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of the Regions**

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REGIONS**

- 25 JANUARY 2022 -

ITEM 8 B

REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF COR OPINIONS

Submitted by the Secretary General

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY	
Bureau meeting: 209	Date: 25/01/2022
Item 8 b Report on the impact of CoR opinions	
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Short description: This main report is the attachment to the <i>Report on the impact of the CoR: executive summary</i> document. The Annual Impact Report 2021 provides a thematic overview of the European Committee of the Regions' (CoR) work and main achievements within the European decision-making process. This analysis is based on the major achievements in key themes identified and debated by each commission.	
The Bureau is invited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take stock of the report on the impact of CoR opinions. 	
Remarks: N/A	

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1. Introduction

As a consultative body to the European institutions the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) represents the European Union's local and regional authorities in the EU decision-making process. The impact of the CoR largely relies on the ability of the Committee and its members to produce impact. This impact is to be assessed in terms of achievements in the EU legislative process (impact on preparatory or final legal texts), visibility for local and regional authorities in the EU's agenda setting or concrete changes in the EU's working methods or tangibly in the day-to-day lives of citizens through EU legislation or EU actions promoted or initiated by the CoR.

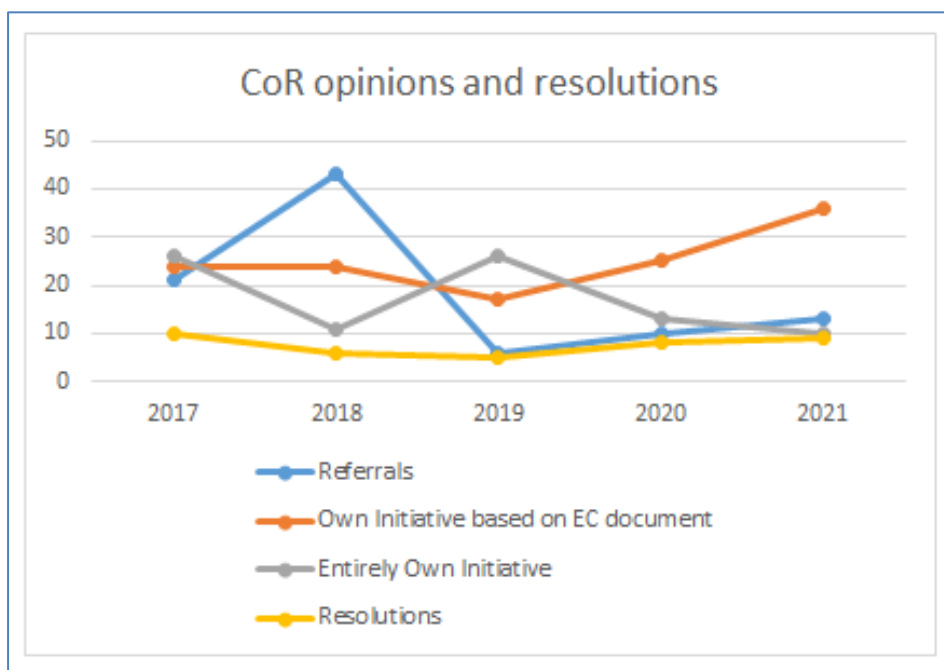
Having a will to showcase its institutional impact at early stage of the following year, in 2021 the CoR decided to advance the annual report's preparation which implies that, exceptionally, the 2021 report covers impact achieved through 10 months of the year with a cut-off date at the end of October 2021. Next year's report will consequently cover the period from November 2021 to October 2022.

The newly developed system of **key performance indicators** shows that in 2021 the CoR adopted in total 9 resolutions and 60 opinions. This represents a 27% increase of our consultative output compared to 2020.

Besides this quantitative assessment, the key performance indicators also give an overview of the key output and the key outcomes of the consultative works:

Opinions – Legal bases					
	Referrals	Own-Initiative based on EC document	Entirely Own-Initiative	Resolutions	Total
2017	21	24	26	10	81
2018	43	24	11	6	84
2019	6	17	27	5	55
2020	10	25	13	8	56
2021	13	36	11	9	69

The table shows that that the number of **referrals based on EC documents** (13) only slightly increased compared to 2020 and is well below the number in 2018, when the European Commission presented its



legislative package for the Multiannual Framework with more than 30 legislative acts. Instead, the CoR focused very much on **36 Own-Initiative opinions** (mainly based on EC documents) to contribute to the implementation and the further development of EU policies and programmes. The CoR also

continued to reduce the number of entirely own-initiative reports, which reflects the desire of the consultative works to focus on contributing to ongoing EU policy debates. The relatively high number of own-initiative opinions based on EC documents shows that the CoR's mandatory consultation rights should be extended by the next Treaty revision in order to better reflect the reality of existing legal and executive responsibilities at regional and local level in Europe.

Another important indicator for the CoR is linked to its ability to provide feedback on territorial impacts of EU regulation and about feedback from the local level about the implementation of EU rules and programmes. That is why the number of **Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) and Regional Hubs (RegHub) reports** provides a useful performance indicator for the CoR. This also counts for the **overall timeliness of our CoR opinions**. The indicators show that all CoR opinions were adopted before key decisions on legislative files were taken by the EU institutions:

	Key output indicators of the consultative works		
	Number of TIA opinions	Number of RegHub Reports	Timeliness of CoR opinion (adopted before political agreements achieved)
2018	2	N/A ¹	100%
2019	4	3	100%
2020	2	3	100%
2021	3	4	100%

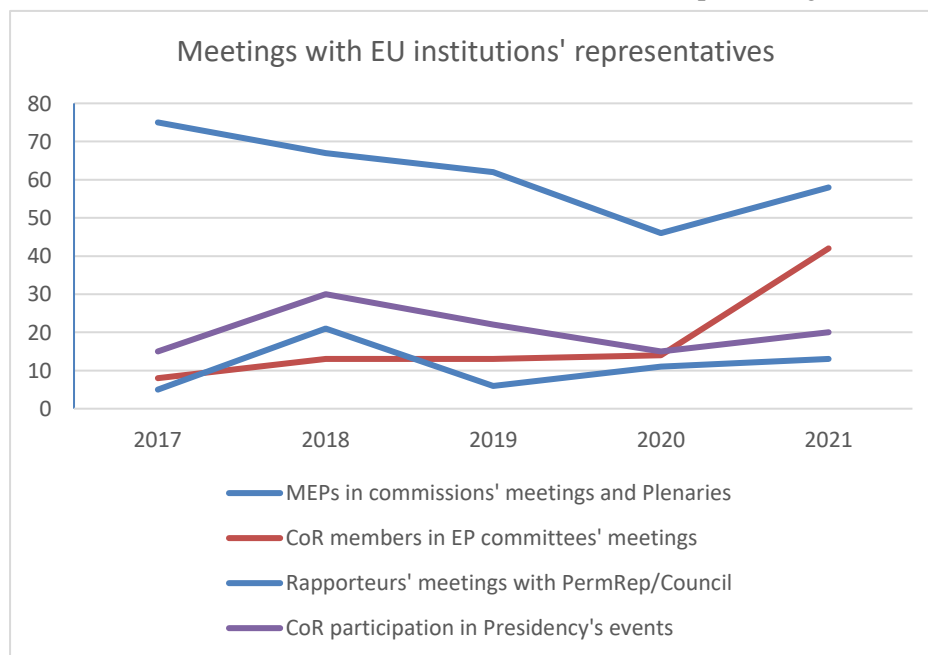
It is also important, however, how the CoR's views and opinions are being presented to the other EU institutions and how CoR rapporteurs interact – before and after the adoption of their opinion – with the representatives of the legislative institutions. Commission chairs, presidents of political groups and the

¹ The RegHub consultations started in 2019.

President and the First-Vice-President also participate in these inter-institutional relations, which is why meetings and personal contact with EU institutions during the course of the year are essential outcome indicators for our work. The following table shows that even though personal contacts with EU institutions dropped as a consequence of the COVID-19 measures, which did not allow personal meetings, the overall interaction with the EU institutions remained steady or even increased.

