conclusions and recommendations of the High Level Group on Simplification post-2020**"⁴, as well as its opinion on "**People-to-people and small-scale projects in cross-border cooperation programmes**"⁵, the Commission's proposals took on board a number of key concerns of the CoR detailed above, under "main impact".

In this context, the impact of the CoR's consistent technical and political work over several years on the simplification of Cohesion policy has to be highlighted. Drawn from the experience on the ground of a range of stakeholders across all Member States including national and regional managing authorities, certifying bodies and audit authorities, the simplification measures in question are a tangible example of the impact of the CoR's work – by facilitating the uptake by beneficiaries of available funds, the simplification measures in question are ultimately geared towards enhancing effective implementation of the Cohesion funds in the interests of the Union's citizens.

This impact, however, would not have been possible without the support of the strategic **#CohesionAlliance**, which was set up by the CoR together with the main European territorial associations in October 2017, and which had gathered more than 8000 supporters by the end of 2018, including 450 organisations and institutions. The political and communication efforts of the CoR and the **#CohesionAlliance** partners significantly contributed towards raising the attention of media, including leading national newspapers in a number of Member States, and decision-makers on the future of cohesion policy and helped to kick off a public debate and push key players to take and explain their position on this crucial topic. The intense and coordinated work on social media has prepared, mirrored, amplified and reinforced these efforts. This work of the **#CohesionAlliance** has without doubt contributed to a much more positive climate with regard to Cohesion policy in the political debate and helped to fend off the detrimental proposals that had been put on the table with the various scenarios in the White Paper on the future of Europe.

After the presentation of the legislative proposals, the CoR produced opinions⁶ in the second half of 2018 on the various dossiers, in order to put forward its recommendations for legislative amendments. Thanks to the close contacts of the CoR rapporteurs with their counterparts in the European Parliament, the immediate impact of the CoR's work was already reflected in many of the draft EP reports that were presented to the EP REGI committee.

³ COTER-VI/012 – "Simplification of ESIF from the perspective of Local and Regional Authorities" - rapporteur Petr Osvald (CZ/PES)

⁴ COTER-VI/035 – "Final conclusions and recommendations of the High Level Group on Simplification post-2020"- , rapporteur Oldřich Vlasák (CZ/ECR)

⁵ COTER-VI/023 – "People-to-people and small-scale projects in cross-border cooperation programmes"- , rapporteur Pavel Branda (CZ/ECR)

⁶ Opinion on Common Provisions Regulation (COR-2018-03593-00-00-AC), co-rapporteurs: Catuscia Marini (IT/PES) and Michael Schneider (DE/EPP);
Opinion on European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund (COR-2018-03594-00-00-AC), rapporteur: Michiel Rijsberman (NL/ALDE);
Opinion on European Territorial Cooperation (COR-2018-03595-00-00-AC), rapporteur: Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA)
Opinion on Cross-border mechanism (COR-2018-03596-00-00-AC), rapporteur: Bouke Arends (NL/PES)
Opinion on European Social Fund Plus (COR-2018-03597-00-00-AC), rapporteur: Susana Díaz Pacheco (ES/PES)

Concerning the **Common Provisions Regulation**, where the initial draft EP report took on board only a few of the CoR's recommendations for legislative amendments, the CoR managed to achieve considerable impact via the amendment process, where out of the 2000 amendments tabled to the draft report in the EP REGI committee around 240 amendments had the same or a similar wording as the CoR position, thanks to the common efforts of the CoR co-rapporteurs, the political groups and the COTER secretariat in promoting CoR's position among REGI members.

The EP report on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund Regulation took on board most of the recommendations made by the CoR opinion on the matter. Both institutions agreed on the objection to the proposal that the ERDF thematic concentration should focus on the national level. The European Parliament agreed that this centralised allocation mechanism goes against the place-based approach and the multi-level governance principle of cohesion policy. However, the European Parliament proposed a lower level of intensity for all the policy objectives except for the climate change related objective (PO2), where it follows the recommendations of the CoR. The EP report is also in generally in line with the CoR request to ensure strong complementarities between the ERDF and the ESF+ in order to carry out integrated initiatives at local level (Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) and Community-led local development (CLLD)), but suggested dedicating funding to NUTS III areas with difficult access to basic services. On the other hand, it is even more ambitious when it comes to the earmarking of ERDF for sustainable urban development (10% compared to 6%). The CoR recommendation to include in the ERDF areas with severe and permanent natural or demographic disadvantages, such as an ageing population or an average annual population decrease, was also taken on board by the Parliament, which in addition suggested to earmark 5 % of ERDF funding at national level for integrated territorial development in rural, mountain, islands and coastal regions, isolated and sparsely populated and all other areas that have difficulty accessing basic services including also on NUTS 3 level.

The CoR opinion on European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) also had considerable impact on the final position of the REGI Committee, which took on board the proposal for a new Article on interregional innovation investments (III) that is separated from the traditional components. The CoR was thus the driver of a solution on the interregional innovation investments (III) that was not initially endorsed by any stakeholder. Despite the initial intentions in the EP to completely delete component 5 from ETC, the final position corresponds to the solution proposed by the CoR rapporteur. Both institutions adopted the position that the budget for ETC should represent 3% of the cohesion budget for components 1-4, with an additional 0.3% for III. There is also alignment on levels of co-financing, and on increased levels of pre-financing. Finally, the reintegration of maritime cooperation under component 1 and the maintenance of Interreg Europe, which have been demanded by many stakeholders, have also been supported by the CoR and the co-legislator.

2.1.2 Post-2020 MFF proposal and reform of own resources

Main impact:

The actual Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) proposal contains:

- a call for an increase in the GNI share and for more flexibility;

- a call for a creation of a Union reserve to tackle unforeseen challenges;
- a call for abolishment of rebates and adjustment mechanisms within the EU own resources;
- an introduction of a package, although rather limited in size, of new/reformed own resources;
- a call for continuation of Treaty-based policies with high European Added Value, while also addressing the current challenges the EU is facing.

Following the debate launched by President Juncker with the White Paper on the Future of Europe on 14 February 2017, the European Commission put forward rather pessimistic scenarios on the future European budget beyond 2020 in its reflection paper on the future of EU finances. For the first time ever, the European Commission considered as one of the options to significantly reduce treaty-based policies, such as cohesion policy and the common agricultural policy, and to concentrate cohesion policy on cohesion countries only. CoR efforts to shape the future Multiannual Financial Framework began in 2017 with its opinion on the "Reform of EU own resources within the next MFF post-2020"⁷ and continued in 2018 with its opinion on the "Reflection paper on the future of EU finances"⁸. Several of key recommendations of these opinions were reflected in the actual MFF proposal, put forward by the European Commission on 2 May 2018.

Through the intensive work of the CoR rapporteurs and the COTER Working Group on the EU Budget with the European Parliament's rapporteurs, the position of the European Parliament on the MFF proposal and the reform of EU own resources reflected the key concerns raised by the CoR. Furthermore, an ambitious EP interim report on the MFF 2021-2027 went even further and set a solid basis for negotiations with the Member States in order to reach a political agreement by October 2019, in which the CoR recommendations should be taken into consideration as well.

2.1.3 Structural reforms, partnership and cohesion in the "investment-oriented" European Semester

Main impact:

- recognition that the increase of resources allocated to the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) should not negatively impact the other priorities of cohesion policy, and
- that Member States should not be obliged to transfer national and regional allocations from European Structural and Investment Funds to the Programme;
- the 2019 Annual Growth Survey⁹ included analytical consideration of regional disparities;
- the European Semester Cycle starting in October 2018 included for the first time a more granular assessment of regional disparities, which is now part of the European Semester.

As of 2019, Country-Specific Recommendations will address long-term investment needs, and the European structural and investment funds (ESIF) programming will have to comply with them. Reform

⁷ COTER-VI/026 – "Reform of EU own resources within the next MFF post-2020" - rapporteur Isabelle Boudineau (FR/PES)

⁸ COTER-VI/034 – "Reflection paper on the future of EU finances" - rapporteur Marek Woźniak (PL/EPP)

⁹ Published on 21 November 2018.

commitments to be incentivised by the Reform Support Programme will also be identified in the context of the Semester.

To respect subsidiarity and increase ownership and effectiveness of structural reforms, the Semester should respect the existing division of powers across levels of government, including local and regional authorities (LRAs).

In 2017-2018, the CoR has intensified its work on the involvement of LRAs in the European Semester by addressing: (a) the lack of a definition of structural reforms in the European Commission's proposals (according to the CoR, reforms should contribute to the Treaty cohesion objective and to the goals and targets of a new post-Europe2020 long-term strategy pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); moreover, reforms should concern fields of EU competence and have demonstrable EU value added); (b) the need to involve the LRAs as full partners in the Semester (for which the CoR insists on its idea of a Code of Conduct, unanimously adopted in May 2017).

To reach out to the EP, the CoR organises bilateral contacts with the relevant rapporteurs and shadows and hearings in relevant Committees, and shared evidence on the actual role of the LRAs in the Semester with the EP services. The CoR ECON commission's secretariat produces annual analyses of territory-related aspects in the Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs) and the National Reform Programmes (NRPs) distributing these to EP members and relevant EP services.

The CoR undertook exchanges with the relevant EP services and high debates with the European Commission and tried to reach out to the relevant Council Working Parties. Since 2015, an annual workshop on Semester-related current challenges is held in December, with the participation of relevant speakers, including European Semester Officers from different Member States.

The July 2018 EP legislative resolution on the proposed amendment to the SRSP regulation meets some CoR claims, for instance, that the increase of resources allocated to the SRSP should not negatively impact the other priorities of cohesion policy, and that Member States should not be obliged to transfer national and regional allocations from European Structural and Investment Funds to the Programme. The resolution also states that, since the LRAs have an important role to play in structural reforms, they should be involved in the preparation and implementation of such reforms.

In line with CoR positions, in October 2018, the EP rejected the European Commission proposal to amend the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) to allow the use of the performance reserve to support structural reforms rather than to finance the specific priorities contained in the partnership agreements.

In its position on the European Commission's proposal on re-financing the SRSP and broadening its scope, the EP also proposed to give the programme the goal "to support the involvement and consultation of regional and local authorities in the preparation and implementation of structural reform measures to a degree commensurate with the powers and responsibilities of those regional and local authorities within the constitutional and administrative structure of each Member State".

For the first time, the 2019 Annual Growth Survey (AGS) included analytical consideration of regional disparities, a long-standing CoR request, and announced it will rebalance the mix of investment and regulatory reforms in the forthcoming Country Reports and Country-Specific Recommendation, which was also a CoR request.

Contacts with the Council working parties were also fruitfully continued. While the Economic Policy Committee (EPC) Chair, Mr Merz, took part in the ECON meeting on 23 October 2018 to discuss the RSP, the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) Chair, Mr Vijlbrief met the CoR rapporteur on the European Semester and Cohesion Policy in February 2019.

On 10th April 2019, during the plenary session, the CoR adopted an opinion on the links between cohesion policy and the European Semester under the new MFF¹⁰ and will keep addressing the issue of the involvement of the local and regional authorities in the Semester with the EC, the EP and the Council.

With respect to the EP, relevant opportunities to cooperate have been the parliamentary debates on the Reform Support Programme and the 2019 AGS. The CoR rapporteur, Rob Jonkman, took the floor at the ECON Committee on 10 January 2019 on the new AGS. The CoR is also in touch with the IPOL/EGOV unit, with which it will share its territorial analysis of the Semester and is asking for a new study from the EPRS.

The CoR communication will be intensified with respect to the Semester, also by developing new narrative and visual aids, to stimulate bottom-up initiatives based on a multilevel approach.

2.1.4 Interregional investment

Main impact:

- EC acknowledged the usefulness of this novel place-based approach and of the legal definition of 'regional ecosystems' as well as the possibility of funding them within FP9/Horizon Europe;
- the definition of "regional ecosystems and innovation hubs", proposed by the CoR, was repeatedly taken on board by the EP main rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs.¹¹
- the synergetic and transparent funding proposal of the CoR concerning the *Seal of Excellence* was also largely adopted¹².
- the issue of "*trans-regional cooperation around shared smart specialization*", repeatedly outlined by the CoR, was also frequently cited by the EP rapporteurs.

¹⁰ ECON-VI/040 - The European Semester and Cohesion Policy: aligning structural reforms with long-term investments- rapporteur: Rob Jonkman (NL/ECR)

¹¹ This definition was explicitly cited in the REGI committee shadow opinion under AM40, while ITRE rapporteur Dan Nica (RO/S&D) refers to "regional innovation ecosystems" in his AMs 25, 68 and 147.

¹² AMs 85 and 96 of the EP Nica report.

- the EP has taken on board the importance of domestic and cross-national "value chains" of R&I activities¹³, as well as the CoR's suggestion to establish *Pathfinder* and *Accelerator programmes* within the newly-created European Innovation Council (EIC) in order to promote LRA research and innovation activities.¹⁴

Interregional investment, and particularly Research and Innovation (R&I) policy, figures prominently in the next MFF. On 6 June 2018, the European Commission published its proposal for a legislative package in the field of R&I, presenting Horizon Europe, the ninth framework programme (FP9) to succeed the current Horizon 2020 (FP8), as of 2021. The CoR contributed to the elaboration of the new R&I programme via different opinions it produced both at the consultation phase and after the new European Commission proposal had been presented. At the same time, the CoR, through the SEDEC secretariat and its rapporteurs, worked closely with the Council R&I Working Group and the Trio Presidency (EE-BG-AT).

The European Commission proposed to increase R&I funds to Euro 94 billion, while the EP went even further, proposing a budget of Euro 120 billion for Horizon Europe. These substantial increases were supported by industry, universities, researchers, scientists and the majority of local authorities based on the evidence of (a) stagnating national and regional financing for R&I activities in the EU, compared to other major R&I centres around the world, and (b) the mission-oriented approach and promising new fields of R&I activity (digital/cyber, health, robotics, space and defence) explored, *inter alia*, by the influential *Lamy Report* and elaborated by a high-level group of EU scientists in June 2017.

The key policy objectives pursued thus far by the CoR and its rapporteurs have been to: (1) fully recognise LRAs as active participants in, and co-sponsors of, research projects and infrastructure under Horizon Europe; (2) promote synergies with other major EU funds such as cohesion, agricultural, social and defence funds; (3) create a series of special instruments for interregional R&I investments and partnerships, bearing smart specialisation in mind; (4) address the issue of brain-drain; (5) advance the European Research Area while promoting R&I inclusiveness (6) promote CoR and LRA participation in the programme's main programming and evaluation committees, and especially in the newly-created European Innovation Council (EIC); and, finally, (7) gain access to funds for connecting territories and building regional R&I ecosystems.

In 2017, the CoR's decided to address at the same time as the EP ITRE committee, the mid-term review of the current programme and the key expectations for the future R&I programme through an own initiative opinion. The CoR rapporteur in the opinion on the "**Local and Regional Dimension of the Horizon 2020 Programme and the New Framework Programme for Research and Innovation**"¹⁵, aligned himself with the position of the EP rapporteur, suggesting an increase in the current R&I budget

¹³ Idem. AM 72 – ITRE (EP) report.