Meetings with EU institutions' representatives					
	MEPs in CoR commissions' meetings and plenaries	CoR members in EP committees' meetings	Rapporteurs' meetings with PermRep/Council	CoR participation in Presidency's events	Total
2017	75	8	5	15	103
2018	67	13	21	30	131
2019	62	13	6	22	103
2020	46	14	11	15	86
2021	58	42	13	20	133

It should also be noted that in 2021 three Heads of State representing the EU Presidencies (current and



incoming) took part in the plenary sessions.

All in all, the output and outcome indicators clearly show that the CoR has maintained its crucial role as the voice of the local and regional level at EU level.

This report is structured in accordance with the

CoR political priorities for the 2020-2025 mandate. In doing so, it indicates progress made with regard to:

- Bringing Europe closer to its people
- Building resilient local and regional communities and
- Promoting cohesion as an overall value of the EU

All in all, the following **10 key impacts of the CoR in 2021** can be summarised in terms of the three key priorities of the CoR:

Bringing Europe closer to its people

- Significantly extending **the participation of local and regional politicians in the Conference on the Future of Europe** from the initial 4 to 30 representatives;
- Increasing the outreach to the one million elected regional and local politicians by successfully launching the **CoR Regional and Local EU Councillors Initiative** (+/- 1000 councillors in the first months) and linking it to the European Parliament's initiative Building Europe with Local Entities;
- The publication of the **second edition of the Barometer Report on the local and regional level** with an unprecedented outreach;
- Successfully **launching the RegHub 2.0 network** as part of the Fit for Future Platform for better regulation and playing a central role in the platform by **leading on three of the nine dossiers of the platform**;
- Including the partnership principle in the implementation of the **Brexit Adjustment Reserve**.

Building resilient local and regional communities

- Strengthening the role of the local and regional level in the implementation of the **National Recovery Plans** through regular cooperation with the RRF working group in the European Parliament and a clear commitment given by the European Commission (EC) to include the territorial dimension in the future RFF Scoreboard;
- Establishing a number of strategic cooperations in **implementing the Green Deal** such as the Carbon Zero network, the launch of the Trees for Life campaign and others;
- Establishing a key role of the CoR in the design and implementation of the **Horizon Missions** by encouraging a close alignment of the EUR 1.5 billion provided for the missions to be linked with the EUR 30 billion foreseen under the structural funds for implementing regional innovation strategies.

Promoting cohesion as an overall value of the EU

- Maintaining a strong **cohesion policy** based on partnership and multi-level governance and profiling the role of cohesion as a fundamental value of the EU;
- Ensuring the inclusion of a **Rural Pact** in the proposals of the European Commission for a long-term vision for rural areas in Europe;
- **Ensuring a EUR 300 million investment by the Digital Europe programme** for the financing of **European Digital Innovation Hubs** in each EU region and playing an active role in the **New European Bauhaus Initiative** at the very early stage in collaboration with the Joint Research Centre and the European Parliament.

Despite the particularly difficult context due to the pandemic, the CoR also continues to reinforce its strategic planning and cross-commission collaboration. The CoR Conference of Presidents (CoP) adopted strategic guidance in view of bringing the different activities of the CoR together in an Annual Strategic Planning Cycle (ASPC, see under point 2) in order to ensure consistency and maximise impact. A substantial number of the proposals by the **CoR impact oversight coordinator**, in the person of the chair of the NAT commission, who presented a report to the CoP in December 2020, were successfully implemented in 2021, such as the intensified collaboration between CoR commissions, the development of a new follow-up of opinions module in Kyklos and the gathering of evidence for the involvement in

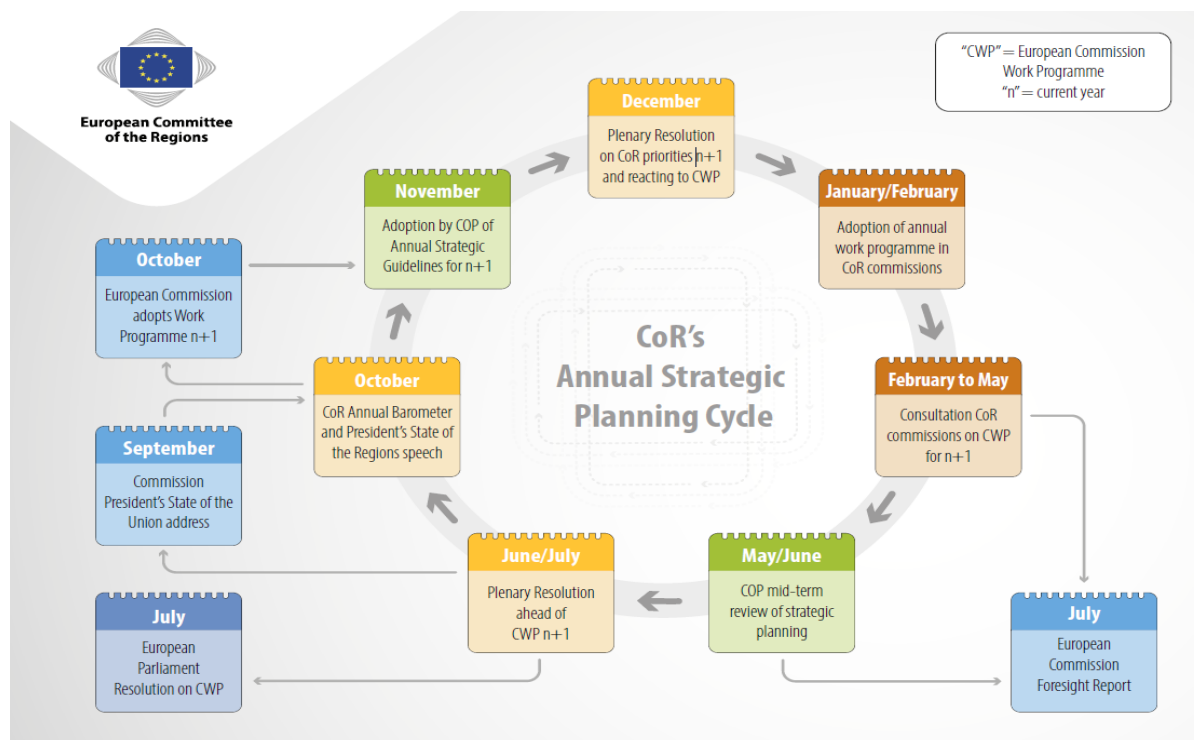
the Fit4Future Platform. As part of the ASPC a joint session of the CoP and the CoR commission chairs at the end of November confirmed the progress on improving the CoR's impact and adopted strategic guidelines for 2022.

On the administrative level, the **Going for Impact!** strategy launched by the Secretary General in 2020 led to a number of simplifications that are intended to increase the impact of the CoR's political work, enhance its outreach and set a standard of administrative good practice and support for members.

In the **Going for Impact!** exercise, the Secretary General wanted to involve the whole CoR, both political and administrative levels, to deploy all efforts towards the administrative reform agenda. Despite the difficult circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic the implementation of the plan is on track and has already produced a tangible impact in the modernisation of the CoR administration. Fine examples are the nine task forces established by the Secretary General. They work in a cross-service manner and underpin political flagship initiatives like the CoR's COVID-19 action plan, the CoR's input into the Green Deal or to the CoFoE. They also support the Secretary General's agenda of modernising the administration, for example the task forces on financial management, simplification or digitisation/electronic workflows.

2. The CoR's Annual Strategic Planning Cycle

Based on the new approach to strategic planning agreed by the CoP in December 2020, the CoR has developed and reinforced its ASPC in 2021. This planning cycle seeks to improve the coherence and impact of the CoR's political work in implementing the overarching **priorities** adopted by the CoR for its **2020-2025 term of office**. Within these priorities, the CoR seeks to influence the political and institutional agendas of the other European institutions and reacts to their proposed initiatives.



This impact-focused strategy enables the CoR to react to key annual milestones of the other EU institutions and the publication of the **EC Work Programme** in October.

Based on the cooperation agreement with the EC, each year the CoR adopts two **resolutions on the European Commission Work Programme**: one in June/July with a view to making suggestions on the Work Programme for the following year, and another one at the end of the year reacting to the Work Programme as published in October and defining the CoR's own political priorities for the next twelve months. These resolutions are based on input from the **CoR's six thematic commissions** and on contributions from the consultation of regional parliaments and assemblies with legislative powers, in cooperation with the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE). The CoR's annual strategic planning, under the political guidance of the **Conference of Presidents**, is also implemented through a number of flagship initiatives for each year, and since 2020 also builds on the CoR's **Local and Regional Barometer**.

In addition to the **medium-term** dimension of the Annual Strategic Planning Cycle, which focuses on the CoR's five-year priorities, it also seeks in the **longer-term** to enhance the Committee's capacity for **Strategic Foresight**, both internally and in the context of the ongoing inter-institutional work on

Foresight, including through the CoR's cooperation in the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) network.

The dedicated administrative Task Force 1 (Strategic Planning) ensures effective information flow and coordination across all services involved.

3. **Impact Report presented by the Committee's three political priorities for the 2020-2025 mandate**

3.1 **Bringing Europe closer to its people**

3.1.1 **EU Annual Regional and Local Barometer**

Main impact:

- The key facts and figures of the Barometer were included in many deliverables such as: (i) the "early Barometer" document sent to the EC; (ii) the speech of the CoR president on the state of the regions and cities and (iii) in the eponymous CoR resolution;
- Particularly high media coverage and stakeholder interest in the Barometer Report: the CoR effectively conveyed the specific needs of local and regional authorities to a very broad and diverse audience.

The focus of the first edition of the Barometer in 2020 was on the effects of the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic, which put Europe's regional and local authorities on the frontline in tackling an unprecedented health crisis. Since then, through its political debates and legislative work, the CoR has turned to the longer-term challenges of building resilient communities. The 2021 edition of the [EU Annual Regional and Local Barometer](#) reflected the central importance of recovery but also covered a range of issues relevant to the local level (such as employment, public finances, the digital transition, climate, Brexit, migration or democracy). The process resulted in the production of a unique and high-quality document analysing facts and figures – difficult to obtain, fresh and relevant – at local and regional level and providing targeted recommendations to EU Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs), Member States and EU institutions.

To deliver a comprehensive assessment of the state of play in EU regions, cities and villages in 2021, the Barometer drew on more than 100 different reports and [studies](#) – some of which were commissioned by the CoR specifically for the Barometer – and in close collaboration with partner organisations such as the JRC, ESPON or the OECD. It represents a collaborative effort involving the expertise of all the Committee's commission secretariats and Directorate D.

The preliminary findings, facts and figures from the Barometer Report were shared with the European Commission in early June to feed into the [EC 2022 Work Programme](#) and the [EC President's State of the Union speech](#). However the speech of the EC President did not refer to the local and regional level.

Media and stakeholder interest were particularly high and confirmed the need for a more granular analysis of the state of Europe and of the impact of recovery measures. For instance, the Barometer page was viewed about 1800 times and social media generated the same – significant – amount of engagement as last year, which shows continued media and stakeholder interest. Live streaming and the EBS's "video on demand" figures were good (with 3302 views of the President's presentation of the Barometer Report) and the report generated television coverage by national and regional channels (e.g. Italy (RAI), Croatia (HRT, TV N1), Latvia (national TV), Portugal (RTP), Romania (TVR), Slovenia (RTV Slo) and France (Euradio, France Inter)). In addition, the Barometer Report and the speech of the

CoR president at the plenary in October 2021 helped convince the European institutions to take the territorial dimension into account in their policies to support the EU's recovery and resilience.

Last but not least, CoR members showed a genuine interest in the Barometer Report, with a very good engagement rate (35% open rate), which demonstrates the relevance and added value of this unique initiative, both in the CoR and externally.

3.1.2 Democracy and citizen participation

Main impact:

- Ensuring an increased number of **regional and local elected representatives in the plenary of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE)**: from the initial proposal (4) to the current 18 CoR members + 12 regional and local elected representatives designated by the CoR (in total 30);
- Succeeding in setting up a **High-Level Group on European Democracy**, chaired by the first President of the European Council and former Prime Minister of Belgium, Herman Van Rompuy;
- **Gaining the support of the European Parliament** in its resolution on Citizens' dialogues and Citizen participation in EU decision-making with some proposals consistent with the key CoR recommendations;
- Getting the support of the EP AFCO chair Antonio Tajani and the EC VP Dubravka Šuica on setting up the **Network of Regional and Local EU Councillors** and its synergy with the EC/EP pilot project BELE – Building Europe with local representatives. Launching the Network successfully in the second half of 2021 with +/- 1000 regional and local politicians having already joined the initiative;
- Creating the **Mayor Paweł Adamowicz Award**.

The objective of strengthening democracy and citizen participation is a multifaceted and broad policy objective that the CoR addresses from different perspectives:

- the institutional perspective, focused on the functioning of EU institutions and their interplay with local and regional ones;
- the link between democracy, EU values, the rule of law and fundamental rights, including "new" challenges to the resilience of democracy, such as disinformation;
- ways to strengthen and complement representative democracy with participatory and deliberative tools, supporting and scaling up the practices implemented at local and regional level.

After a complex preparation and some delay due to the pandemic crisis, the CoFoE kicked off in 2021. The Conference is a timely opportunity to discuss the fitness of the EU institutional framework and its capacity to deliver policies that respond to societal challenges and citizens' expectations; it is also an important opportunity for the CoR to put forward proposals aiming to strengthen European multi-level governance and the LRAs' and the CoR's role in the EU institutional framework. Therefore, Conference-related activities partly catalysed the CoR's work on democracy and citizen participation.

The CoR's work on democracy is built around two main pillars:

- **CoFoE-related activities** (which should be read as overarching and including all the sub-topics mentioned earlier) such as support for the CoR delegation with the preparation of relevant material, including through the participation in the CoFoE CoR secretariat and TF4; input into CoR positioning through thematic debates in the CIVEX commission (5), in plenary and through the organisation of dedicated events; cooperation with Directorate D on specific initiatives, such as the Network of EU Councillors and the partnership with the Bertelsmann Foundation; cooperation with LRA EU associations and with relevant institutional stakeholders (e.g. JRC);
- **Local and regional dimension of the European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP)** by adopting the CoR opinion on the EDAP² in which a holistic and integrated approach to democracy was developed (including the fight against disinformation, strengthening democratic resilience and citizen empowerment).

In the area of the CoFoE, the **increased number of regional and local elected representatives** in the **Plenary of the CoFoE** should be stressed as outcomes: from the initial proposal (4) to the current 18 CoR members + 12 regional and local elected representatives designated by the CoR (total 30), as well as the **alliance building with EU LRA associations** in the designation of the 12 additional delegates in the plenary of the CoFoE and in organising events contributing to the CoFoE (29 June: *The place of regions in the European Union architecture*, co-organised with CALRE; 14 October: *Cities fostering democracy in the European Union*, co-organised with Eurocities and CEMR). Last but not least, the **[High-Level Group on European Democracy \(HLG\)](#)**, chaired by the President Emeritus of the European Council and former Prime Minister of Belgium, Herman Van Rompuy, was set up. It is an independent advisory body whose mission is to support the CoR's political and institutional role by providing strategic political analysis and ideas on how to improve European democracy and reinforce the impact and influence of local and regional authorities and the CoR in the European process. CoR members held several exchanges with president Van Rompuy and the members of the High-Level Group during plenary and CoR commission meetings throughout 2021, and a high-level conference on the state of European Democracy and Democracy in the EU took place on 3 December with representatives of various components of the CoFoE. Its recommendations are expected during the month of December as input to the CoR and its delegates in the CoFoE.

Regarding **democracy and citizen participation**, on 7 July 2021 the European Parliament adopted a resolution on Citizens' dialogues and Citizens' participation in EU decision-making³, which was presented by the rapporteur to CIVEX members on 30 March 2021. The resolution acknowledges and welcomes the CoR opinion *Local and regional authorities in the permanent dialogue with citizens*⁴ and puts forward some proposals consistent with the key messages of the CoR opinion, including the discussion, in the framework of the CoFoE, on possible mechanisms for the active participation of citizens in the consultation process in order to influence the annual Work Programme of the EC and the State of the Union address and sketches a possible structured mechanism to develop regularly on an annual basis.