¹⁴ "The EIC through its instruments – *Pathfinder* and *Accelerator* – should aim at identifying, developing and deploying breakthrough market creating innovations and supporting their rapid scale-up to EU and international levels. Through coherent and streamlined support to breakthrough innovation, the EIC should fill the current vacuum in public support and private investment for breakthrough innovation. The instruments of the EIC call for dedicated legal and management features in order to reflect its objectives, in particular market deployment activities." (AM31 – EP ITRE report)

¹⁵ SEDEC-VI/026- "Local and Regional Dimension of the Horizon 2020 Programme and the New Framework Programme for Research and Innovation"- rapporteur: Christophe Clergeau (FR/PES)

to at least EUR 120 billion. Moreover, he called for a new approach and a programme from the FP9 budget dedicated to "territorial connections", which would make use of existing innovation potential and research achievements found within local and regional R&I ecosystems.

All of the European Commission DGs involved in the planning of FP9 (i.e. DG RTD, DG GROW, DG REGIO and the JRC), as well as major associations (ERRIN, the European University Association (EUA) and the Vanguard Initiative) worked together with the CoR representatives, while Commissioners Moedas and Navracsics, as well as Council representatives discussed the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe programmes with the CoR members.

As a follow-up to the above, a high-level conference was organised and hosted by the CoR on 20 February 2018 on the subject of "**Building R&I Ecosystems and Connecting Territories**". The SEDEC external meeting and conference in Logroño (Spain) in June 2018 focused on demographics and the issue of brain-drain. This latter topic was also explored in a specific CoR study. As part of various innovation camps and the inter-institutional *Science meets Regions* events, the CoR repeatedly addressed the challenges of implementing Horizon Europe in an inclusive way throughout the EU and of closing the R&I divide.

The CoR rapporteur on **the CoR opinion on Horizon Europe**¹⁶ worked closely with the EP rapporteurs as well as the representatives of the Bulgarian and Austrian EU presidencies. Furthermore, the opinion and its main proposals were strongly supported by key associations in this field (ERRIN, the Vanguard Initiative, Eurocities, CLORA and EUA). Targeted meetings and consultations were carried out with the European Commission's DG RTD, DG REGIO, DG GROW and the JRC.

The EP ITRE committee, as well as eight other committees, reflected a substantial part of the regionally- and territorially-based proposals on Horizon Europe advanced by the CoR. Furthermore, the Austrian Presidency addressed a letter to the CoR President acknowledging the usefulness of this novel place-based approach and of the legal definition of 'regional ecosystems' as well as the possibility of funding them within FP9. Overall, the impact of the CoR opinions in the field of R&I has been substantial on an inter-institutional and even national scale (see main impact part above).

The European Commission's Communication on "A sustainable Bioeconomy for Europe: Strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment"¹⁷, published on 11 October 2018, responds to many of the issues raised in the 2017 CoR own-initiative opinion on "**The local and regional dimension of bioeconomy and the roles of regions and cities**"¹⁸. These include easing access to funding for bioeconomy, facilitating the public-private partnerships, improving education and skills in the area of bioeconomy via a project aimed at creating a bioeconomy curricula, and the creation of interregional networks with the European Bioeconomy intercluster. The European Commission's new

¹⁶ SEDEC-VI/041 - "Horizon Europe: The Framework Programme 9 for Research and Innovation"- rapporteur: Christophe Clergeau (FR/PES)

¹⁷ COM(2018) 673 final

¹⁸ SEDEC-VI/022 - The local and regional dimension of bioeconomy and the roles of regions and cities" - rapporteur: Katrin Budde (DE/PES)

Bioeconomy Strategy also emphasises the importance of the local level in the deployment of bioeconomy strategies, noting that "cities should become major circular bioeconomy hubs".

2.1.5 Civil protection

The CoR's 2018 work programme in the field of civil protection focused on the new legislative proposal on the review of the European Civil Protection Mechanism as well as on continuing its strategic partnership with DG ECHO and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

To that end, rapporteurs from the Commission for Natural Resources (NAT) and other members intensified their strategic partnerships, participating as panellists at the European Civil Protection Forum 2018, the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and the UNISDR. The CoR rapporteur on the Union's Civil Protection Mechanism¹⁹ also actively participated in the work of the Steering Committee of the 'Making Cities Resilient' Campaign. The CoR opinion on the legislative proposal to review the EU Civil Protection Mechanism was adopted in May 2018. The CoR opinion fed into the EP's report on the subject, which took on board some of the recommendations of the CoR underlining; the important role of LRAs in disaster prevention and management and when developing risk assessments, the importance of a territorial and community-led approach and local community action, and the need for **training to enhance the capacity of communities for self-help. The European Commission, in its follow-up, takes note of several suggestions contained in the CoR opinion, notably the proposal to create a guiding framework for developing risk management plans and the call for a disaster preparedness strategy that would cover training, exercises, exchange of experts.**

These activities improved the overall visibility of the CoR as an important player in the field of civil protection and demonstrate that it is regarded as a valuable and reliable partner. The political agreement was reached on 12 December 2018 and entered into force on 21 March 2019. The impact of NAT work on the legislative proposal will be assessed later in 2019.

2.1.6 Climate change and energy transition

In 2018, the Commission for the Environment, Climate change and Energy (ENVE) developed a sound position on the implementation of the Paris agreement through the adoption of the CoR opinion on Climate Governance Post-2020. This opinion was the basis for a political discussion with the EP's ENVI Committee and for the CoR's participation in, and contribution to, the COP24 in Katowice (Poland). The rapporteur actively took part in a debate in the ENVI commission on the EP resolution ahead of COP24. The final text included points championed by the CoR, such as the importance of engaging with regions and cities and their participation in the Talanoa Dialogues, as well as support for

¹⁹ NAT-VI/029 - Review of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism – rapporteur: Adam Banaszak (PL/ECR)

²⁰ ENVE-VI/030 - Climate governance after 2020: a European and global perspective – a contribution to the UNFCCC COP24 – rapporteur: Andrew Varah Cooper (GB/EA)

the introduction of regionally and locally determined contributions to encourage further climate ambition. The CoR's political position was submitted to the Talanoa Dialogue Platform established by the COP23 Fijian Presidency. The ENVE chair delivered a statement at the COP24 Plenary (Talanoa Dialogue Political Closing Session) on behalf of world's local governments (LGMA), reaffirming the main political messages of the CoR. This was possible thanks to the close cooperation with ICLEI as the LGMA focal point towards the UNFCCC. In the COP 24 conclusions, the Parties were invited to "consider the outcome, inputs and outputs of the Talanoa Dialogue in preparing their nationally determined contributions and in their efforts to enhance pre-2020 implementation and ambition" which is an important step towards achieving, in the long-term, the objectives of the CoR's Climate governance opinion, not only at the European level but also at the global level.

As a follow up to the opinion on Energy Union and clean energy²¹, ENVE has been monitoring the implementation of the Governance Regulations of the Clean Energy Package and, in particular, on the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs). The CoR's aim is to ensure that the Multilevel Energy and Climate Dialogue suggested in the opinion and endorsed in the final text of the Regulation is put in place and that LRAs are duly consulted when drafting these plans. To achieve this, the ENVE commission prepared a letter that was sent by the CoR President to Commissioner Cañete to highlight the importance of the Multilevel Energy and Climate Dialogue and to ask for a thematic structured dialogue on the 2050 long-term strategy. The ENVE Secretariat is also planning joint activities with the Covenant of Mayors Office and relevant NGOs to ensure that all regions in Europe are aware of the importance of the NECPS and urging them to lobby their national governments for a greater involvement of sub-national authorities in the process. Bearing in mind that the final NECPs will be submitted by the Member States to the Commission by the end of 2019, the action is concentrated mainly in the first half of 2019. The topic of NECPs was addressed in the Event "Covenant of Mayors – Regional best practices and financing opportunities towards 2030 objectives" (hosted by the CoR and organised in cooperation with Marche Region and the CoM Ambassador Manuela Bora) and in the scheduled event to be organised in June by the CoR "EU Regions for Multilevel Climate and Energy Action". Considering the increasing importance of the topic, a rapporteur was appointed in January on "Implementing the Clean Energy Package: the INECPS as a tool for local and territorial governance approach to climate, active and passive energy"²².

In November, the ENVE commission appointed a rapporteur on the 2050 long-term strategy²³. This opinion builds upon the impact of the previous related opinions, notably on Climate governance post 2020 and Energy Union and clean energy, further reinforcing the position of the CoR in the field of Climate Action and Climate governance. Synergies will be developed with the work of the Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX) (Forum on Cities and Regions for Development Cooperation), the SDGs framework and the ongoing activities related to the Covenant of Mayors.

²¹ ENVE-VI/018 - Energy Union governance and clean energy - rapporteur: Bruno Hranic (HR/EPP)

²² ENVE-VI/041 - Implementing the Clean Energy Package: the INECPS as a tool for local and territorial governance approach to climate, active and passive energy - rapporteur: Jozsef Ribanyi (HU/EPP)

²³ ENVE-VI/037 - A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy - rapporteur: Michele Emiliano (IT/PES)

The Memoranda of Understanding with ICLEI and Climate Alliance have proven to be increasingly effective. The successful impact derived from the implementation of previous cooperation agreements incentivised the signature of new Action Plans for the period 2019-2020. These plans were adopted by the Bureau on 14 March 2019.

In 2018, the ENVE commission adopted an opinion on Models of local energy ownership and the role of local energy communities in energy transition in Europe²⁴, in response to a request from the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The opinion notably recommended to streamline the various national support schemes as far as necessary at European level in order to ensure that local energy communities can contribute to reaching the Sustainable Development goals, the Paris Agreement targets and the objectives of the European energy Union.

Climate action is a sub-programme of LIFE. The rapporteur²⁵ on this topic has requested a budgetary increase with a higher co-funding rate for cities and regions, in line with the former Horizon 2020 actions. The LIFE Regulation proposal is currently under inter-institutional discussion. More information can be found under the point on Environmental policy and circular economy.

2.2 The territorial dimension of EU legislation matters

Working in the interest of citizens, no matter where they chose to live and work.

2.2.1 European Pillar of Social Rights

Main impact:

- A strong regional focus of the future European Social Fund (ESF) was maintained and the need for better capturing the social conditions at local and regional level in the future social scoreboard was acknowledged;
- EP took on board the CoR's suggestion about "notice periods", which called for the inclusion of information on the procedure to be followed regarding at least the formal requirements for notice of termination;

The CoR was granted observer status on the European Commission Expert Group on Social Economy.

Following a lengthy process, the European Pillar of Social Rights was proclaimed in 2017, in Gothenburg. In 2018, the European Commission presented new legislative proposals aimed at delivering on key principles of the European Pillar, in order to facilitate convergence between Member States by promoting better working and living conditions. In particular, a European Labour Authority (aimed at strengthening cross-border mobility) and the revision of the Written Statement Directive

²⁴ ENVE-VI/032 - Models of local energy ownership and the role of local energy communities in energy transition in Europe - rapporteur Mariana Gâju (RO/PES)

²⁵ ENVE-VI/035 - Proposal for a Regulation establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 - rapporteur Marco Dus (IT/PES)

establishing an obligation on the employer's part to promptly inform its employees of the conditions applicable to the contract or employment relationship.

Over the past 4 years, CoR adopted several opinions²⁶ in response to the European Commission's legislative proposals on the European Pillar of Social Rights²⁷. Since then, rapporteurs have been promoting the CoR opinions with the relevant institutional contacts. Meetings with the European Commission and with EP rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs were organised.

Concerning the CoR Opinion on **Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions**²⁸, the European Parliament²⁹ took on board the CoR's suggestion about "notice periods", which called for the inclusion of information on the procedure to be followed regarding at least the formal requirements for notice of termination. In addition, the Opinion on the European Labour Authority (ELA)³⁰, adopted in October 2018, revealed a convergence between the EP³¹ and the CoR concerning rules in cross-border situations, both of which asked for clear, fair and strict rules to ensure an effective and fair labour market.

On 26 November 2018 -one year after the Gothenburg Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth -, the CoR SEDEC Commission organised an Interinstitutional Conference on "Delivering on the European Social Pillar: A territorial perspective"³². The CoR event was well attended and saw the participation of high-level speakers, including Commissioner Thyssen³³, two members of the European Parliament, namely, Maria João Rodrigues (PT/S&D)³⁴ and Milan Zver (SI/EPP)³⁵, and Andrä Ruppechter, First Advisor to the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the EU. Commissioner Thyssen underlined the importance of regional policies in the EU.

Formal negotiations between the European Parliament and the Council have officially started regarding both opinions on "Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions", and the Opinion on "the European

26 Establishment of a European Labour Authority, rapporteur Doris Kampus (AU/PES); Building a Stronger Europe: the role of youth, education and culture policies, rapporteur Gillian Ford (UK/EA); Digital Education Action Plan, rapporteur Domenico Gambacorta (IT/EPP); Transparent and predictable working conditions for all forms of employment across the EU, rapporteur Isolde Ries (DE/PES); Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture, rapporteur Tanya Hristova (BG/EPP); Work-life balance for parents and carers, rapporteur Nathalie Sarrabezolles (FR/PES); Modernising school and higher education, rapporteur Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP); Coordination of Social Security Systems, rapporteur Ulrike Hiller (DE/PES); Social innovation as a new tool for addressing societal challenges, rapporteur Marcelle Hendrickx (NL/ALDE); Investing in Europe's youth and the European Solidarity Corps, rapporteur Paweł Grzybowski (PL/ECR).

27 The first opinion, responding to the European Commission's public consultation on the Pillar, was drafted by Heinz-Joachim Höfer (DE/PES), Mayor of Altenkirchen, and was adopted in October 2016. The second opinion, on "The European Pillar of Social Rights and Reflection Paper on the social dimension of Europe", was drafted by Mauro D'Attis (IT/EPP), adopted in October 2017, and constituted the CoR's contribution to the Gothenburg Social Summit.

28 SEDEC-VI/036 – "Transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union" - rapporteur Isolde Ries (DE/PES)

29 Report A8-0355/2018

30 SEDEC-VI/038 – "A European Labour Authority" - rapporteur Doris Kampus (AT/PES)

31 Draft Report, Rapporteur Jeroen Lenaers

32 <https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/EU-budget-cuts-to-cohesion-policy-will-undermine-eu-promises-on-social-progress.aspx>

33 Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour mobility

34 Rapporteur on the European Pillar of Social Rights

35 Rapporteur on Erasmus+

Labour Authority" (ELA). The CoR will continue to follow these negotiations in order to ensure that the CoR's positions will be taken into account in the final version of these legislative files.

In 2019, the CoR will aim in publishing a regional social scoreboard in cooperation with Eurostat and possibly with other institutions.