² CIVEX-VII/008 – European democracy action plan – rapporteur Aleksandra Dulkiewicz (PL/EPP) – COR-2021-01278-00-02-AC-TRA

³ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0345_EN.html

⁴ CIVEX-VII/001 – Local and regional authorities in the permanent dialogue with citizens – rapporteur Declan McDonnell (IE/EA) – COR-2019-04989-00-00-AC-TRA

In addition to the political work of the CoR during its plenary sessions and with the bodies of the CoFoE, the following communication and outreach measures were implemented:

- [120+ events](#) – local, cross-border and transnational citizens' dialogues – involving 7000+ citizens and stakeholders were or will be held and the ideas and recommendations from these were or will be uploaded to the Conference platform;
- among these, some 50 regions and cities were involved in a [special project](#), which included capacity building for deliberative citizens' involvement in cooperation with the Bertelsmann Foundation and several Europe Direct Centres;
- among the CoR events, there were also a number high-level conferences including an online citizens' dialogue in the town hall of Strasbourg (9 May 2021), a conference with representatives from the EU and regional parliaments and governments on the future role of regions in the EU (29 June 2021) and a conference with mayors on 14 October 2021 on [urban perspectives on the Conference on the Future of Europe](#);
- the two annual flagship events in which the CoR is involved – the European Week of Regions and Cities (11-14 October) and the European Conference on Public Communication (8-9 November) – both prominently addressed the issue of citizen participation and the Conference on the Future of Europe;
- the first-ever Flash Eurobarometer [survey representing the 1.17 million politicians elected at local and regional level in EU27](#) on their views on the future of Europe was published on 12 October 2021.

Finally, the [Network of EU Councillors](#) was launched in the CIVEX meeting on 30 March 2021 and its synergy with the EC/EP pilot project BELE – Building Europe with local representatives was [endorsed by the EP AFCO chair Antonio Tajani and by EC VP Dubravka Šuica](#).

The defence of democratic principles, European values and the promotion of fundamental rights through LRAs found a tangible form with the creation of the [Mayor Paweł Adamowicz Award](#) to honour those who fight for freedom and solidarity and against intolerance, oppression and xenophobia by the CoR, together with the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN) and the city of Gdańsk.

3.1.3 Sustainable transport

Main impact:

- Eight policy recommendations of the CoR opinion⁵ on the EC document [Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy](#) have been tabled by MEPs in the TRAN committee as amendments;
- During the preparation of the new [Urban Mobility Framework](#), a dedicated political session with the CoR was held in June 2021 where CoR members were able to present the key aspects to achieve sustainable urban mobility at local level;
- The CoR managed to adapt the selection criteria for the thematic partnerships in the Urban Agenda for the EU to allow smaller cities to participate on a more equal footing;

⁵ COTER-VII/011 – Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – rapporteur Robert Van Asten (NL/RE) – COR-2021-00497-00-00-AC-TRA

- The Connecting Europe Express, a train to promote sustainable rail travel, was running from 2 September to 7 October 2021 with CoR members engaged at local stops.

Besides the eight policy recommendations of the CoR opinion⁶ on the EC document [Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy](#) to be tabled as amendments to the draft EP report, numerous other amendments highlight that the sustainable mobility transition is taking place at regional and local level and underline other key CoR positions like the need to consider mountainous, outermost and island regions in the shift towards sustainable mobility. In addition, one amendment suggests including "having regard to the opinion of the CoR" in the introduction to the EP report.

The EC's [roadmap](#) to the revision of the Urban Mobility Framework explicitly mentioned the CoR as a key partner to achieve maximum impact of the new Urban Mobility Framework which aims to make urban transport more sustainable. A joint workshop was held in June 2021 with a dedicated political session with CoR members and other local and regional politicians.

Within the framework of urban policies, the CoR adopted an opinion⁷ on the renewal of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities in view of the adoption of a renewed Leipzig Charter and the following revision of the Urban Agenda for the EU. This latest revision was adopted by the informal Council of Ministers on urban matters on 27 November 2021 in Ljubljana. The CoR was expressly mentioned in the new practical agreement, playing a key role in the governance and providing input and support to the further development and implementation of the urban partnerships.

As part of the European Year of Rail 2021, the [Connecting Europe Express](#) travelled through almost all EU Member States to raise awareness of the benefits of rail and the challenges the EU still needs to overcome, also putting a focus on the importance of sustainable infrastructure planning and financing. Local events at the various stops have been organised with the CoR and its members, raising awareness of the need for connectivity as the backbone of cohesion.

The CoR followed up on its opinion on *the Future of regional airports*⁸ (which stressed their role in connectivity and regional development especially for remote regions, while calling for support in their green transition).

3.1.4 EU-UK trade relations at the subnational level

⁶ COTER-VII/011 – Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – rapporteur Robert Van Asten (NL/RE) – COR-2021-00497-00-00-AC-TRA

⁷ COTER-VII/001 – The renewal of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities – rapporteur Juan Espadas Cejas (ES/PES) – COR-2019-04829-00-01-AC-TRA

⁸ COTER-VII/010 – The future of regional airports – challenges and opportunities – rapporteur Władysław Ortyl (PL/ECR) – COR-2021-00471-00-00-AC-TRA

Main impact:

A number of issues raised by the CoR were reflected in the agreement on the Brexit Adjustment Reserve⁹ (BAR) on 6 October 2021:

- The EC is required to report back to the CoR on the effectiveness of the BAR (before it was only to the EP and the Council);
- Regions, and specifically regional coastal communities, are much more implicated in the implementation of the BAR than was originally proposed by the EC.

The Brexit Adjustment Reserve (BAR) regulation aims to provide support to alleviate the negative consequences of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU in the different Member States, regions and sectors, in particular those most affected by the withdrawal, and to mitigate the negative impact on economic, social and territorial cohesion.

In general, the BAR was welcomed by the CoR as a useful tool to mitigate the negative economic effects of Brexit as well as an instrument to display solidarity between Member States. However, the CoR argued that the EUR 5 billion available in the BAR should be increased to EUR 6 billion and that the way the Reserve is to be allocated between the Member States had to be revised, as the model for allocation proposed by the European Commission included the financial sector but excluded tourism when measuring how much trade a Member State has with the UK. The European Commission's proposal for compensation for loss of access to UK fishing waters was also questioned by the CoR as it did not only consider how much a Member State loses in terms of fishing in UK waters but how much that compares to the whole catch of fish of that Member State. This means that fishermen from Belgium and the Netherlands would be eligible for much more support than those from France for example, as fishermen from France also fish in the Mediterranean Sea.

The legislators formally agreed on the BAR on 6 October 2021 and a number of issues raised by the CoR were reflected in the agreement. The allocation of the BAR will now be based on the value of the fish caught in the UK exclusive economic zone (not relative to fishing in the Mediterranean Sea, hence in line with the CoR proposal), the share of trade with the UK (excluding the financial sector but including tourism, as proposed by the CoR) and the population of the maritime border regions with the UK (also in line with the CoR proposal).

The budget is to be increased from EUR 5 billion to EUR 5.5 billion and the European Commission is also required to report back to the CoR on the effectiveness of the BAR. Moreover, regions, and specifically regional coastal communities, are much more implicated in the implementation of the BAR than was originally proposed by the European Commission. This outcome was facilitated by the quality of the inter-institutional dialogue with the EP as a CoR rapporteur was invited at committee level in the European Parliament and The European Parliament's rapporteur participated both in the ECON commission meeting and the plenary session where the BAR was discussed and adopted.

⁹ ECON-VII/013 – Proposal for a Regulation establishing a Brexit Adjustment Reserve – rapporteur-general Loïg Chesnais-Girard (FR/PES)
– COR-2021-00718-00-01-AC-TRA

3.1.5 Fit for Future, better regulation and active subsidiarity

Main impact:

- Active participation of the CoR in the **Fit for Future (F4F) Platform** with three representatives in the Government Group and the **RegHub network** as an expert group of the Platform;
- The EC has considerably increased the use of the subsidiarity assessment grid. The **Fit for 55** package presented on 14 July 2021 included **seven subsidiarity assessment grids**;
- **The European Commission's Annual Report 2020 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and on relations with national parliaments** took up the contribution provided by the CoR almost entirely verbatim.

Regarding the Fit for Future (F4F) Platform and the RegHubs, the participation of **the CoR in the [Fit for Future \(F4F\) Platform](#) with three representatives** in the Government Group and **the [RegHub](#) as an expert group of the Platform** has helped to further strengthen cooperation with the European Commission, increasing the CoR's outreach and building credibility for its role as an effective institutional partner in the implementation of the EU better regulation agenda. This has been illustrated by the reference in the resolution of the German Bundesrat of 8 October 2021 to the Conference on the Future of Europe, which stressed the importance of the CoR's activities in relation to RegHubs and F4F¹⁰. The EC communication on *Better regulation: Joining forces to make better laws* confirmed the highlighted role for local and regional authorities in the EU's legislative review through the three CoR representatives in F4F and the RegHubs, and acknowledged the role and relevance of TIAs as valuable tools for complementing EC *ex ante* impact assessments. The **three F4F opinions** – on cross-border healthcare¹¹, e-procurement¹² and the INSPIRE Directive¹³, drafted by the three CoR representatives in F4F, contributed significantly to the F4F work programme for 2021, consisting of 15 topics/opinions, and support the EU's effort to improve the quality of legislation based on evidence and better impact assessment.

In relation to **active subsidiarity**, the section of the EC's Annual Report 2020 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and on relations with national parliaments¹⁴ dedicated to the CoR took up the contribution provided by the CoR almost entirely verbatim. The chapter on the role of regional parliaments (6) also specifically referred to the CoR's [Subsidiarity Monitoring Network](#), the participation of regional parliaments with legislative powers in the early warning mechanism on subsidiarity ([REGPEX](#)), the RegHub network and the Fit for Future Platform. As requested by the CoR, the EC has considerably increased the use of the subsidiarity assessment grid proposed by the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and "Doing less more efficiently". The **Fit for 55 package** presented on 14 July 2021 included **seven subsidiarity assessment grids**. The [CoR launched the idea](#)

¹⁰See point 12 in <https://www.bundesrat.de/SharedDocs/TO/1009/tagesordnung-1009.html?nn=4732016#top-9>.

¹¹ Opinion on *the Directive on the application of patient rights in cross-border healthcare*, adoption at the F4F plenary session on 25 November 2021. Rapporteur Ulrika Landergren (SE/Renew Europe)

¹² Opinion on *public procurement legislation* (e-procurement aspects), adoption at the F4F plenary session on 25 November 2021. Rapporteur Mark Speich (DE/EPP)

¹³ Opinion on *INSPIRE – Directive establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the EU*, adoption at the F4F plenary session on 25 November 2021. Rapporteur Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES)

¹⁴ [2020-annual-report-subsidiarity-proportionality-national-parliaments_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#).

[on the Conference on the Future of Europe's digital platform](#) of using active subsidiarity to better involve parliaments, regions and cities in the shaping of European policies. [The workshop co-organised on 13 October 2021 by the CoR and the Conference of Regional Legislative Assemblies of the EU \(CALRE\)](#) within the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities on multi-level governance and active subsidiarity for sustainable recovery and resilience reached out to over 130 participants.

Regarding the future, the draft [opinion on better regulation](#)¹⁵ presented at the December 2021 plenary is expected to be a stepping stone for the CoR's impact ahead of the proposals by the European Commission on the "one-in one-out principle" due to be presented in 2022. In 2022, the CoR will also hold the 10th Subsidiarity Conference, building on the momentum of the CoFoE, with the objective of making subsidiarity more operational, through a more circular approach to legislation, regulatory processes and EU spending programmes, and reflecting on the interplay of the active subsidiarity concept with the better regulation agenda, the Fit for Future initiative and the work of the RegHub network as multi-governance tools for improving European legislation, evaluating European policies and effectively enabling greater citizen involvement.

3.1.6 Territorial Impact Assessments

Main impact:

- Inclusion of TIA among the 2030 Territorial Agenda Pilot Actions
- Establishment of a joint Action Plan with ESPON
- Commitment of the European Commission in its work programme for 2022 to better take territorial impacts into account

The CoR has been pressing since 2013 for better recognition of the territorial nature of legislative impacts. The number of TIA reports produced by the CoR increased significantly from 2018, and on par with that, studies dedicated to strengthening and promoting the methodological tools currently available were produced. The inclusion of a TIA pilot action in the 2030 Territorial Agenda¹⁶ – and in particular the mention of the study published in January 2020, *State of the art and challenges ahead for Territorial Impact Assessments*¹⁷ as a guide and inspiration for this pilot action – is a recognition of years of cumulative efforts from the Committee. The partner states are Poland (lead), Germany, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, and Luxemburg as an observer partner. Additional cooperation partners besides the CoR are the EC and ESPON.

Furthermore, the negotiation of a joint Action Plan between ESPON and the CoR cements long-lasting joint work in the field of territorial evidence for better policy making. This document, approved in the Bureau meeting of October 2021, was negotiated between the two institutions, with contributions from all Legislative Works' units, and will structure future, stronger cooperation with ESPON.

Finally the work of the CoR to promote the territorial impacts in EU legislation paid off when the EC announced in its work programme 2022 that "Territorial impact assessments and rural proofing will be

¹⁵ CIVEX VII/007 – Better Regulation – rapporteur Piero Mauro Zanin (IT/EPP) – COR-2021-04071-00-00-AC-TRA

¹⁶ <https://territorialagenda.eu/pilot-actions/understanding-how-sector-policies-shape-spatial-imbalances/>

¹⁷ <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/TIA-State-of-Play.pdf>

strengthened, so that the needs and specificities of different EU territories are better taken into account."¹⁸

3.2 Building resilient regional and local communities

3.2.1 Sustainable recovery including the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)

Main impact:

- The CoR had a significant and constructive impact on the final RRF regulation, notably regarding the obligation for Member States to report on LRA involvement, and the effective recognition of territorial cohesion as an objective of the instrument;
- Thanks to analytical and political initiatives, the CoR effectively conveyed the need to involve LRAs in the implementation of recovery plans to the EC and European Parliament;
- Commitment of the EC to reinforcing the monitoring of LRA involvement in the implementation of the RRF as expressed in a letter from the Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis to the CoR president in November 2021.

The recovery from the COVID-19 economic shock has been a crucial focus of the CoR, and the ECON commission more specifically.

The flagship element of the EU recovery efforts is the **RRF**¹⁹: a EUR 672.5 billion (2018 prices) programme which aims to promote investment and reforms across the EU. From the start, the CoR has been supportive of the objectives but has also sought to strengthen the importance of support for territorial cohesion and to improve governance and effectiveness by monitoring and promoting the involvement of LRAs in the processes surrounding the instrument. The CoR's principal objective in this field is for the governance of the RRF (via the European Semester) and its implementation to be done with the necessary involvement of local and regional authorities, and thus reflect needs and challenges on the ground.

During the legislative process, thanks to close contacts with key MEPs, the CoR's message was heard by the EP, whose position echoed the CoR's concerns, for instance by introducing a requirement to establish a multi-level dialogue with LRAs in the preparation of the recovery plans. Unfortunately, this was not fully preserved in the final regulation (adopted in February 2021) following the trilogue. Nonetheless, the final text does require Member States to report in their National Recovery and Resilience Plans on the consultation process with LRAs (art. 18(4)q), which is an important step in the right direction despite the fact that Member States interpreted this rule in different ways. The text agreed in trilogue also responds to several other key CoR concerns voiced in the opinion: it significantly strengthens the importance of cohesion in the proposal, notably with the creation of a "cohesion" pillar and many references to cohesion and territorial disparities (see in particular art. 3 and recital 3), it increases the share of climate-related financing to 37%, close to the CoR demand; it introduces "rule of law" conditionality and it makes reporting by MS biannual to reduce administrative burden.