2.2.2 Digital Single Market

Main impact:

- Strengthened cooperation with the EC on Digital policy;
- CoR hosts the first Digital Cities Mayors Summit and takes part in the adoption process of the Declaration of Cooperation among the Digital Cities;
- Creation of WiFi4EU vouchers.

In 2018, the European Commission published several dossiers aimed at finalising the Digital Single Market (DSM). The DSM strategy, the second of the ten priorities of the Juncker Commission, aims to bring the single market to the digital world, opening up digital opportunities for people and business, breaking down digital barriers and enhancing Europe's position as a world leader in the digital economy. The CoR very strongly supports connectivity for all EU territories, thus reducing the digital divide. Digitising European industry will help large and small companies, researchers and public authorities to make the most of new technologies. They will link up national and regional initiatives and boost investment through strategic partnerships and networks.

The CoR adopted opinions on "Digital Single Market: Mid-term review"³⁶, "Boosting broadband connectivity in Europe"³⁷ and "Digital Europe programme (2021-2027)"³⁸, and adopted an opinion on the "Artificial Intelligence for Europe"³⁹ at the plenary session on 6-7 February 2019.

Furthermore, the CoR organised, together with DG CNECT, two meetings of the Broadband platform, as set out in the Gigabit Society communication. These gave CoR members an opportunity to learn in a more in-depth way about the Broadband Competence Centres, the CEF-Digital and the Connecting Europe Broadband Fund. In addition, Kieran McCarthy (IE/EA) regularly attended meetings of the e-Government Action Steering Board as an observer on behalf of the CoR.

On 4 December 2018, the CoR hosted the first Digital Cities Mayors Summit, based on the Digital Cities Challenge initiative, a tailored programme of coaching and facilitation, launched by the European Commission to help 41 cities develop and implement digital policies that can transform day-to-day life for residents, businesses, workers, and entrepreneurs (DG GROW and EASME). To validate the Mayors political leadership, a Declaration of Cooperation among the Digital Cities was signed. The

³⁶ SEDEC-VI/031 – "Digital Single Market: Mid-term review" - rapporteur Alin-Adrian Nica (RO/EPP)

³⁷ SEDEC-VI/034 – "Boosting broadband connectivity in Europe" - rapporteur Mart Vörklaev (EE/ALDE)

³⁸ SEDEC-VI/044, "Digital Europe programme (2021-2027)", Rapporteur Markku Markkula (FI/EPP)

³⁹ SEDEC-VI/046, "Artificial Intelligence for Europe", Rapporteur: Jan Trei (EE/EPP)

CoR's involvement in this initiative helps support city networking and sharing of insight into, and practical experience of, their digital transformation.

In December 2018, the European Commission published the names of the first municipalities to receive the so-called WiFi4EU vouchers, by means of which free Wi-Fi connectivity is provided to citizens and visitors in public spaces. The idea of WiFi4EU was strongly promoted in the 2017 CoR opinion: "The review of the telecom package". In addition, the efforts of the CoR to inform municipalities, however large or small, of this campaign should also be taken into account, although it may not be possible to evaluate their full impact in this report.

In 2019, the CoR continues to follow the European Commission's forthcoming proposals concerning other digital matters. The CoR adopted its opinion on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in 2019 and seek to influence new developments in this field, such as ethical guidelines or the rolling-out of the Coordinated Plan on AI. It also follows and contributes in a timely manner to the debate on the implementation of the Digital Single Market in the EU. More specifically, the SEDEC commission organised a conference in Palermo, Sicily, on the "Digital Agenda: Territorial strategies for addressing technological innovation in infrastructure and services". It also organised, together with DG CNECT, a Broadband platform meeting on 3 April. It also had a meeting with DG CNECT and stakeholders about Digital Europe for all on 15 May. Moreover, in 2019 it will organise, in conjunction with the European Commission, a half-day meeting on the Digital Innovation Hubs, one of the key proposals included in the Digital Europe Programme (2021-2027). In the second half of the year, a study visit on "Fostering Synergies between space, digitalisation and the EU research programme after 2020" will be organised in Tallinn by the CoR Rapporteur on Boosting Broadband Connectivity, Mart Vorklaev (EE/ALDE). Concerning the Digital Europe Programme, the CoR will continue to insist that the network of Digital Innovation Hubs that is to be established must have sufficient coverage for all regions.

2.2.3 Fisheries/Maritime Affairs

In the policy fields of fisheries and maritime affairs, the main goal of the CoR is to support the interests of EU coastal and maritime regions and make their voice heard at European level. Alongside sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, the main objectives are to promote jobs and growth through the Blue Economy at regional and local level and to assist regions and cities to exchange best practices.

Primarily, the NAT Commission aims to influence European policy-making and legislation through its opinions. One example is the own-initiative opinion "The EMFF beyond 2020: an investment in European coastal communities"⁴⁰, which had a significant impact on multiple points of the draft Regulation published on 12 June 2018. Another important success of this opinion is that it managed to insert the wording "coastal communities" into the draft legislation, a sign of a major policy shift.

Through high-level events such as "EU Aquaculture: Farmed in EU Regions", organised jointly with the European Commission, the CoR aims to accelerate the exchange of best practices between regions and inspire them to create their own "Blue Economy" strategies, with help from EU funding.

40

NAT-VI/028 - The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) beyond 2020 – Investing in Europe's Coastal Communities- rapporteur Alberto Nuñez Feijoo (ES/EPP)

To achieve its targets, the CoR is working closely with EU institutions, regional, thematic and national associations, and CoR members have appeared as speakers at high-level hearings and conferences, presenting the positions of the CoR to policy-makers and stakeholders.

Different rapporteurs and other members participated in:

- a hearing of the European Parliament dedicated to aquaculture on 11 January 2018;
- a high-level ministerial meeting on Black Sea fisheries adopting the declaration of Sofia;
- the Atlantic Stakeholder Platform conference in Vigo, Spain, on 23 October 2018.

The NAT Commission intends to work even closer with stakeholders, communities and decision-makers, with the aim of achieving a maritime policy that is more inclusive and closer to the regions and their citizens.

2.2.4 Rural Agenda

The CoR's overarching priority in this field is to maintain sustainable agriculture in all regions and preserve rural communities, in the interests of reducing the development gap between rural and predominantly urban areas and meeting the territorial cohesion objective enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. To achieve this objective we need a fairer Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a proper market regulation policy, a European rural development strategy and regional governance for the CAP.

To this end, the NAT commission has reinforced its cooperation with:

- **the European Parliament.** A joint meeting with the AGRI committee was organised on 11 January 2018 on the reform of the CAP, and the CAP rapporteur participated in various meetings of the European Parliament. On 23 May 2018, the CoR opinion⁴¹ on the CAP post-2020 was presented during the European Parliament conference "a CAP for small farmers and citizens". On 3 October 2018, the NAT rapporteur participated in a conference in the European Parliament on "The role of EU regions in the Common Agricultural Policy: capitalising on the benefits of the regionalisation". On 9 October 2018, the rapporteur spoke at the public hearing on the future of the CAP in the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee of the European Parliament.
- **the European Council.** On 21 June 2018, the rapporteur presented the CoR opinion on the CAP during the closing event of the Bulgarian Presidency thematically dedicated to CAP post-2020. The rapporteur met the Austrian Minister for Agriculture at the Informal Council of agriculture ministers on 23-25 September 2018.
- **Various network and rural European associations.** A joint meeting with the European Countryside Movement and the Parliament's RUMRA Intergroup was organised on 19 March 2018 on financing the integrated development of rural areas. In addition, 10 European rural associations have signed the CoR's 'cohesion alliance' declaration.

⁴¹ NAT-VI/021 - Future of the CAP after 2020 - rapporteur: Guillaume Cros (FR/PES)

As a result, the European Parliament adopted a Resolution on 3 October 2018 addressing the specific needs of rural, mountainous and remote areas. In its Resolution, the EP calls for an EU Agenda for Rural, Mountainous and Remote Areas to promote socio-economic development, economic growth and diversification, social wellbeing, protection of nature, and cooperation and interconnection with urban areas in order to foster cohesion and prevent the risk of territorial fragmentation, as has been requested by the CoR for several years.

These connections improved the overall visibility of the CoR as a key player in the rural policy field and will help the CoR to influence the ongoing discussion on the future of the CAP.

2.2.5 Health Policy

The CoR 2018 work programme in the field of health focused on raising awareness of the key role played by local and regional authorities in the design, planning, implementation and financing of health systems and services.

To deliver on this policy objective, the CoR has focused on strengthening ties with DG SANTE and the UN World Health Organisation (WHO). This included featuring Commissioner Andriukaitis in three CoR debates throughout the year; creating close connections between leading CoR members and the Commissioner; influencing agendas and debates; speaking at high-level events and joining expert forums. Similar alliance-building activities were also part of the CoR's work with the UN WHO. The CoR representatives have had many opportunities to influence the UN health processes and speak at ministerial conferences and a delegation of CoR members was welcomed at the UN WHO Regional Office for Europe in Copenhagen for a series of multilateral talks with the Board of Directors and the Regional Director (the highest representative in Eurasia).

These connections improved the overall visibility of the CoR as a key player in the public health policy field and will help the CoR to shape the policy framework post-2020, ensuring a strong local and regional dimension in future Health funding, as repeatedly expressed by the Commissioner.

2.2.6 Food policy

Last year, the key objective of the NAT commission in the field of food policy was to contribute towards establishing a comprehensive food policy at EU level as well as bringing local and regional expertise to the EU platform on food waste and losses.

Following consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, the CoR rapporteur on "Local and regional incentives to promote healthy and sustainable diets" delivered a keynote speech during the opening session of the conference of the European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD) on 28 September 2018 in Rotterdam.

At the crossroads between health and food policy, the CoR rapporteur on "the need for and way towards an EU strategy on alcohol-related issues"⁴² pursued her successful work in building networks aimed at eventually relaunching a much-needed **EU Alcohol strategy**. In February 2018, the rapporteur met Commissioner Andriukaitis, to investigate the position of the Commissioner on the issue, and she highlighted once more the importance of giving local and regional authorities the opportunity to contribute their experience and knowledge. The Commissioner suggested fostering cooperation actions by a group of regions and municipalities in areas of their competences, and indicated that he will visit the CoR rapporteur's home region to continue the discussion before the summer of 2019.

Importantly, as requested in the aforementioned CoR opinion, the consolidated text of the proposal for a directive concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) includes video-sharing platform services and social media services within the scope of the directive. The consolidated text also stipulates that "(...) Member States should be encouraged to ensure that self- and co-regulatory codes of conducts are used to effectively reduce the exposure of children and minors to audio-visual commercial communications for alcoholic beverages". In this regard, the CoR expressed doubts about the efficiency of self-monitoring and self-regulation used within the EU in alcohol marketing, whereas the proposal for a Directive outlines that "(...) while self-regulation might be complementary method of implementing certain provisions of this Directive, it should not constitute a substitute for the obligations of the national legislators". Here, the CoR took a stronger approach, pleading in favour of prohibiting both the marketing and advertising of alcohol to children.

In the field of **food waste**, the CoR rapporteur continued to contribute to the EU platform on food waste and losses and to one of its subgroups on action and implementation. The waste directive adopted on 30 May 2018⁴³ sets an indicative Union-wide food waste target for reducing food waste by 30% by 2025 and 50% by 2030, which is in line with the CoR's recommendations. Member States will be also obliged to monitor and assess the implementation of their food waste prevention measures by measuring the levels of food waste on the basis of the methodology established by the delegated act. By 31 December 2023, the Commission will have to examine the data on food waste provided by Member States with a view to considering the feasibility of establishing a Union-wide food waste reduction target to be met by 2030 on the basis of the data reported by Member States in accordance with the common methodology.

2.2.7 Implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU

Main impact:

- The CoR played a key role in allowing a successful start-up of two new urban partnerships on "Security in Public Spaces" and on "Culture and Culture Heritage"
- As a direct consequence of the Pact of Amsterdam, which granted the CoR the possibility to propose cities to become members of the urban partnerships, some cities and regions that the

⁴² NAT-VI/010 - The need for and way towards an EU strategy on alcohol-related issues– rapporteur: Ewa-May Karlsson (SE/ALDE)

⁴³ Directive (EU) 2018/851 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste.

CoR had put forward, such as Mechelen, Berlin, the Canary Islands and the Silesian Voivodship were selected.

The Urban Agenda for the EU is in the middle of its implementation phase. The final Action Plans of the six remaining Partnerships (Housing, Urban Mobility, Sustainable Land Use, Jobs and Skill, Climate Adaption and Circular Economy) were adopted in 2018. The European Commission carried out an assessment study of the Urban Agenda for the EU, in order to analyse the performance of this process and to explore possible options for improvement. Against this background, the CoR anticipated the discussion on the implementation of the Urban Agenda making its own assessment with the adoption of an opinion⁴⁴ on the matter in July 2018, thereby acknowledging the work pursued since the adoption of the Pact of Amsterdam in May 2016, calling for the continuation and further development of the Urban Agenda, and reiterating its commitment to contribute to this process.

The involvement of CoR members in the work of the partnerships has been a paradigm and allowed members to feed the CoR's position into the discussion, for instance, at a workshop on state aids and housing that was organised by the urban partnership on affordable housing within the framework of the follow-up activities of the CoR opinion on "Towards an European Agenda on Housing"⁴⁵ at the CoR. The CoR COTER commission also produced an Urban Impact Assessment on the New United Nations Urban Agenda⁴⁶ in order to provide input to the monitoring process carried out by the European Commission.

The COTER commission played also a key role in allowing a successful start-up of two new urban partnerships on "Security in Public Spaces" and on "Culture and Culture Heritage" launched by the Directors General responsible for urban matters in November 2018, the latter one being a topic which had already been proposed by the CoR opinion on "Concrete steps for implementing the EU Urban Agenda"⁴⁷ in 2016. As a direct consequence of the Pact of Amsterdam, which granted the CoR the possibility to propose cities to become members of the urban partnerships, some cities and regions that the CoR had put forward, such as Mechelen, Berlin, the Canary Islands and the Silesian Voivodship were selected.

2.2.8 Territorial and cross-border cooperation, EGTC and missing transport links

Main impact:

- The EC presented a proposal for a Regulation on the European cross-border mechanism to solve legal and administrative barriers;
- In 2018 the EC announced a **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)** transport call for proposals, which specifically co-finances projects addressing missing-links and cross-border connections on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T).

44 COTER-VI/037 – "Implementation assessment of the Urban Agenda for the EU" - rapporteur Kieran McCarthy (IE/EA)

45 COTER-VI/025 – "Towards an European Agenda on Housing" - rapporteur Hicham Imane (BE/PES)

46 <https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Documents/COTER/TIA-Urban-Agenda-28052018.pdf>

47 COTER-VI/010 – "Concrete steps for implementing the EU Urban Agenda" - rapporteur Hella Dunger-Löper (DE/PES)

- The European Commission also published in March 2018 a comprehensive analysis of cross-border missing links between Member States⁴⁸.