¹⁸ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar%3A9fb5131e-30e9-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

¹⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en

The CoR undertook a number of actions during the course of 2021: a joint consultation of LRA associations with CEMR, an in-depth study analysing recovery plans, several hearings and debates in ECON and in plenary, and a high-level Recovery Forum in the context of the external bureau in Slovenia, with a statement by Commissioner Paolo Gentiloni and the participation of a number of Ministers and MEPs. CoR representatives also took part in a number of activities and events organised by other institutions. The ECON chair, for instance, was invited by MEPs to speak at the European Parliament's RRF Working Group twice, in June and again in October. There he alerted MEPs to the CoR's concerns surrounding the low involvement of LRAs in the preparation of the recovery plans, and discussed the synergies between the RRF and other EU actions, notably the structural and investment funds. Many of these points were later taken on board by a number of MEPs. The impact of the CoR's work was also recognised by Commissioner Gentiloni in his contribution to the external Bureau meeting.

The CoR will follow up on this major topic in 2022 by monitoring the implementation of the RRF and the recovery plans. Building on the RRF implementation opinion (adopted in December 2021), a follow-up consultation of LRAs on recovery plan implementation will be organised. The CoR will also strengthen its cooperation with the EP on monitoring the RRF and seek to continue to be invited to regularly voice its concerns to the European Parliament.

3.2.2 Green Deal Going Local

Main impact:

- **CoR members engaged in the [Green Deal Going Local campaign](#)** based on ten calls for action;
- Establishment of the [Chamber of National Ambassadors of the Covenant of Mayors](#);
- Creation of a new "**Members+**" feature in the framework of [CoR 4 Climate Pact](#), to build a systematic screening of members' activities in the Green Deal.

The CoR established the Green Deal Going Local working group with three main planned objectives: to ensure consistency and coherence between all six commissions in the CoR's consultative and political work on the Green Deal, to better represent LRAs within the institutional framework and to strengthen the outreach on the Green Deal to the local and regional authorities. Throughout 2021, these fundamental objectives grew into the leading principles of the CoR on all Green Deal-related activities.

The Green Deal Going Local working group, consisting of members from all six commissions and supported by a dedicated administrative Task Force, is at the heart of the CoR's efforts on the Green Deal. In 2021 the Bureau of the CoR decided to scale up the CoR's Green Deal activities to a fully-fledged political and outreach campaign. The [Green Deal Going Local campaign](#) is built around six distinct activities that aim to showcase the potential of LRAs and ensure that they move from commitments towards action. A key component within the Green Deal Going Local framework is the CoR 4 Climate Pact flagship initiative, which is aimed at **engaging CoR members in the Green Deal as Climate Pact and Covenant of Mayors ambassadors** and at building a systematic **screening of members' activities in the Green Deal**, for communication and engagement purposes.

The [Green Deal Going Local working group](#) met five times throughout 2021, all of the meetings supporting the objectives of the initiative. Notably, the fourth meeting of **the working group paved the way for cooperation with the EC on Local Green Deals**, resulting in a co-organised event on 22 June 2021. These **working group meetings** furthered **stronger cooperation and joint projects** on a great number of subjects involving a range of actors, and this included Horizon Europe missions, Strategic Foresight and the use of space technology within the Green Deal. Although the Green Deal Going Local campaign was decided on only on 4 May 2021, significant results were achieved within its frameworks. The [Call for Best Practices](#) gathered around [300 responses](#), while 95 members stated [their commitments on the Green Deal](#) and its specific policy areas. Green Deal local events were organised, on occasion also in cooperation with the European Commission. These actions served as the basis for the CoR's [showcasing of the local and regional potential within the UNFCCC COP26](#) and the European Week of Regions and Cities. Furthermore, dedicated Green Deal debates were held at every plenary meeting to give all CoR members an opportunity to engage with the Green Deal. Out of these, the October 2021 plenary session saw a great milestone reached with the [announcement of the ten Calls for Action of the Green Deal Going Local campaign](#), as well as [the launch of the Trees for Life campaign](#). The CoR 4 Climate Pact flagship initiative also had strong momentum, with the [establishment of the Chamber of National Ambassadors of the Covenant of Mayors and ten Covenant Ambassadors' events](#) held or attended as CoM Ambassadors.

In the framework of the [CoR 4 Climate Pact](#), a new feature has been developed to support the work of the CoR administration in getting to know the CoR members better, starting with their commitments in relation to the Green Deal and its implementation. This has led to the creation of a new feature (Members+) to serve this goal, to map the activities of the CoR members connected with the Green Deal, such as their participation in networks, their role as Climate Ambassadors, their best practices, the targets they set, etc. In the future, [Members+](#) may be further developed with the aim of monitoring the results of the ten Calls for Action and the engagement of CoR members in this regard. Members+, even in its beta version, has already proven useful for identifying CoR members interested in specific topics.

In its second year of functioning, the Green Deal Going Local working group has already established a strong institutional and inter-institutional presence. Moving forward, the Working Group will work to further advance on its three fundamental objectives, while providing strategic direction to the Green Deal Going Local campaign. [All six campaign activities](#) will become fully operational in the coming year and the 10 Calls for Action will bear its first results in mid-2022.

3.2.3 Environment

Main impact:

- CoR co-chairing of the **Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform**
- Inclusion of main CoR positions in the **EP report on the Environment Action Programme**
- **Recognition of the multilevel governance in the Edinburgh Declaration** advocating greater LRA involvement in global biodiversity

The CoR sought to influence the strategic Environment Action Programme (EAP) and three main **environmental priorities of the Green Deal – Biodiversity, Circular Economy and Zero Pollution** – by adopting opinions connected with these areas: one opinion on the EAP²⁰, two opinions on Biodiversity²¹ and Nature²², one opinion on Circular Economy²³ and three opinions on Zero Pollution²⁴ (among which the opinion on air was an outlook opinion specifically aimed at contributing to the Zero Pollution Action Plan). The opinions on the Biodiversity Strategy, New Circular Economy Action Plan and the upcoming opinion on the Zero Pollution Action Plan provide CoR positions on the three strategies covering the main environmental priorities of the Green Deal.

The CoR has been working on Zero Pollution beyond the opinions. The CoR cooperated with [Green Week 2021](#) focusing on Zero Pollution, promoting activities of relevance for the local and regional level, providing speakers and organising a session. Most importantly, the CoR has been working on the creation of the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform with regular meetings. The CoR also organised an event with DG ENV of the European Commission of the [Technical Platform for Cooperation on the Environment on the revision of the Urban Waste Water Treatment \(UWWT\) Directive](#), one of the main upcoming legislative proposals on Zero Pollution.

The CoR has been working towards the [15th Conference of Parties \(COP 15\) of the Convention for Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#) to promote the role of LRAs in biodiversity policies.

The CoR organised follow-up actions for the opinions to ensure impact, meetings with other institutions, participation in inter-institutional events and stakeholder activities. A good example was the **opinion on the EAP**, a file of strategic importance since it is intended to cover the period until 2030, in accordance with the 2050 vision. The EU Treaties foresee that the EAP should be adopted using the Ordinary Legislative Procedure, and consequently a legislative opinion was prepared. Actions to increase the impact were organised: the CoR rapporteur-general had bilateral meetings with the Permanent Representations of Slovenia (holding the presidency) and Greece (the Member State of the CoR rapporteur-general); he had a bilateral meeting with the European Parliament's rapporteur and made a contribution during the debate in the ENVI committee of the European Parliament; he met with officials of the EC dealing with this file and made an statement at the Stakeholder Workshop to discuss the indicators for the new monitoring framework proposed by the EAP. The first reading of the [Parliament report on the EAP](#)²⁵ **includes multiple amendments reflecting the CoR proposals**. Trilogues are ongoing. A more final impact assessment will follow approval.