Within the framework of the legislative proposals for Cohesion policy post-2020, the European Commission also presented a proposal for a Regulation on the European cross-border mechanism⁴⁹ to solve legal and administrative barriers, which had been requested by the CoR for several years. The European Commission's initiative was thus received with unanimous support by the CoR. The views of the CoR opinion⁵⁰ and the EP report on the matter are largely convergent and take a similar position on a number of issues, such as clarification of scope, the inclusion of maritime borders and the need for proper information dissemination. Both institutions also suggested including a specific reference to the fact that not only the national level, but also the regions have legislative powers.

In 2018 the European Commission announced a Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) transport call for proposals, which specifically co-finances projects addressing missing-links and cross-border connections on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T). This call is another tangible result of the CoR's "missing links" initiative, which started in 2016 in a joint meeting with the European Parliament's TRAN Committee followed by the adoption of the CoR opinion on "Missing transport links in border regions"⁵¹. In the same context, the European Commission also published in March 2018 a comprehensive analysis of cross-border missing links between Member States⁵².

Following the own-initiative opinion on the "Future of CEF transport"⁵³ in October 2017, the CoR has also set out its position on the legislative proposal for the "Connecting Europe Facility"⁵⁴ 2021-2027, which was adopted at the October 2018 plenary session. Many important aspects of both opinions – such as simplification of the programme implementation, focus on the objectives of territorial cohesion, cross-border and missing links as well as the cohesion fund envelope transferred to the CEF – have also been reflected in the EP's report on the matter, which was adopted in December 2018.

48 https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/inforMation/publications/reports/2018/comprehensive-analysis-of-the-existing-cross-border-rail-transport-connections-and-missing-links-on-the-internal-eu-borders

49 Proposal for a Regulation on a mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context (COM(2018) 373 final)

50 COTER-VI/048 – "Cross-border mechanism" - rapporteur Bouke Arends (NL/PES)

51 COTER-VI/016 – "Missing transport links in border regions" - rapporteur Michiel Scheffer (NL/ALDE)

52 https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/inforMation/publications/reports/2018/comprehensive-analysis-of-the-existing-cross-border-rail-transport-connections-and-missing-links-on-the-internal-eu-borders

53 COTER-VI/027 – "Future of CEF transport", rapporteur Ximo Puig i Ferrer (ES/PES)

54 COTER-VI/050 – "Connecting Europe Facility", rapporteur Isabelle Boudineau (FR/PES)

2.3 A simpler, more democratic Europe

Reconnecting citizens and businesses at local and regional level.

2.3.1 Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA)

1. Territorial Impact Assessment

In 2018:

- five TIA workshops were held in 2018, the highest number since the CoR developed this activity.
- besides the three TIA workshops undertaken with the objective of supporting the ongoing legislative work of the CoR, two further TIA exercises were organised in cooperation with DG REGIO, which reflects the rising interest of the European Commission in this topic.
- the TIA report on ETC was mentioned in the overall impact assessment exercise of the European Commission.

In addition, DG REGIO implemented its own TIA workshops (on the Cross-Border Mechanism, for example) and trainings for other EC services, representing a positive step towards the further mainstreaming of territorial impact assessments in the working of the European Commission, which was one of the main objectives of the CoR's TIA strategy.

2.3.2 Subsidiarity and proportionality

In the field of subsidiarity and proportionality, the CoR had the central objective in 2018 of promoting the role of the local and regional authorities in the proper application of these fundamental principles of the European Union. Both the scope and the political relevance of this objective have been greatly enhanced throughout the year due to the work of the CoR delegation to the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and "Doing Less More Efficiently"⁵⁵.

Established in November 2017 by President Juncker, the Task Force prepared a written report to the President of the European Commission recommending how the EU could better apply the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality⁵⁶. The Task Force, chaired by EC First Vice-President Frans Timmermans, held monthly meetings throughout the first half of 2018 and conducted a series of Europe-wide consultative actions to prepare its recommendations in a comprehensive way. The Final Report of the Task Force⁵⁷, presented to President Juncker on 10 July 2018, put forward 9 broad recommendations and 36 concrete, practical actions that aim at significantly upgrading and reinvigorating the European decision-making process. This renewed approach, termed as 'Active Subsidiarity', highlights the

⁵⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/democratic-change/better-regulation/task-force-subsidiarity-proportionality-and-doing-less-more-efficiently_en

⁵⁶ Decision of the President of the European Commission, C(2017) 7810, Brussels, 2017

⁵⁷ Report on the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and "Doing Less More Efficiently", Brussels, 10 July 2018

importance of better engaging local and regional authorities within EU policymaking to produce more effective laws that bring real added value to Europe's citizens in a transparent way. Moving beyond the perception of subsidiarity and proportionality only as restrictive mechanisms, the 'Active Subsidiarity' approach marks a significant shift in the way these principles are regarded and applied within the policymaking process. Subsidiarity is no longer viewed only as a tool in the struggle for competences between the EU and national levels, but rather as a fundamental, basic component in building added value and legitimacy in EU legislation, and a wider ownership of the European project. The CoR delegation to the Task Force⁵⁸ played an integral role in developing this approach and provided strong and evidence-based input to the Task Force by carrying out a broad consultation of more than 2.500 regional and local stakeholders⁵⁹, by consulting regional experts on a common framework for subsidiarity assessment and by hosting a hearing that provided an opportunity for the Chair and members of the Task Force to listen to the views of national, regional and local stakeholders⁶⁰.

The CoR was not only a key player in shaping the 'Active Subsidiarity' approach, but has also made significant efforts to promote and implement the recommendations of the Task Force. With its Bureau declaration on the *Implementation of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality*⁶¹, adopted on 14 September 2018 in Innsbruck, the CoR has been at the forefront in advocating the 'Active Subsidiarity' culture within the EU by expressing its strong commitment to this inclusive, bottom-up approach to policymaking. The European Commission has followed suit in recognising the need to open up the EU decision-making process in its Communication on the *Principles of subsidiarity and proportionality: Strengthening their role in EU policymaking*⁶². This important document has not only embraced the recommendations of the Task Force on subsidiarity and proportionality as potential positive drivers within EU policymaking, it also explicitly calls for a deeper engagement with Europe's regions and cities, and the CoR as their institutional representative. At a *Conference on Subsidiarity as a building principle of the European Union*⁶³, organised by the Austrian Presidency on 15-16 November 2018 in Bregenz, CoR President Lambertz spoke alongside First Vice-President Timmermans and other distinguished guests, and the event resulted in a Declaration that called on the Council to assess and approve the Task Force recommendations to improve the application of subsidiarity and proportionality in the EU.

58 CoR President Karl-Heinz Lambertz (BE/PES), Michael Schneider (DE/EPP) and François Decoster (FR/ALDE),

59 <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/taskforcesubsidiarity>

60 Hearing to support the work of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and "Doing Less More Efficiently", Brussels, 28 May 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/14-5-2018-tf-hearing-programme_en.pdf

61 Declaration of the Bureau of the CoR on the Implementation of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, Innsbruck, 14 September 2018

62 Communication – The Principles of subsidiarity and proportionality: Strengthening their role in EU policymaking, Brussels, 23 October 2018

63 Conference "Subsidiarity as a building principle of the European Union", Bregenz, 15-16 November 2018, <https://www.eu2018.at/calendar-events/political-events/BKA-2018-11-16-Subsidiarity-Conf.html>

Honouring its commitment to implement the Task Force recommendations, on 8 October 2018 the CoR Bureau⁶⁴ agreed to launch a pilot project for a network of Regional Hubs⁶⁵. This initiative originated from the CoR delegation to the Task Force and was taken up into its Final Report. The project aims to gather local and regional feedback on EU policy implementation and has, since its launch in 2019, been recognised as a valuable asset towards the Better Regulation agenda of the EC⁶⁶. Further concrete actions to develop 'Active Subsidiarity' within the CoR and to implement the Task Force recommendations were agreed by the CoR Bureau in December 2018.

Efforts to promote and implement 'Active Subsidiarity' have continued 2019. During the 8th European Summit of Regions and Cities that took place on 14-15 March 2019 in Bucharest, a high-level panel discussion on the 'Active Subsidiarity' approach took place. The political momentum of the Summit, taking place before the European elections and the Leaders' Summit in Sibiu was important in ensuring that the developments from 2018 in the field of subsidiarity and proportionality were taken into account and carried over into 2019. On 15 April 2019, the EC published its Communication on *Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment*⁶⁷. The conclusions of the stocktaking exercise conducted by the European Commission confirm the value and significance of the work of the Task Force, as the Communication strongly calls a shared effort between all actors and levels of government to make Better Regulation more effective. Following the Communication, the European Commission organised a large scale conference⁶⁸ in Brussels on 29 April 2019 dedicated to Better Regulation. The CoR has decided to draw up an opinion on the Communication⁶⁹, and the rapporteur spoke at the conference, highlighting that subsidiarity cannot be properly applied without the full engagement of the sub-national levels.

2.3.3 Industrial Policy

Main impact:

- participation of Vice President and President of the CoR in Informal Meetings of Ministers responsible for Competitiveness under the Bulgarian and Austrian Presidencies;
- appointment of a CoR permanent observer to the European Commission's High Level Industrial Roundtable *Industry 2030*;
- alliance-building and joint stakeholder events with the Industry4Europe coalition;
- a clear commitment of the European Commission to include the regional dimension and the place based approach in the centre of a revised Industrial Policy in Europe.

⁶⁴ Subsidiarity Task Force follow-up: pilot project for a network of Regional Hubs to assess the implementation of EU legislation, Brussels, 8 October 2018

⁶⁵ <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/network-of-regional-hubs.aspx>

⁶⁶ Communication on Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment, Brussels, 15 April 2019

⁶⁷ Communication on Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment, Brussels, 15 April 2019

⁶⁸ Conference 'Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment', Brussels, 29 April 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/conference-better-regulation-taking-stock-take-it-forward-2019-apr-29_en

⁶⁹ CIVEX-VI/041 - Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment – rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP)

Industry is vitally important for regions and cities. Maintaining a substantial industrial base across the regions of the EU requires a policy framework that supports industry in adapting to the forces driving change in the industrial economy, including new digital technologies, the blurring of services and manufacturing, emerging new business models, increasingly globalised value chains and the shift to a low carbon and circular economy. In 2017-2018, the CoR conducted comprehensive analytical and political work to influence the development of an EU Industrial policy strategy, which recognises the centrality of places and which supports the role of territorial ecosystems in driving industrial modernisation.

In March 2018, the CoR adopted an opinion on *A European strategy for industry: the role and perspective of regional and local authorities*. Preparatory work began in early 2017 with a study followed by an ECON commission's workshop in May 2017 on the future of industry in Europe and challenges for local and regional authorities. The rapporteur's consultations extended to a wide range of EU, business and regional stakeholders. This led to alliance-building and joint stakeholder events with the Industry4Europe coalition (representing some 122 manufacturing associations in Europe) notably as part of Industry Days in February 2018. Rapporteur Lehmann was also a panellist in the Industry Days 2018 session on *Road to 2030 – The Future of EU Industry in Global Economy*. The ECON commission's external seminar in Dresden in May 2018 on *Shaping change – towards a holistic industrial strategy* and the ECON external conference in Bucharest in June 2018 on *Boosting the competitiveness of SMEs through digitalisation* were important follow-up activities. Trade policy is also important for industry. CoR collaborated with the EPRS in their delivery of a study on *Interactions between trade, investment and trends in EU industry*, which was also the theme of an CoR workshop on *International trade and globalisation – Implications for regional growth, employment and industrial renewal* in January 2018.

Notable outcomes of this political work included the participation by Vice President Lehmann and President Lambertz in Informal Meetings of Ministers responsible for Competitiveness under the Bulgarian and Austrian Presidencies, and the nomination of a CoR permanent observer to the European Commission's High Level Industrial Roundtable *Industry 2030* chaired by Vice-President Katainen. The CoR's work also helped to consolidate its partnerships with bodies such as the EPRS and the OECD. In its follow-up report, the European Commission welcomed the CoR opinion as an important contribution to the dialogue on industrial policy with EU institutions and stakeholders. It commented on the opinion's recommendations regarding funding for research and innovation, strategic European value chains, open and rules-based trade, and the role of regional ecosystems and multi-level partnership in revitalising regions and building resilience.

In 2019, the CoR is preparing an opinion on *A place-based approach to EU industrial policy*, making the case for how an EU industrial policy strategy can be developed and implemented using a territorial or place-based approach, and how a low carbon and circular economy can be a driver of innovation in a regional and local context. The European Commission's High Level Industrial Roundtable *Industry 2030* will report in summer 2019 with a "bold, longer-term vision on industrial policy" that will inform the policy agenda for the next European Commission, which the CoR shall seek to influence.

2.4 Stability and cooperation within and outside of the European Union

Supporting our neighbours on their path towards European values.

2.4.1 Integration of migrants

There has been a significant increase in the recognition of the key role of local and regional authorities in the integration of migrants and the need to build local networks for successful integration. EU funding for integration at local level should be increased as integration policies are primarily implemented at this level and deliver results.

The CoR's aim is to achieve this policy objective through opinions and alliance building. The strong cooperation with DG HOME and other partners was further formalised in 2018, with the CoR becoming a formal member of the Urban Agenda partnership for the inclusion of migrants and refugees. Moreover, the CoR continues to be a member of the European Integration Network.

The new "Cities and Regions for Integration" initiative, which was launched in the first semester of 2019, will be the main tool to achieve policy objectives in this area in the coming years. This initiative will provide a political platform for mayors and political leaders to improve the integration of migrants and to create a strong and persuasive narrative of solidarity. It will showcase examples of the benefits of the integration of migrants in cities, towns and rural areas throughout the European Union.

The opinion on the Mid-term review of the European Agenda on Migration⁷⁰ has contributed to the recognition of the key role of local and regional authorities in the integration of migrants. The rapporteur was invited to the European Parliament to speak on the integration of migrants and the European Commission recognises this crucial role in its Communication on the delivery of the European Agenda on Migration⁷¹. The work of local authorities is also acknowledged in the OECD study on Integration of migrants and refugees at the local level (April 2018), based on a survey of 72 cities.

In the recent opinion on The Asylum and Migration Fund⁷², the CoR highlights, as in previous opinions, the need to support networks of LRAs for the integration of migrants and proposes, through an amendment to the Regulation, to include specific funding for this purpose. As a result of CoR demands, in 2018 the European Commission launched a call for proposals to fund local and regional networks for integration of migrants.

The new MFF proposals related to the integration of migrants (i.e. the Asylum and Migration Fund and the European Social Fund (ESF)) appear to answer some long-standing demands of the CoR. With a new objective under the ESF for integration of migrants, more funds would be available in this field. In addition, the higher co-financing rate allowed for action implemented by LRAs and the simplification of the rules should facilitate LRAs' access to EU funding.

The expected outcome of the "Cities and Regions for Integration" initiative is to build a political coalition among cities, regions and associations of regions and cities at European level in favour of

⁷⁰ CIVEX-VI/029 - Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration - rapporteur Dimitrios Kalogeropoulos (GR/EPP)

⁷¹ COM/2017/0558 final, September 2017

⁷² CIVEX-VI/035 - Asylum and Migration Fund proposal - rapporteur Peter Bossman (SI/PES)

integration. This initiative/platform is expected to draw attention to the key role of mayors and regional leaders to make successful integration happen and to highlight the importance of diversity as one of the fundamental values of the EU.

2.4.2 Neighbourhood and the world

In the proposed Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2021-2027, the overall budgetary framework for the EU's external action is set out in Heading 6: 'Neighbourhood and the World'. In December 2018, the CoR adopted the opinion on "Neighbourhood and the World"⁷³ focused on the two biggest single instruments under this budget heading: the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) with €89.2 billion and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (III) with €14.5 billion, which directly impact the main areas of the CoR's external activity (enlargement countries and candidates, Eastern Partnership including Ukraine, Mediterranean partner countries, and developing countries).

Among other proposals and recommendations, the CoR deplors the fact that the budget line earmarked for local authorities and currently available under the Development Cooperation Instrument is proposed to be discontinued. The CoR proposed a series of amendments concerning the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), notably the reinstatement of a specific thematic programme for local and regional authorities with a budget of €500 million.

The CoR rapporteur spoke at the public hearing on NDICI in October 2018 organised by the two committees of the European Parliament jointly in charge of this dossier (Committee on Foreign Affairs and Committee on Development) and reached out to several MEPs.

In the EP's draft report on NDICI⁷⁴ published in November 2018, rapporteurs Pier Antonio Panzeri (IT/S&D), Cristian Dan Preda (RO/EPP), Frank Engel (LU/EPP) and Charles Goerens (LU/ALDE) request the inclusion of local authorities at a prominent place within the thematic pillar of the instrument, with a specific earmarked budget of 500 million EUR (amendments 70 and 98). They also call for the inclusion of local authorities in joint applications (am. 17), the fostering of their participation in contributing to the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (am. 20), and regular exchanges of information between the EC and LRAs (am. 90).

⁷³ CIVEX-VI/038 - Neighbourhood and the World – rapporteur Hans Janssen (NL/EPP)

⁷⁴ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=COMPARL&mode=XML&language=EN&reference=PE627.790>

2.4.3 Peer-to-peer capacity building

Cooperation with Libyan municipalities

In the absence of efficient governance structures at national level, Libyan municipalities play a significantly increased role and bear most of the responsibility for providing basic services to the population. Through the **Nicosia Initiative**, the CoR contributes to fostering stability and prosperity in Libya at sub-national level and promotes the creation of local and regional partnerships for sustainable development. It thus aims to improve the living conditions of Libyan citizens by strengthening public services and administrative capacity at local level.

Within the Nicosia Initiative, the CoR follows a bottom-up approach, matching the needs of Libyan municipalities with support available from European cities and regions, helped by the financial support of the European Commission's Public Administration Facility and other partners. Key activities in 2018 have included a training programme on pressing issues for Libyan municipalities and universities, with the aim of giving Libyan universities the tools to develop and deliver needs-based curricula for municipality staff; a series of workshops on positive peace for 180 young Libyan community leaders with the participation of CoR members who shared their experience in youth integration and post-conflict reconciliation, as well as the PATH-DEV pilot action supporting local economic development in Libya through training in the fishery sector, funded by the Italian Ministry of Interior.

The training programme for Libyan municipalities and universities has enabled the development of a curriculum for municipality staff that can be delivered locally in Libyan universities. The peace training workshops have generated a number of inspiring projects that are being implemented at local level, including the opening of the Sirte youth radio station, following the destruction of the local radio by the Islamic State. Further support for the Nicosia Initiative is foreseen under the upcoming phase of the European Commission's Public Administration Facility, and the CoR is coordinating with Libyan municipalities, EU institutions and implementers in order to determine the best way forward. Future priorities include the further development of the training programme for municipality staff, strengthening activities in the field of local economic development and public service delivery, pursuing the training for young community leaders with the goal of building active citizenship, and linking the Nicosia Initiative more closely to the nascent association of Libyan municipalities, in order to support local governance in Libya.

Cooperation with Ukrainian municipalities

Set up in 2015, the **CoR-Ukraine Task Force** aims to intensify bilateral relations, support decentralisation reform launched in 2014 and provide both political and technical support so that Ukrainian partners can achieve good governance at all levels. As a result of the reforms, by the end of December 2017 more than 600 new "amalgamated" territorial communities were created in Ukraine, many of which lacked the capacity to manage additional funds and newly-attributed responsibilities.

At the third meeting of Ukraine Task Force in Khyriv (Ukraine) on 30 June 2017, the members

discussed for the first time the possibilities to support Ukrainian local and regional authorities through capacity-building exchanges. Through a match-making exercise organised in 2017 with the support of the European Commission's "U-LEAD with Europe" programme and its implementer, the German Development Agency GIZ, the first five EU-Ukrainian **local peer-to-peer initiatives** were established. These peer-to-peer initiatives are bilateral projects between the EU and Ukrainian local authorities through which Estonian, German, Hungarian, Lithuanian and Polish communities shared their experience in areas identified as priorities by their Ukrainian partners – drawing up economic development plans, supporting rural areas, helping small and medium-sized enterprises, boosting tourism, and increasing transparency. The objectives of the projects were achieved through study trips, internships and ongoing communication throughout the year.

The pilot phase of the project was deemed successful by all stakeholders and beneficiaries.

At the wrap-up event of the peer-to-peer initiative on 13 February 2019 in Brussels, the peers presented the results achieved. Two of the five pairs signed a cooperation agreement, based on which they will continue working together.

After the pilot phase of the initiative, more CoR members expressed their interest to participate in similar projects with Ukrainian LRAs. The Ukrainian Ministry of Regional Development also expressed its satisfaction with the results and is looking forward to a continuation. The European Commission is positive about finding other sources of financial support – possibly within other thematic programmes – for a next stage of peer-to-peer exchanges, with CoR participation.

2.4.4 Environmental policy and circular economy

In 2018, the ENVE commission worked on seven opinions related to environmental policy and circular economy, and the impact of opinions from previous years was also seen in 2018.

The CoR has become recognised as a valuable partner in issues connected to environmental policy and the circular economy, and this has led to the building of strong alliances with other EU institutions and with civil society. The CoR has been DG Environment's partner in the Technical Platform for Cooperation on the Environment, in the Green Week 2018 on Green Cities for a Greener Future and the SDGs stakeholders' platform, cooperating in the organisation of thematic debates, conferences, stakeholder consultations, hosting activities of DG Environment and welcoming its Director-General, Mr Calleja Crespo, to the ENVE commission. The CoR has co-organised the European Week of Waste Reduction Awards and supported the European Green Capital and Green Leaf Awards, the Natura 2000 Award and the Tree of the Year Award.

The CoR continued its cooperation on the Action Plan for nature, people and the economy, and its work on nature policy, with an opinion on Conflict Species⁷⁵, with the participation of the rapporteur at several events on the topic. A new pilot project has been launched to set up regional platforms on the

⁷⁵ ENVE-VI/025 - Promoting coexistence with conflict species within the framework of the EU Nature Directives - rapporteur Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP)

co-existence of people and large carnivores (the county of the CoR Rapporteur has been proposed as one of the pilot locations).

The CoR was able to influence the policymaking process at EU and international level through the adoption of an opinion on the role of EU cities and regions in the post-2020 Biodiversity Policy Framework⁷⁶. At the 14th meeting of the United Nation Convention on Biological Diversity (UN CBD COP14)⁷⁷, the CoR opinion was distributed as an official conference document and the CoR rapporteur was involved in a number of high level bilateral meetings with EU and non-EU partners.

The EC proposal for the LIFE Regulation included significant elements from the CoR opinion on the Mid-term review⁷⁸ adopted in 2016, the most important being the extension of the LIFE Programme beyond 2020, which was in doubt at the time of the adoption of the CoR opinion. The CoR opinion on the proposal⁷⁹ also contributed to the position of the CoR on the MFF. In line with the CoR's proposals, the European Parliament has made explicit reference to local and regional authorities, paying attention to outermost regions and to overseas countries and territories, and has requested a budget increase and the Council is in favour of keeping the LIFE Committee. Both institutions support capacity-building actions and a higher co-funding rate in biodiversity projects. The negotiations are taking place in 2019 under the Romanian Presidency.

The chair of the ENVE commission, as rapporteur for three previous opinions on air quality⁸⁰, attended high level events on this topic. The implementation of Air quality legislation at sub-national level has been selected as one of the first topics to be assessed by the new Network of Regional Hubs for EU Policy Implementation Review (RegHub) - Pilot project.

The impact of the opinion on the Waste package⁸¹ was seen with the conclusion of the negotiations. An assessment of the final agreement in comparison with the CoR opinion was already included in the Annual Impact Report 2017⁸².

The new EC initiative on Delivering on the Circular Economy Action Plan is consistent with the CoR opinion on the Plan⁸³ as it includes elements on plastics and littering, specifically the new Plastics

76 ENVE-VI/031 - The contribution of EU cities and regions to the CBD COP14 and the post-2020 EU Biodiversity Strategy - rapporteur Roby Biber (LU/PES)

77 <https://www.cbd.int/meetings/COP-14>

78 ENVE-VI/016 - Mid-term evaluation of the Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) 2014-2020 - rapporteur Witold Stepień (PL/EPP)

79 ENVE-VI/035 - Proposal for a Regulation establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 - rapporteur Marco Dus (IT/PES)

80 ENVE-V/017 - Review of EU Air Quality and Emissions Policy – rapporteur Cor Lamers (NL/EPP); ENVE-V/046 - The Clean Air Policy Package for Europe – rapporteur Cor Lamers (NL/EPP); ENVE-VI/027 - Towards an 8th Environment Action Programme (NL/EPP) – rapporteur Cor Lamers (NL/EPP)

81 ENVE-VI/010 - Legislative proposals amending waste directives - rapporteur: Domenico Gambacorta (IT/EPP)

82 More details available in the Annual Impact Report 2017.
<https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Documents/Opinions/3783-Report-impact-CoR-opinions-LR.PDF>

83 ENVE-VI/011 - Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy - rapporteur: Babette Winter (DE/PES)

Strategy that itself launched the proposal for a Single-use plastics directive (the CoR has already adopted opinions on both issues⁸⁴).

The impact of the CoR opinions on the Plastics Strategy⁸⁵ and on the Single-use plastics Directive⁸⁶ is being assessed in 2019 in line with the ending of the negotiations on the Directive and with the progressive development of the actions foreseen in the strategy.

The CoR has been an active partner of the European Commission in water policy, hosting the IMPEL assembly and the conference on evaluation of the urban waste water Directive. On drinking water⁸⁷, the European Parliament fully accepted the CoR proposal related to derogations, which generates an entirely new article in the Directive. The EP also accepted the CoR proposal for more categories of water suppliers and flexibility measures for very small suppliers, the consideration of the specific geographic circumstances of water distribution, the need for support to local and regional authorities (including financial support), subsidiarity issues in aspects related to information to the public, and the CoR's concerns about the definition of microplastics. Related to water reuse⁸⁸, the CoR rapporteur spoke at the EU Water Conference in Vienna in September 2018 and at the EP Intergroup on Sustainable Development. The Council position is not yet adopted.

The impact still to be assessed once the inter-institutional negotiations are over concern the CoR opinions on the LIFE Programme (linked to the MFF)⁸⁹, on the drinking water Directive⁹⁰, and on the Regulation on minimum requirements for water reuse⁹¹.

The opinion on the 8th Environment Action Programme (EAP)⁹² adopted in February 2019, has already triggered cooperation with DG ENV in the context of the evaluation of the 7th EAP, including a back-to-back event with the Commission on the 7th and 8th EAP. A full assessment will be possible with the progressive development of the debate on the possible 8th EAP.

85 ENVE-VI/029 - Communication on a European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy - rapporteur André Van De Nadort (NL/PES)

86 ENVE-VI/033 - Proposal for a single-use plastics directive - rapporteur Sirpa Hertell (FI/EPP)

87 ENVE-VI/028 - Quality of water intended for human consumption - rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP)

88 ENVE-VI/034 - Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for water reuse - rapporteur Oldřich Vlasák (CZ/ECR)

89 ENVE-VI/035 - Proposal for a Regulation establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 - rapporteur Marco Dus (IT/PES)

90 ENVE-VI/028 - Quality of water intended for human consumption - rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP)

91 ENVE-VI/034 - Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for water reuse - rapporteur Oldřich Vlasák (CZ/ECR)

92 ENVE-VI/027 - Towards an 8th Environment Action Programme (NL/EPP) -- rapporteur Cor Lamers (NL/EPP)

2.4.5 Space policy

In the area of space policy, the CoR has, throughout the first half of 2018, been focused on improving the network created by the 2017 opinion on the European Space Strategy⁹³ and building impact. As part of this follow-up, and in order to promote the market uptake of downstream services and applications, the CoR has continued its involvement in the Copernicus user forum. Although a highly technical subject, the presence of Mr Jaadla as observer in this forum had a concrete impact on recognising the CoR as a relevant actor among European space stakeholders and opened the door to participation in numerous political and technical space events organised throughout the year, such as bilateral meetings with Commissioner Bienkowska, the event celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Baveno Manifesto - the birth of the Copernicus Programme and several more. Furthermore, hand in hand with the ESA and Eurisy, the CoR organised an Energy Day Workshop on Space as an enabler for sustainable energy management – local and regional perspectives on 6 June 2018 as a part of the EU Sustainable Energy Week. The rapporteur on renewable energy and the internal energy market in electricity⁹⁴ was a speaker.

Building on the momentum created with the previous CoR Space opinion, the same member was appointed as rapporteur on the new proposal for a Regulation by the European Commission on establishing the space programme of the Union and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme⁹⁵ and his opinion was adopted unanimously during the CoR plenary session in December 2018. Throughout the drafting process, the CoR rapporteur cooperated with the EP's rapporteur and shadow rapporteur, as well as with the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), and he was a panellist at the 9th International Meeting for members of Parliament organised by the International Astronautical Federation. Further impact remains to be assessed, as the opinion was only adopted at the last CoR plenary of 2018.

2.4.6 UK withdrawal from the EU

Main impact:

- EC reiterated its commitment to do the utmost for cushioning this impact and for putting the conditions in place to maintain cooperation among local and regional governments in the EU27 and the UK after the UK leaves the EU;
- the EP REGI Committee amended the draft Common Provisions Regulation with proposal to create a specific support fund for EU regions affected by the UK's withdrawal.