²⁰ ENVE VII-012 – 8th Environment Action Programme – rapporteur-general Dimitrios Karnavos (EL/EPP) – COR-2020-05234-00-00-AC-TRA

²¹ ENVE-VII/002 – Bio-diverse cities and regions beyond 2020 at the UN CBD COP 15 and in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – rapporteur Roby Biber (LU/PES) – COR-2020-00539-00-01-AC-TRA

²² ENVE-VII/015 – Local and regional authorities protecting the marine environment – rapporteur Emma Nohrèn (SE/Greens) – COR-2021-00292-00-01-AC-TRA

²³ ENVE-VII/006 – New Circular Economy Action Plan – rapporteur Tjisse Stelpstra (NL/ECR) – COR-2020-01265-00-02-AC-TRA

²⁴ ENVE VII-001 – Fitness check of the Water Framework Directive, Groundwater Directive, Environmental Quality Standards Directive and Floods Directive – rapporteur Piotr Całbecki (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-00541-00-00-AC-TRA; ENVE VII-003 – The future of EU Clean Air Policy in the framework of the zero-pollution ambition – rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP) – COR-2020-00540-00-00-AC-TRA; ENVE VII-014 – Safe and sustainable chemicals for a toxic-free environment in Europe's cities and regions – rapporteur Adam Struzik (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-05137-00-00-AC-TRA

²⁵ ENVI Committee report on the proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2030 (COM(2020)0652 – C9-0329/2020 – 2020/0300(COD)) – A9-0203/2021

The newly established **Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform** is to provide a key gateway for the CoR and for stakeholders to help achieve the zero pollution ambition, which is one of the key objectives of the European Green Deal. Moreover, the joint efforts of **DG ENV and CoR** stem from an **enhanced cooperation agreement** between the services (concluded in 2021) and call for stronger involvement of LRAs in opinions linked to zero pollution. The CoR will co-chair the platform, and through negotiations in the preparatory phase ENVE was able to increase the number of representatives of LRAs as members in the Platform Group. Besides the Platform, the Zero Pollution Action Plan includes another action involving the CoR, the **Scoreboard of EU regions' green performance** (basis for the future Green Region of the Year award) and other actions involving LRAs. These developments are also in line with the CoR opinion on *The impact of climate change on regions: an assessment of the European Green Deal*²⁶ which includes multi-level platforms and a European Regional Scoreboard for the Green Deal as key proposals.

The First Vice-President of the CoR, Vasco Cordeiro, and the rapporteur for the Climate Pact²⁷ have participated as speakers in [the third EU Clean Air Forum](#). The Clean Air Forum is a major biennial event on air policy, particularly important in view of the recent publication of the new WHO guidelines on air quality and of the upcoming legislative proposal on air quality.

On the basis of its opinion on Biodiversity²⁸, the CoR was one of the partners creating the [Edinburgh Declaration](#) which advocates the adoption of a new dedicated Decision at COP 15 of the CBD for the greater inclusion of subnational governments, cities and local authorities within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, among other key messages. The CoR has been organising its participation in [COP 15](#) (Part 1 October 2021, Part 2 April-May 2022). The CoR participated as part of the "subnational and local governments' major group" which provided two statements during COP 15 (Part 1). A full impact assessment will be possible after COP 15 Part 2. These efforts are becoming a reference point for global efforts of LRAs to be involved in a structured way in climate COPs.

Concerning the **circular economy**, the CoR rapporteur²⁹ contributed during the debate at the ENVI committee of the European Parliament, was appointed as CoR representative within the Coordination Group of the [European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform](#) and participated in multiple activities such as the jury of the European Week for Waste Reduction awards. In 2021 the European Parliament adopted a [resolution on the New Circular Economy Action Plan](#) which acknowledged the important role of LRAs and called on the European Commission and Member States to support the establishment and cooperation of circularity hubs in all European regions, industrial clusters and local communities.

Further developments are expected with the implementation of the [Biodiversity Strategy](#), the [New Circular Economy Action Plan](#) and the [Zero Pollution Action Plan](#). The CoR will contribute to the implementation of these strategies with specific actions and in particular with legislative opinions on upcoming key proposals. Certain actions of these strategies have potential for involvement of the LRAs and the CoR could promote their participation, disseminate information and, when appropriate,

²⁶ ENVE-VII/009 – The impact of climate change on regions: an assessment of the European Green Deal – rapporteur Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA) – COR-2020-03120-00-00-AC-TRA

²⁷ ENVE-VII/007 – The European Climate Pact – rapporteur Rafał Kazimierz Trzaskowski (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-01360-00-00-AC-TRA

²⁸ ENVE-VII/002 – Bio-diverse cities and regions beyond 2020 at the UN CBD COP 15 and in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – rapporteur Roby Biber (LU/PES) – COR-2020-00539-00-01-AC-TRA

²⁹ ENVE-VII/006 – New Circular Economy Action Plan – rapporteur Tjisse Stelpstra (NL/ECR) – COR-2020-01265-00-02-AC-TRA

participate itself, in line with the three CoR opinions on the strategies. Other related opinions are being considered at the end of 2021 and in 2022.

3.2.4 Climate and energy

Main impact:

- **Direct references to LRAs included in the Renovation Wave Communication and [the launch of an Action Plan with DG ENER on the Renovation Wave](#);**
- **The CoR engaged in the development of the [Horizon Europe mission on Adaptation to Climate Change](#);**
- **COP26: Recognition of multilevel governance and reference to LRAs in the final conclusions as well as in the European Parliament resolution on COP26 .**

The CoR sought to influence the main proposals of the Green Deal on Climate and Energy. More specifically, the **work was focused on the initiatives launched by the EC to make the Green Deal targets a reality, starting from the Fit for 55 package and the main strategies released on building renovation (the "Renovation Wave"), adaptation to climate change and energy system integration.** Particular attention was also given to the **preparation of the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26)** of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which took place in November 2021 in Glasgow.

Under the policy area of climate and energy, there were five opinions adopted in 2021 and five in 2020, with some of the opinions having profound institutional impact, influencing the EC's proposals and the European Parliament's reports and reinforcing the role of the CoR within the institutional framework. The opinion on COP26 of the UNFCCC³⁰ was accompanied by extensive work to prepare the concrete participation of the CoR delegation in the COP and to ensure that the role of LRAs could be taken into account, including the support provided to the related CoR resolution. The impact was achieved by ensuring that the opinions are developed in a timely manner, targeting key aspects of the policies in question where LRAs can provide the most benefits and through strong outreach and additional supporting activities to accompany the development of the opinions.

A good example of an opinion getting impact on all fronts is the **opinion on the Renovation Wave**³¹. The opinion started development well ahead of the EC's Communication on the topic, allowing the rapporteur and secretariat to highlight the importance of subnational levels in this regard. This resulted in **direct references to LRAs being included in the Renovation Wave Communication**³² and allowed the CoR **[to launch an Action Plan with DG ENER on the Renovation Wave](#)** at the March 2021 plenary session. The CoR was also directly referenced in the Conclusions of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council of June 2021 as a result of the opinion. To ensure the quality

³⁰ RESOL-VII/017 – Resolution on the COP26 and global and local alliances for climate action – COR-2021-03276-00-01-RES-TRA

³¹ ENVE-VII/008 – A Renovation Wave for Europe – greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives – rapporteur Enrico Rossi (IT/PES) – COR-2020-2786-AC-TRA

³² Communication from The Commission to The European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of The Regions – A Renovation Wave for Europe – greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives (SWD(2020) 550 final)

of the content, a [Multilevel Climate and Energy Dialogue](#), as well as a [dedicated event on financing the Renovation Wave](#) were organised. The CoR has, building on the opinion on adaptation to climate change from 2020³³, adopted **the opinion on *Forging a climate-resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change***³⁴. The new opinion served as a response to the new EU climate adaptation strategy and has served as a vehicle for significant inter-institutional impact. Notably, the **CoR was engaged in the development of the [Horizon Europe mission on Adaptation to Climate Change](#)** and held a [dedicated event on providing the local and regional input to the mission on 31 May 2021](#). The CoR supported the first call for applications under the mission on 30 July 2021 and will continue to support other calls under the mission area. These efforts also paved the way for further collaboration on other relevant Horizon Europe Missions. The First Vice-President of the CoR spoke in the opening panel of the [fifth edition of the European Climate Change Adaptation Conference on 22 June 2021](#) with more than 900 registered participants. High-level speakers, such as Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Co-Chair of the European Parliament Intergroup on Climate Change, Biodiversity & Sustainable Development, supported CoR proposals, such as the "carbon handprint" approach, at this grand stage.