⁹³ ENVE-VI/022 - Space Strategy for Europe - rapporteur: Andres Jaadla (ET/ALDE)

⁹⁴ ENVE-VI/020 - Opinion Renewable energy and internal electricity market - rapporteur: Daiva Matoniene (LT/ECR)

⁹⁵ ENVE-VI/036 - The space programme of the Union and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme - rapporteur Andres Jaadla (EE/ALDE)

The CoR conducted a process of analysing and debating the likely asymmetric impact that the UK leaving the EU would have on the EU27 regions and cities, aiming to raise awareness among regions and cities and to convey the views of regional and local authorities to the European Commission.

Since the start of the negotiations in March 2017, members of the CoR, mainly in the framework of the Conference of Presidents, have met on several occasions with devolved administrations and local governments from the UK to discuss and collect evidence on the impact of the UK's withdrawal. The CoR President launched a survey addressed to CoR members on the consequences of Brexit.

The CoR conducted comprehensive analytical and political work on the possible economic impact of the UK's withdrawal on the EU27 regions and cities: a study, a survey and a Territorial Impact Assessment workshop (TIA) were conducted as well as debates in the CoR ECON commission's meetings. A detailed report was published and debated with a large audience on 20 March 2018.

The overall results of the analytical work and political debates provided sound input for two CoR Resolutions (in March 2017 and May 2018)⁹⁶. These identified measures to mitigate the expected impact of the withdrawal and called for the EU to ensure that local and regional authorities are not "left to deal on their own" with the challenges ahead. Both resolutions were notably sent to chief European Commission negotiator Mr Barnier, who joined the CoR's plenary session twice in 2017 and 2018. Mr Barnier acknowledged the CoR's and regions' work on the local and regional impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EU and reiterated his commitment to do the utmost for cushioning this impact and for putting the conditions in place to maintain cooperation among local and regional governments in the EU27 and the UK after the UK leaves the EU.

The European Commission's Communication on preparing for the withdrawal of the UK from the EU (July and November 2018) echoes key conclusions of the CoR work. Amendments tabled in the European Parliament REGI Committee to the draft Common Provisions Regulation propose the creation of a specific support fund for EU regions affected by the UK's withdrawal and thereby reflect the CoR May 2018 Resolution that had called on the European Commission to assess the possible need for a stabilisation fund for regions most adversely affected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The CoR's work also had a significant media impact: more than 500 newspapers/agencies across Europe reported on the CoR analytical work; the CoR was invited to numerous interviews/radio shows on the Brexit impact on LRAs.

Since the future EU27-UK relationship will involve negotiations on key policy areas (trade, financial services, agriculture and fisheries, etc.), which will impact certain regions and cities in the EU27, the CoR will closely monitor those negotiations to bring up the views and concerns of regions and cities.

⁹⁶ RESOL-VI/022, Resolution on the Implications for Local and Regional Government of the UK's intention to withdraw from the EU,
RESOL-VI/031, Resolution on the implications for local and regional governments from the European Union, of the United Kingdom's intention to withdraw from the Euro

2.5 Europe of the citizens is Europe of the future

Enhancing forward-looking partnerships between European Union and its people.

2.5.1 Future of Europe

The CoR has been closely involved in the broad reflection on the future of Europe, following a request in November 2016 from the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk for an opinion on the topic – which is the first such request ever received by the CoR. The request underlined the importance of getting a perception of the reality from the European grassroots level.

The opinion on "Reflecting on Europe: the voice of local and regional authorities to rebuild trust in the European Union"⁹⁷, whose co-rapporteurs were the CoR President and the First Vice-President, was adopted on 9 October 2018. Nevertheless, its impact in the same year can be deemed relevant, as the preparation of the opinion took almost two years of political debate and consultation of citizens, LRAs and their associations, with political work and communication activities carried out in parallel.

In preparing the opinion, the CoR organised a campaign entitled "Reflecting on Europe" within which 176 CoR members organised Citizens' Dialogues with over 40,000 participants in person or digitally. More than 22,000 citizens took part in the discussion through an online survey and over 540 local and regional authorities responded to a survey on the future of Europe. Debates on the future of Europe were held in CoR Commissions and Plenaries and a study was commissioned by the CIVEX Commission encompassing a consultation of relevant stakeholders, including all CoR members and alternate members, local and regional authorities, regional parliaments and LRA associations at national and European level.

The main findings of the opinion have been presented twice to the AFCO Committee of the European Parliament: on 10 October, on the occasion of the Inter-parliamentary Committee Meeting between the European Parliament and national Parliaments, and in the Joint AFCO-CIVEX debate that took place on 27 November.

On 4 December 2018, the Secretary General of the European Commission attended the CoR Bureau meeting to discuss the Future of Europe and on the next day the co-rapporteurs delivered the opinion in person to the President of the European Council.

On 14 December 2018, the President of the CoR Mr Lambertz and the President of the EESC Mr Jahier presented a proposal on "*Bringing the EU closer to its citizens: The call for an EU permanent mechanism for structured consultations and dialogues with citizens*". They proposed to build upon the experience developed in the Committees and in other EU institutions by establishing an EU permanent structured consultation with citizens, cities, regions and civil society organisations during the next EU institutional cycle (2019-2024), which would be managed by an EU inter-institutional working group.

The "Reflecting on Europe" campaign was acknowledged in the report on the main findings of the different consultations at EU and Member State level submitted to the European Council in December

⁹⁷ CIVEX-VI/021 - Reflecting on Europe: the voice of local and regional authorities to rebuild trust in the European Union – rapporteur Karl-Heinz Lambertz (BE/PES) and Markku Markkula (FI/EPP).

2018. In its conclusions of 14 December 2018, the European Council welcomed the holding of citizens' dialogues and citizens' consultations and considered them an "unprecedented opportunity to engage with European citizens, which could serve as an inspiration for further consultations and dialogues".

The debate on the future of the European Union continued in the 8th European Summit of Regions and Cities on 14-15 March 2019 in Bucharest, organised by the CoR together with the Romanian delegation to the CoR and the Romanian presidency of the Council of the EU. The Summit - attended by about 1000 delegates, including 640 elected politicians - was thematically framed by the three key concepts of the CoR's "Reflecting on Europe" opinion (democracy, solidarity, proximity) and discussed a wide range of concerns and ideas of local leaders about the future of Europe through four plenary sessions and six thematic debates. The Summit Declaration "[*Building the EU from the ground up with our regions and cities*](#)", adopted by the Bureau on 14 March 2019, forms the backbone of the CoR's next steps and strategic orientation towards its next term of office (February 2020 to February 2025).

2.5.2 Education, Culture and Youth

Main impact:

- in December 2018, the European Commission put forward a European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage, which ensures continuity of the positive legacy of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH2018) and mainstreams cultural heritage in different EU policy areas, as requested in the CoR opinion on "Creative Europe Programme and a new European agenda for culture".
- a great mobilisation at local and regional level for the EYCH2018 and a strong plea for meaningful budget of the EU beyond 2020 to support culture and creativity;
- EC and Council recognise the pivotal role of the local and regional level in the field of education and culture.

Cities and regions reflect Europe's cultural diversity and are best placed to turn Europe's cultural heritage into a strategic asset. The CoR directly contributed to celebrating 2018 as the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH2018) through strong territorial component stressing the fundamental role of local and regional authorities in the management, promotion, protection and safeguarding of the European cultural heritage. This approach was presented during the high-level debate in the Plenary session in May 2018, in the presence of the Commissioner Navracsics

A number of proposals made in the CoR opinion on "Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture"⁹⁸ were reflected in the relevant Council recommendation⁹⁹ or other European Commission proposals, thereby recognising the pivotal role of the local and regional level in the field of education and culture.

As underlined in para. 13 of the CoR opinion, "Introducing a European dimension of teaching should aim to help learners experience European identity in all its diversity and strengthen a European positive

⁹⁸ SEDEC-VI/033 – "Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture" - rapporteur Tanya Hristova (BG/EPP)

⁹⁹ The Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching, adopted by the Council on 22 May 2018 (2018/C 195/01).

and inclusive sense of belonging complementing their local, regional and national identities and traditions" (Recital (18) in the Preamble of the Council Recommendation). As requested in Amendment 6 on "introducing new and expanding the scope of existing opportunities for cultural mobility", a new scheme for the mobility of artists and/or culture professionals is being set up through the future Creative Europe programme and the New European Agenda for Culture.

The opinion also has a valuable role to play as part of the CoR's input in the Leaders' Agenda debate on education and culture, as does the CoR Opinion on "Cultural Heritage as a strategic resource for more cohesive and sustainable regions in the EU"¹⁰⁰.

On 22-23 May 2018, the Council of the EU invited the Member States, in due compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, to "recognise the role of cultural heritage in relevant national sectoral programmes co-financed by the EU with a view to preserving the value and importance of cultural heritage for local people and future generations and fully develop the potential of heritage as a resource for economic development, social cohesion and cultural identity" (relevant ideas are proposed in para. 29 and 40 of the later CoR Opinion).

As provided for in the CoR for the EYCH2018, synergies were established with others key strategic priorities of the current term of office (EU cohesion policy/structural and investments funds, education, youth, urban agenda, etc.) and their communication campaigns such as the #CohesionAlliance. These multi-dimensional aspects required the involvement of all CoR commissions and they matched the CoR's communication activities and support for the rapporteurs concerned.

The CoR also played a role as facilitator with the local and regional authorities and their offices in Brussels in order to encourage them to share their potential initiatives, collaborate with their national coordinators for the EYCH2018 and support the ten initiatives by organising conferences, launching information campaigns notably in local media, or producing publications. An information session was organised at the CoR in late 2017, followed by dedicated decentralised events at the CoR or on the ground throughout 2018.

A series of brief video with the "testimonies" by CoR members were recorded for European Year and posted on social media. The generic presentation video on EYCH2018 helped raising awareness about and encouraging the participation in the Year: "Get involved!". On 4 May 2018, a seminar was organised jointly by the Government of Castilla y León and the CoR in Burgos (Spain) to highlight and boost the role of culture as an important resource for the future of Europe.

The impact of the work of the CoR lead to a great mobilisation at local and regional level for the EYCH 2018 and a strong plead for meaningful budget of the EU beyond 2020 to support culture and creativity.

In the European Commission's proposal for the EU's next Multiannual Financial Framework, existing actions supporting European culture and creativity will be integrated into the future "Creative Europe" Programme with a budget increase. The European Commission also proposed to double the budget for Erasmus and reinforce the European Solidarity Corps. These instruments are included in the new "Investing in People, Social Cohesion & Values" cluster with a total proposed budget of EUR 139.5 billion.

¹⁰⁰ SEDEC-VI/035 – "Cultural Heritage as a strategic resource for more cohesive and sustainable regions in the EU" - rapporteur Babette Winter (DE/PES)

As far as "Erasmus, the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport"¹⁰¹ is concerned, the European Parliament backed up most of the CoR key amendments as well as the political recommendations, stressing the need to improve the inclusiveness of the Programme to reach people from all social backgrounds and age groups, including the disadvantaged, and all forms of education and training; the need for special support and financial means for most disadvantaged groups; and for limiting the administrative burden; calling for synergies with other European programmes and for more focus mobility in vocational training, to boost the development of future-oriented vocational skills.

Concerning the opinion on the "European Solidarity Corps"¹⁰², the Commission shares the view, amongst other points considered in the Amendments, that the local and regional aspects of the ESC are crucial, and should be taken into account by the National Agencies implementing the decentralised actions of the programme. Moreover, as concrete follow-up action to the CoR call for the inclusion of the CoR in the formal cooperation in youth field (New EU Youth Strategy), the CoR Rapporteur was invited to represent the CoR in the constitutive meeting of the new Youth Platform.

The negotiations taking place under the new MFF on the future EU Programmes Erasmus and Creative Europe will provide an opportunity to further CoR proposals on education and culture in relation to the European Pillar of Social Rights. The CoR [draft] Opinion on Erasmus calls for establishing "a stronger link between education and training on the one hand, and the specific economic and social situation of a region on the other, particularly with regard to peripheral, disadvantaged areas". The CoR [draft] Opinion on Creative Europe¹⁰³ wants to raise "awareness of the expansion of culture as a policy area: the number of cross-sectoral projects involving culture is growing, addressing areas such as urban regeneration, health, wellbeing and social inclusion".

101 SEDEC-VI/043- "Erasmus, the EU programme for education, training, youth and sport" - rapporteur: Ulrike Hiller (DE/PES)

102 SEDEC-VI/042 – "European Solidarity Corps and the new EU youth strategy" - rapporteur Matteo Luigi Bianchi (IT/ECR)

103 SEDEC-VI/040 – "Creative Europe and a New European Agenda for Culture" - rapporteur János Adám Karácsony (HU/EPP)

3 Conclusions – Outlook

Through its 78 Opinions in 2018 and the impact of opinions, this report shows the range and effectiveness of the work of the European Committee of the Regions. The work of the Committee was closely linked to the political agenda of the European Union as a whole, including the Multiannual Financial Framework and monitoring the negotiations for the United Kingdom withdrawal from the European Union, to bring up the views and concerns of regions and cities,. Our Plenary Sessions attracted Presidents of European Institutions, Commissioners and national Government ministers.

Through interaction with the six policy commissions the European Committee of the Regions has fulfilled its role under the Treaties, and has undertaken initiatives such as 'Reflecting on Europe', in which members engage in dialogues with citizens. On 14 December 2018 CoR President Mr Lambertz and EESC, President, Mr Jahier presented a proposal on "***Bringing the EU closer to its citizens: The call for an EU permanent mechanism for structured consultations and dialogues with citizens***". Responding to the European Council, the idea is to establish an EU permanent structured consultation with citizens, cities, regions and civil society organisations during the next EU institutional cycle, building upon the experience developed in the Committees, other EU institutions and Member States. **The work of the CoR in this area was acknowledged in the European Council conclusions adopted on 14 December 2018: "*The European Council welcomes the holding of Citizens' Dialogues and Citizens' Consultations, which was an unprecedented opportunity to engage with European citizens and which could serve as an inspiration for further consultations and dialogues*".** Since then, the CoR has begun a series of seminars and workshops to exchange best practice on dialogues and consultations ahead of a possible permanent consultation mechanism being established in Autumn 2019.

Moreover, with **European-level associations**, we have been continuing our work at the #CohesionAlliance which is now showing its true value. And we have showcased examples of where regions, cities and local authorities, acting together, are able to deliver on EU policies ranging from investment and the economy to migration and climate change.

2019 is a key year for the European politics. In this regard the CoR will prepare its contribution to the:

- EU's Strategic Agenda 2019-2024, and
- the CoR will set up a strategy to establish close relationship with the newly elected European Parliament and with the new European Commission Commissioners.

4 Annex

4.1 Annex 1: List of opinions included in this report

CIVEX

- CIVEX-VI/021 - Reflecting on Europe: the voice of local and regional authorities to rebuild trust in the European Union – rapporteur Karl-Heinz Lambertz (BE/PES) and Markku Markkula (FI/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/029 - Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration - rapporteur Dimitrios Kalogeropoulos (GR/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/035 - Asylum and Migration Fund proposal - rapporteur Peter Bossman (SI/PES)
- CIVEX-VI/038 - Neighbourhood and the World – rapporteur Hans Janssen (NL/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/041 - Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment – rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP)

COTER

- COTER-VI/010 – "Concrete steps for implementing the EU Urban Agenda", rapporteur Hella Dunger-Löper
- COTER-VI/012 – "Simplification of ESIF from the perspective of Local and Regional Authorities", rapporteur Petr Osvald
- COTER-VI/015 – "The future of cohesion policy beyond 2020", rapporteur Michael Schneider
- COTER-VI/016 – "Missing transport links in border regions", rapporteur Michiel Scheffer
- COTER-VI/023 – "People-to-people and small-scale projects in cross-border cooperation programmes", rapporteur Pavel Branda
- COTER-VI/025 – "Towards an European Agenda on Housing", rapporteur Hicham Imane
- COTER-VI/026 – "Reform of EU own resources within the next MFF post-2020", rapporteur Isabelle Boudineau
- COTER-VI/027 – "Future of CEF transport", rapporteur Ximo Puig i Ferrer
- COTER-VI/034 – "Reflection paper on the future of EU finances", rapporteur Marek Woźniak
- COTER-VI/035 – "Final conclusions and recommendations of the High Level Group on Simplification post-2020", rapporteur Oldřich Vlasák
- COTER-VI/037 – "Implementation assessment of the Urban Agenda for the EU", rapporteur Kieran McCarthy
- COTER-VI/045 – "Common Provisions Regulation", co-rapporteurs Catuscia Marini and Michael Schneider

- COTER-VI/046 – "European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund", rapporteur Michiel Rijsberman
- COTER-VI/047 – "European Territorial Cooperation", rapporteur Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis
- COTER-VI/048 – "Cross-border mechanism", rapporteur Bouke Arends
- COTER-VI/049 – "European Social Fund Plus", rapporteur Susana Díaz Pacheco
- COTER-VI/050 – "Connecting Europe Facility", rapporteur Isabelle Boudineau

ECON

- ECON-VI/040 - The European Semester and Cohesion Policy: aligning structural reforms with long-term investments- rapporteur: Rob Jonkman (NL/ECR)
- ECON-VI/026 - A European strategy for industry: the role and perspective of regional and local authorities - rapporteur Heinz Lehmann (DE/EPP)
- RESOL-VI/022 - Resolution on the Implications for Local and Regional Government of the UK's intention to withdraw from the EU
- RESOL-VI/031 - Resolution on the implications for local and regional governments from the European Union, of the United Kingdom's intention to withdraw from the Euro

ENVE

- ENVE-V/017 - Review of EU Air Quality and Emissions Policy – rapporteur Cor Lamers (NL/EPP)
- ENVE-V/046 - The Clean Air Policy Package for Europe – rapporteur Cor Lamers (NL/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/010 - Legislative proposals amending waste directives - rapporteur: Domenico Gambacorta (IT/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/011 - Closing the loop – An EU action plan for the Circular Economy - rapporteur: Babette Winter (DE/PES)
- ENVE-VI/016 - Mid-term evaluation of the Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) 2014-2020 - rapporteur Witold Stepień (PL/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/018 - Energy Union governance and clean energy - rapporteur: Bruno Hranic (HR/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/020 - Opinion Renewable energy and internal electricity market - rapporteur: Daiva Matoniene (LT/ECR)
- ENVE-VI/022 - Space Strategy for Europe - rapporteur: Andres Jaadla (ET/ALDE)
- ENVE-VI/025 - Promoting coexistence with conflict species within the framework of the EU Nature Directives - rapporteur Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP)

- ENVE-VI/027 - Towards an 8th Environment Action Programme (NL/EPP) - – rapporteur Cor Lamers (NL/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/028 - Quality of water intended for human consumption - rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/029 - Communication on a European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy - rapporteur André Van De Nadort (NL/PES)
- ENVE-VI/030 - Climate governance after 2020: a European and global perspective – a contribution to the UNFCCC COP24 - rapporteur Andrew Varah Cooper (GB/EA)
- ENVE-VI/031 - The contribution of EU cities and regions to the CBD COP14 and the post-2020 EU Biodiversity Strategy - rapporteur Roby Biwer (LU/PES)
- ENVE-VI/032 - Models of local energy ownership and the role of local energy communities in energy transition in Europe - rapporteur Mariana Gâju (RO/PES)
- ENVE-VI/033 - Proposal for a single-use plastics directive - rapporteur Sirpa Hertell (FI/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/034 - Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for water reuse - rapporteur Oldřich Vlasák (CZ/ECR)
- ENVE-VI/035 - Proposal for a Regulation establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 - rapporteur Marco Dus (IT/PES)
- ENVE-VI/036 - The space programme of the Union and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme - rapporteur Andres Jaadla (EE/ALDE)
- ENVE-VI/037 - A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy - rapporteur: Michele Emiliano (IT/PES)
- ENVE-VI/041 - Implementing the Clean Energy Package: the INECs as a tool for local and territorial governance approach to climate, active and passive energy - rapporteur: Jozsef Ribanyi (HU/EPP)

NAT

- NAT-VI/010 - The need for and way towards an EU strategy on alcohol-related issues– rapporteur: Ewa-May Karlsson (SE/ALDE)
- NAT-VI/021 - Future of the CAP after 2020 - rapporteur: Guillaume Cros (FR/PES)
- NAT-VI/028 - The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) beyond 2020 – Investing in Europe's Coastal Communities- rapporteur Alberto Nuñez Feijoo (ES/EPP)
- NAT-VI/029 - Review of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism - rapporteur Adam Banaszak (PL/ECR)

SEDEC

- SEDEC-VI/022 – The local and regional dimension of bioeconomy and the role of regions and cities - rapporteur Katrin Budde
- SEDEC-VI/027 – The European Pillar of Social Rights and reflection paper on the social dimension of Europe - rapporteur Mauro D'Attis (IT/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/031 – Digital Single Market: Mid-term review - rapporteur Alin Nica
- SEDEC-VI/034 – Boosting broadband connectivity in Europe - rapporteur Mart Vörklaev
- SEDEC-VI/035 - Cultural Heritage as a strategic resource for more cohesive and sustainable regions in the EU - rapporteur Babette Winter (DE/PES)
- SEDEC-VI/036 – Transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union - rapporteur Isolde Ries (DE/PES)
- SEDEC-VI/038 – A European Labour Authority - rapporteur Doris Kampus (AT/PES)
- SEDEC-VI/040 - Creative Europe and a New European Agenda for Culture - rapporteur János Adám Karácsony (HU/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/042 - European Solidarity Corps and the new EU youth strategy - rapporteur Matteo Luigi Bianchi (IT/ECR)
- SEDEC-VI/044 – Digital Europe programme (2021-2027), rapporteur Markku Markkula (FI/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/046 – Artificial Intelligence for Europe - rapporteur Jan Trei (FI/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/047 – A renewed European agenda for research and innovation – Europe's chance to shape its future, rapporteur Birgitta Sacrédeus (SE/EPP)

4.2 Annex 2: List of opinions adopted in 2018

CIVEX

- CIVEX-VI/021 - Reflecting on Europe: the voice of local and regional authorities to rebuild trust in the European Union – rapporteur Karl-Heinz Lambertz (BE/PES) and Markku Markkula (FI/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/024 - Erasmus for Local and Regional Representatives - rapporteur François Decoster (FR/ALDE)
- CIVEX-VI/028 - Regulation on the European citizens' initiative – rapporteur Luc Van Den Brande (BE/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/029 - Implementation of the European Agenda on Migration - rapporteur Dimitrios Kalogeropoulos (GR/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/030 - Eastern Partnership deliverables for 2020: The contribution of local and regional authorities - rapporteur Sören Herbst (DE/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/031 - Action Plan to support the protection of public spaces - rapporteur Jean-François Barnier (FR/ALDE)
- CIVEX-VI/032 - Enlargement: Inclusion of Western Balkan Local and Regional Authorities in EU's Macro-regional, Cross-border and other Transnational Cooperation Initiatives - rapporteur Franz Schausberger (AT/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/033 - Enlargement Package - rapporteur Franco Iacop (IT/PES)
- CIVEX-VI/034 - Rights and Values - rapporteur François Decoster (FR/ALDE)
- CIVEX-VI/035 - Asylum and Migration Fund proposal - rapporteur Peter Bossman (SI/PES)
- CIVEX-VI/038 - Neighbourhood and the World – rapporteur Hans Janssen (NL/EPP)

COTER

- COTER-VI/030 - Towards full implementation of the renewed EU strategy for the outermost regions – rapporteur Fernando Clavijo Batlle (ES/ALDE)
- COTER-VI/031 - Integrated territorial investments – a challenge for EU cohesion policy after 2020 - rapporteur Petr Osvald (CZ/PES)
- COTER-VI/032 - Europe on the Move: promoting seamless mobility solutions - rapporteur Ivan Žagar (SI/EPP)
- COTER-VI/033 - Europe on the Move: labour aspects of road transport - rapporteur Spyros Spyridon (GR/EPP)
- COTER-VI/034 - Reflection paper on the Future of EU Finances - rapporteur Marek Woźniak (PL/EPP)
- COTER-VI/035 - Final conclusions and recommendations of the High Level Group on Simplification for post 2020 - rapporteur Oldřich Vlasák (CZ/ECR)
- COTER-VI/036 - Boosting Growth and Cohesion in EU Border Regions – rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP)
- COTER-VI/037 - Implementation Assessment of the Urban Agenda for the EU - rapporteur Kieran Mccarthy (IE/EA)

- COTER-VI/038 - Mid-term review of the ESF preparing the post-2020 proposal - rapporteur Catuscia Marini (IT/PES)
- COTER-VI/039 - Delivering on low-emission mobility - rapporteur Michiel Scheffer (NL/ALDE)
- COTER-VI/040 - The cost and risk of non-cohesion: The strategic value of cohesion policy for pursuing the Treaty objectives and facing new challenges for European regions – rapporteur Mieczysław Struk (PL/EPP)
- COTER-VI/041 - Clean Ports, Clean Seas - port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships - rapporteur Spyros Spyridon (GR/EPP)
- COTER-VI/042 - The Multiannual Financial Framework package for the years 2021-2027 - rapporteur Nikola Dobroslavić (HR/EPP)
- COTER-VI/045 - Common Provisions Regulation - rapporteur Catuscia Marini (IT/PES) and Michael Schneider (DE/EPP)
- COTER-VI/046 - European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund - rapporteur Michiel Rijsberman (NL/ALDE)
- COTER-VI/047 - European Territorial Cooperation - rapporteur Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA)
- COTER-VI/048 - Cross-border mechanism - rapporteur Bouke Arends (NL/PES)
- COTER-VI/049 - European Social Fund Plus - rapporteur Susana Díaz Pacheco (ES/PES)
- COTER-VI/050 - Connecting Europe Facility - rapporteur Isabelle Boudineau (FR/PES)

ECON

- ECON-VI/026 - A European strategy for industry: the role and perspective of regional and local authorities - rapporteur Heinz Lehmann (DE/EPP)
- ECON-VI/027 - The Future of the COSME programme beyond 2020: regional and local perspective - rapporteur Robert Sorin Negoită (RO/PES)
- ECON-VI/028 - Proposal for a European Defence Fund - rapporteur Dainis Turlais (LV/ALDE)
- ECON-VI/029 - Trade Package - rapporteur Micaela Fanelli (IT/PES)
- ECON-VI/030 - The Public procurement package - rapporteur Adrian Ovidiu Teban (RO/EPP)
- ECON-VI/031 - The amendment of the Structural Reform Support Programme and new budgetary instruments for the euro area - rapporteur Olga Zrihen (BE/PES)
- ECON-VI/032 - Reform proposals for the economic and monetary union (December 2017) - rapporteur Christophe ROUILLON (FR/PES)
- ECON-VI/033 - Fair Taxation Package - rapporteur Paul Lindquist (SE/EPP)
- ECON-VI/034 - Financing Sustainable Growth - rapporteur Tilo Gundlack (DE/PES)
- ECON-VI/035 - Taxation of the digital economy - rapporteur Jean-Luc Vanraes (BE/ALDE)
- ECON-VI/036 - European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) - rapporteur Ximo Puig I Ferrer (ES/PES)
- ECON-VI/037 - EU reform and stabilization support - rapporteur Olga Zrihen (BE/PES)
- ECON-VI/038 - The Single Market Programme - rapporteur Deirdre Forde (IE/EPP)
- ECON-VI/039 - The InvestEU Programme - rapporteur Konstantinos Agorastos (GR/EPP)

ENVE

- ENVE-VI/025 - Promoting coexistence with conflict species within the framework of the EU Nature Directives - rapporteur Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/026 - Rules for the internal market in natural gas - rapporteur Mauro D'ATTIS (IT/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/028 - Quality of water intended for human consumption - rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/029 - Communication on a European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy - rapporteur André Van De Nadort (NL/PES)
- ENVE-VI/030 - Climate governance after 2020: a European and global perspective – a contribution to the UNFCCC COP24 - rapporteur Andrew Varah Cooper (GB/EA)
- ENVE-VI/031 - The contribution of EU cities and regions to the CBD COP14 and the post-2020 EU Biodiversity Strategy - rapporteur Roby Biwer (LU/PES)
- ENVE-VI/032 - Models of local energy ownership and the role of local energy communities in energy transition in Europe - rapporteur Mariana Gâju (RO/PES)
- ENVE-VI/033 - Proposal for a single-use plastics directive - rapporteur Sirpa Hertell (FI/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/034 - Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for water reuse - rapporteur Oldřich Vlasák (CZ/ECR)
- ENVE-VI/035 - Proposal for a Regulation establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 - rapporteur Marco Dus (IT/PES)
- ENVE-VI/036 - The space programme of the Union and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme - rapporteur Andres Jaadla (EE/ALDE)

NAT

- NAT-VI/023 - Initiative for the sustainable development of the blue economy in the western Mediterranean - rapporteur Samuel Azzopardi (MT/EPP)
- NAT-VI/026 - Local and regional incentives to promote healthy and sustainable diets - rapporteur Nikolaos Chiotakis (GR/EPP)
- NAT-VI/027 - Mid-term review of the EU Forest Strategy - rapporteur Ossi Martikainen (FI/ALDE)
- NAT-VI/028 - The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) beyond 2020 – Investing in Europe's Coastal Communities- rapporteur Alberto Nuñez Feijoo (ES/EPP)
- NAT-VI/029 - Review of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism - rapporteur Adam Banaszak (PL/ECR)
- NAT-VI/030 - Unfair trading practices in the food supply chain - rapporteur Jacques Blanc (FR/EPP)
- NAT-VI/031 - Risk assessment in the food chain - rapporteur Miloslav Repaský (SK/EA)
- NAT-VI/032 - New deal for Consumers - rapporteur Samuel Azzopardi (MT/EPP)
- NAT-VI/034 - Reform of the CAP - rapporteur Guillaume Cros (FR/PES)
- NAT-VI/035 - The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund - rapporteur Nathalie Sarrabezolles (FR/PES)

SEDEC

- SEDEC-VI/031- Digital Single Market: Mid-term review - rapporteur Alin-Adrian Nica (RO/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/032 - Strengthening Innovation in Europe's Regions: Strategies for resilient, inclusive and sustainable growth - rapporteur Mikel Irujo Amezaga (ES/EA)
- SEDEC-VI/033 - Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture - rapporteur Tanya Hristova (BG/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/034 - Boosting broadband connectivity in Europe - rapporteur Mart Vörklaev (EE/ALDE)
- SEDEC-VI/035 - Cultural Heritage as a strategic resource for more cohesive and sustainable regions in the EU - rapporteur Babette Winter (DE/PES)
- SEDEC-VI/036 - Transparent and predictable working conditions in the European Union- rapporteur Isolde Ries (DE/PES)
- SEDEC-VI/037 - Mainstreaming sport into the EU agenda post-2020 - rapporteur Roberto Pella (IT/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/038 - A European Labour Authority - rapporteur Doris Kampus (AT/PES)
- SEDEC-VI/039 - Digital Education Action Plan - rapporteur Domenico Gambacorta (IT/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/041 - Horizon Europe: the Framework Programme 9 for Research and Innovation - rapporteur Christophe Clergeau (FR/PES)
- SEDEC-VI/042 - European Solidarity Corps and the new EU youth strategy - rapporteur Matteo Luigi Bianchi (IT/ECR)
- SEDEC-VI/044 - Digital Europe programme (2021-2027) - rapporteur Markku Markkula (FI/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/045 - Building a stronger Europe: the role of youth, education and culture policies - rapporteur Gillian Ford (GB/EA)

4.3 Annex 3: Meetings in 2018 in figures

Meeting	2018
Number of MEPs in commission meetings	67
Number of CoR rapporteurs participating in EP committee meetings	13
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR and EP rapporteurs	51
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and EC	83
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and Permanent Representations on legislative dossiers	21
Participation of the CoR in events of the EU Presidency	30

4.4 Annex 4: References of the 6 Committee Commissions' contributions to the Impact Report 2018

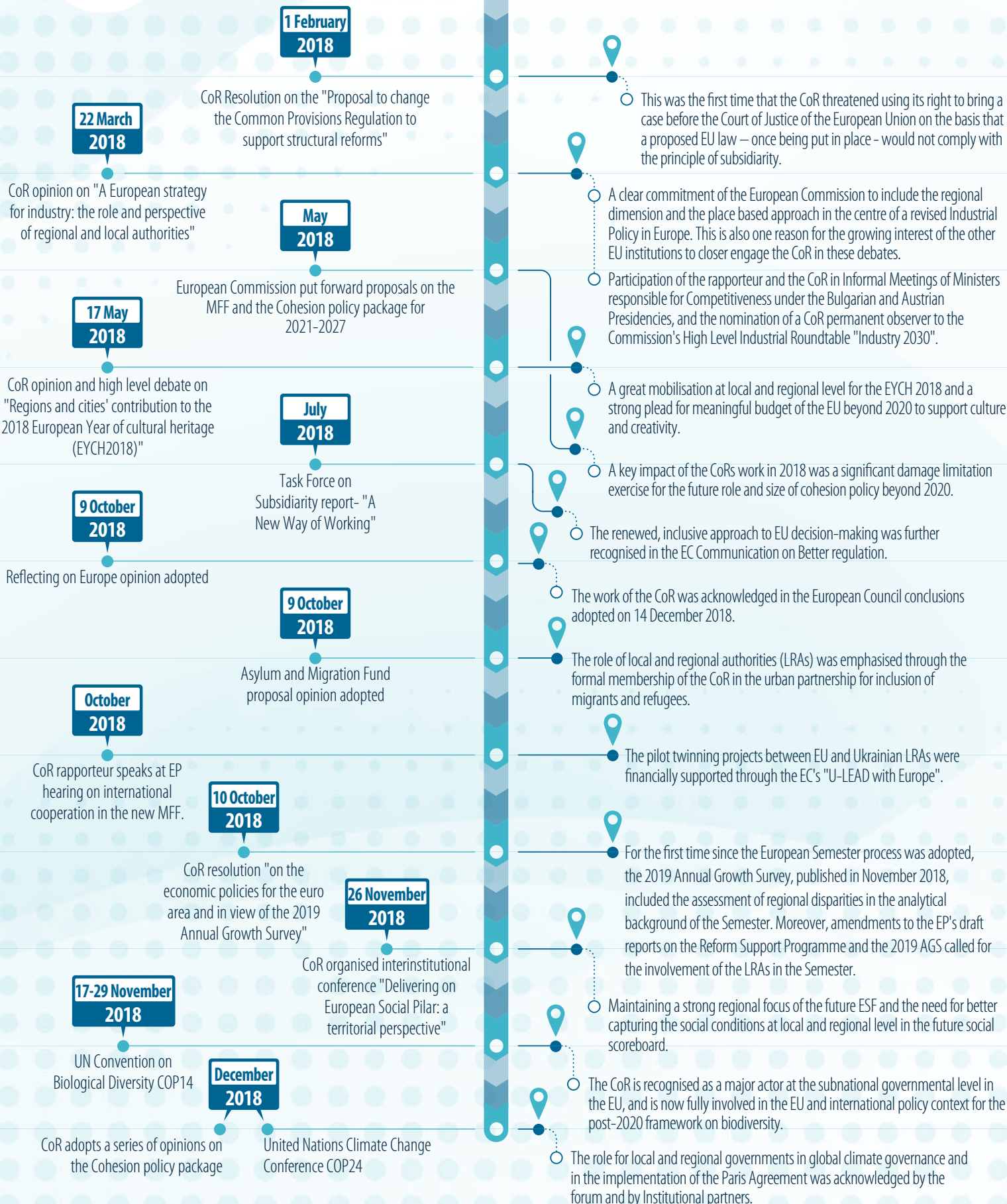
Commission	Presentation of the document (meeting date)	Reference number of the document
CIVEX	25 January 2019	COR-2018-06285-00-00-TCD-TRA
COTER	26 March 2019	COR-2018-06426-00-01-TCD-TRA
ECON	14 February 2019	COR-2019-00230-00-00-TCD-TRA
ENVE	28 January 2019	COR-2018-05750-00-01-TCD-TRA
NAT	29 January 2019	COR-2018-05556-00-02-TCD-TRA
SEDEC	18 February 2019	COR-2018-06431-00-00-TCD-TRA

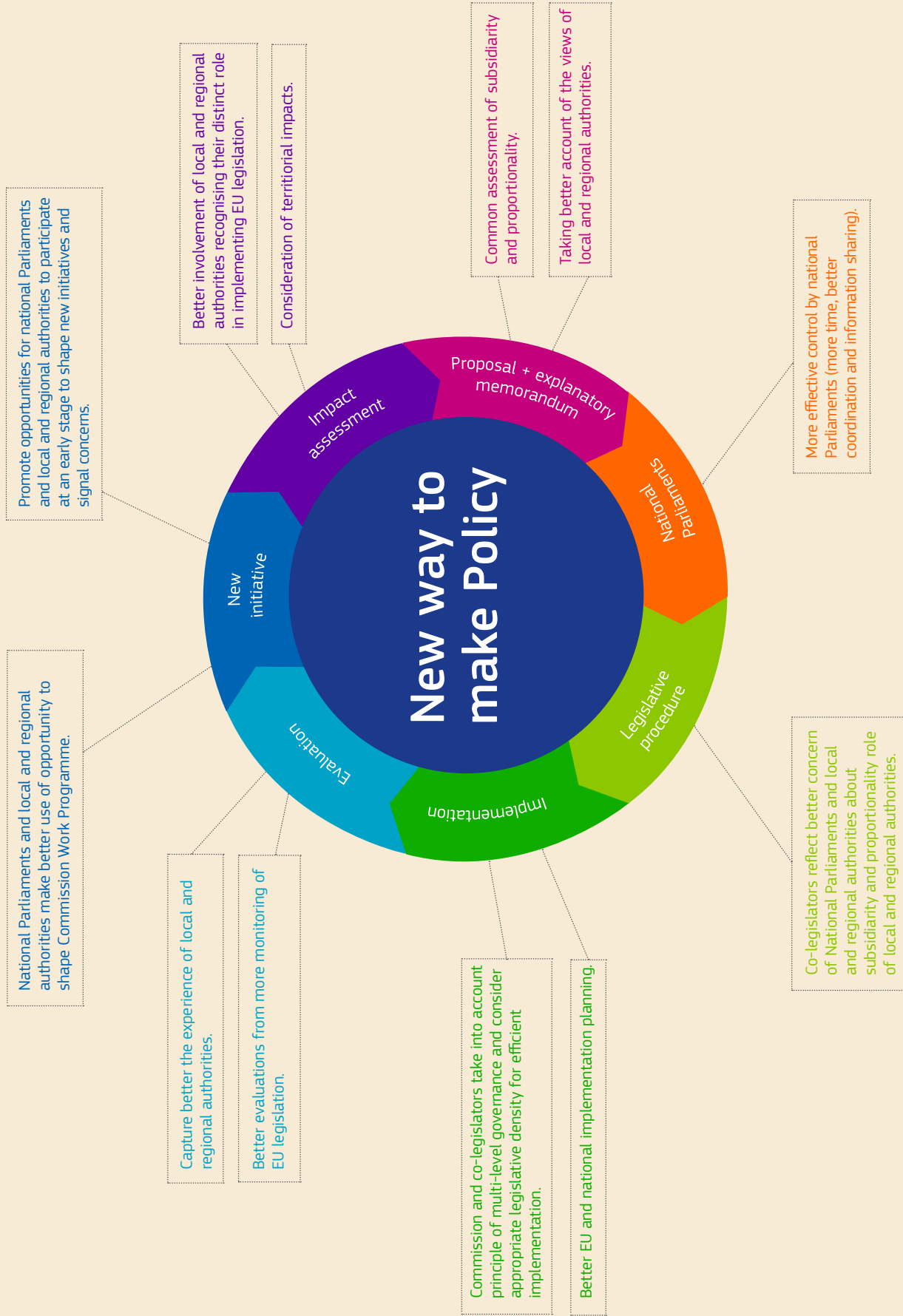
Overview of the main achievements



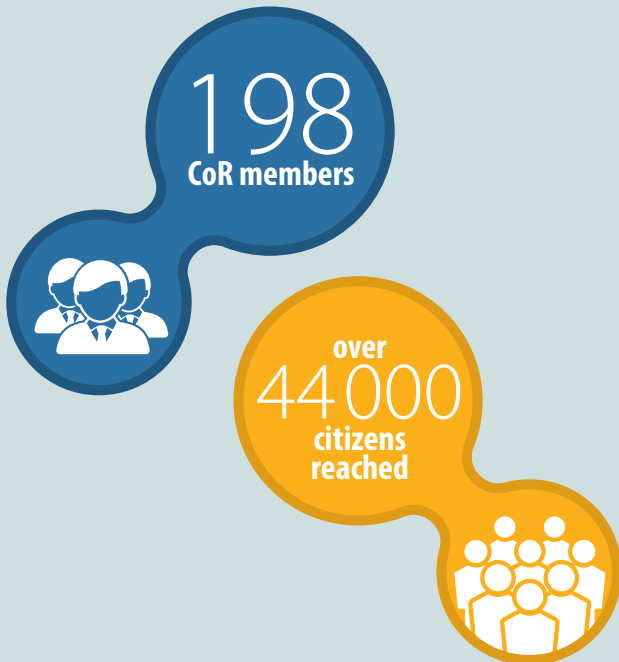
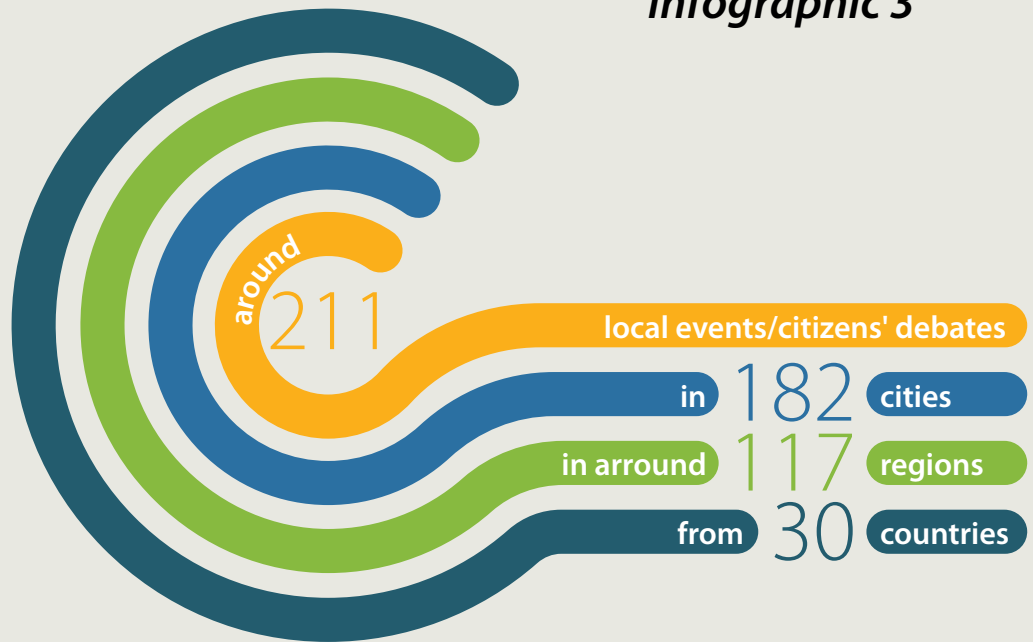
European Committee of the Regions

PROCESS IMPACT





Local events key figures



Cooperation with EU institutions

48

European Direct Information Centers (EDICs)

21

European Commission Representations

3

EU Commissioners as speakers in local events: *Pierre Moscovici, Corina Crețu and Elżbieta Bieńkowska*

The President of the European Commission, *Jean-Claude Juncker*

15

Members of European Parliament as speakers in local events





European Committee of the Regions

Created in 1994, after the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of 350 regional and local representatives from all 28 Member States, representing over 507 million Europeans. Its mission is to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. It can appeal to the Court of Justice of the European Union if its rights are infringed or it believes that EU law infringes the subsidiarity principle or fails to respect regional or local powers.

Edited by the Directorate for Communication of the European Committee of the Regions

Brussels, June 2019

Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 101 | 1040 Bruxelles/Brussel | BELGIQUE/BELGIË
Tel. +32 22822211 | e-mail: PublicationsCdR@cor.europa.eu | www.cor.europa.eu
 @EU_CoR |  /european.committee.of.the.regions |  /european-committee-of-the-regions