The **opinion on *Stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition towards COP26***³⁵ was another crucial piece in strengthening the role of the CoR, this time within the global climate diplomacy framework. The opinion served not only to establish the CoR's viewpoint on the 2030 climate targets, but as a vehicle for further engagement of the rapporteur and other CoR members with relevant partners on the UNFCCC COP26 and in preparatory activities; as an example, the **European Parliament resolution on COP26**³⁶ **includes references to the subnational level**. The opinion served as the foundation for the following resolution on global and local alliances for climate action³⁷ in view of COP26. The main political messages of the CoR on the greatest international climate action forum were distilled through the opinion. Linked to the opinion and resolution on COP26, the European Committee of the Regions has gained institutional weight by **increasing its [official delegation to the COP26](#) by 50%, from four to six members**.

CoR opinions can also be the catalyst for inclusion in wider networks and initiatives, an example is the appointment of the rapporteur on Clean Hydrogen³⁸ as member of the new Clean Hydrogen Alliance. Other relevant opinions adopted in 2021 include the opinions on *an EU Strategy for Energy System Integration*³⁹ and *the Revised Trans-European Energy Infrastructure Regulation fit for the Green and*

³³ ENVE-VII/010 – Opportunities and synergies of a precautionary adaptation to climate change to promote sustainability and quality of life in regions and municipalities – rapporteur Markku Markkula (FI/PES) – COR-2020-3121-AC-TRA

³⁴ ENVE-VII/017 – Forging a climate-resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change – rapporteur Markku Markkula (FI/PES) – COR-2021-1903-AC-TRA

³⁵ ENVE-VII/013 – Stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition towards COP26 – rapporteur Vincent Chauvet (FR/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-5068-AC-TRA

³⁶ European Parliament – Resolution on the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, UK (COP26)

³⁷ RESOL-VII/017 – On the COP26 and Global and Local Alliances for Climate Action – COR-2021-03276-RES-TRA

³⁸ ENVE-VII/004 – Towards a Roadmap for Clean Hydrogen – the contribution of local and regional authorities to a climate-neutral Europe – rapporteur Birgit Honé (DE/PES) – COR-2020-549-AC-TRA

³⁹ ENVE-VII/011 – Powering a climate-neutral economy: An EU Strategy for Energy System Integration – rapporteur Gunārs Anšņs (LV/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-4014-AC-TRA

*Digital Transition*⁴⁰. Also, opinions adopted in 2020 continue to present new opportunities for action, for example the rapporteur for the Climate Pact⁴¹ has been a speaker at relevant EU level events in late 2021.

Continuing the work on this policy area, the CoR is currently preparing four opinions on the Fit for 55 Package including the main new revisions and initiatives to the European Green Deal climate actions and in particular the climate target plan's 55% net reduction target. Other related opinions are being considered for 2022.

3.2.5 Supporting local and regional digital development

Main impact:

- Several recommendations from the CoR opinion on *A strategy for Europe's digital future and a strategy for data*⁴² have been translated into concrete steps by the European Commission, namely in the Communication on *2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade*⁴³ and in the public consultation on EU digital principles that ran over summer 2021;
- The recommendations from the CoR opinion *The Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act*⁴⁴ have been taken on board by the European Parliament, including in 30 identical references in the amendments tabled in the IMCO committee;
- The indicators on measuring digital transformation at local and regional level have been taken into account in the EC's legislative proposals and/or preparatory legislative work.

The CoR policy objective on digital policy is to promote digital connectivity and digital transformation at local and regional level in both urban and rural areas and to ensure adequate involvement of local and regional authorities. In 2021, close cooperation with the European Commission's DG CNECT was achieved in the areas of connectivity/digital cohesion (Broadband Platform) and on measuring digital transformation at city level (Living-in.EU network/LORDI index).

In addition, two key opinions on the digital single market were adopted: the CoR opinion on *the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act*⁴⁵ (see above) and the CoR opinion on *a European Digital Identity*⁴⁶ whose real impact will, however, only be measurable at a later stage. Cooperation has been built up with stakeholders such as city alliances and the start-up industry.

⁴⁰ ENVE-VII/016 – Revised Trans-European Energy Infrastructure Regulation fit for the Green and Digital Transition – rapporteur Robert Sorin Negoită (RO/PES) – COR-2021-722-AC-TRA

⁴¹ ENVE-VII/007 – The European Climate Pact – rapporteur Rafał Kazimierz Trzaskowski (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-1360-AC-TRA

⁴² ECON-VII/004 – A strategy for Europe's digital future and a strategy for data – rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP) – COR-2020-02354-00-01-AC-TRA

⁴³ COM(2021) 118 final

⁴⁴ ECON-VII/012 – The Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act – rapporteur Rodi Kratsa (EL/EPP) – COR-2020-05356-00-02-AC-TRA

⁴⁵ ECON-VII/012 – The Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act – rapporteur Rodi Kratsa (EL/EPP) – COR-2020-05356-00-02-AC-TRA

⁴⁶ ECON-VII/019 – European Digital Identity – rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP) – COR-2021-03686-00-00-AC-TRA

The EC has acknowledged the work of the CoR on *A strategy for Europe's digital future and a strategy for data*⁴⁷ and has taken several recommendations on board in its activities:

- regarding the request of the CoR regarding clearer effects of the EU Court of Justice's judgement concerning the privacy shield, the European Data Protection Board published recommendations regarding supplementary measures in the context of international transfers such as standard contractual clauses;
- the issue of the EU's technological independence has been addressed in the *2030 Digital Compass* communication, whereas the EC identified four "cardinal points" for mapping the EU's trajectory – including secure and performant sustainable digital infrastructures – as part of a "Digital Compass" to translate the EU's digital ambitions for 2030 into concrete targets and to ensure that these objectives are met;
- the need to address the lack of digital skills should be addressed in the European Digital Competence Framework under the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027), which the EC proposes to update.

Key points of the opinion on *the Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act*⁴⁸ have been taken up in the European Parliament by the rapporteur for the Digital Markets Act in the EP IMCO committee. Many recommendations from the CoR opinion have been taken on board, including 30 identical references in the amendments tabled in the IMCO committee on both legislative proposals.

The CoR has also followed up on the effect of accelerated digitalisation through the pandemic, through a [study](#) on new business models and an SME survey together with Eurochambres. DG CNECT subsequently invited the CoR to present the study in detail during the #EU Regions Week workshop on European Digital Innovation Hubs. The study has further fed into internal EC discussions about indicators to measure digital preparedness, the key value of the study being that it proposed some proxy indicators for which data is already available.

Starting with the Broadband Platform kick-off meeting of 21 January 2021, the CoR has developed the Broadband Platform as a CoR internal brand for the exchange of information on topics such as connectivity (5G), accelerated digital transformation and RRF implementation. An expected future outcome is that building members' expertise on digital transformation will facilitate their participation in the policy discourse at local and EU level, firmly rooting the concept of digital cohesion in the implementation of the EU Digital Compass⁴⁹ vision.

3.2.6 Civil protection

Main impact:

- The CoR's calls and requests have been reflected in the **2021 UCPM (Civil Protection Mechanism) Regulation**;

⁴⁷ ECON-VII/004 – A strategy for Europe's digital future and a strategy for data – rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP) – COR-2020-02354-00-01-AC-TRA

⁴⁸ ECON-VII/012 – The Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act – rapporteur Rodi Kratsa (EL/EPP) – COR-2020-05356-00-02-AC-TRA

⁴⁹ [Europe's Digital Decade: digital targets for 2030 | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://european-commission.europa.eu)

- Renewed **partnership with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction** (UNDRR).

The CoR supports and advocates for coordinated EU action and support for national, regional and local disaster preparedness in compliance with the subsidiarity principle, and further strengthening of resilience to disasters and emergencies at local and regional level.

The Committee renewed its partnership with the [United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) (UNDRR) and organised a joint session during the European Week of Regions and Cities 2021. In 2021, the Committee adopted an opinion on *A reinforced Union civil protection mechanism* on the new legislative proposal⁵⁰, whereas the calls made in the earlier opinion on *the Cross-border dimension in disaster risk reduction* remain relevant in the current context. **The CoR's calls and requests have been largely reflected in the 2021 UCPM (Civil Protection Mechanism) Regulation⁵¹**. Commissioner Lenarčič also confirmed the EC's intention to invest more in the RescEU aerial firefighting capacity. On 13 October 2021, the CoR president led a high-level plenary debate on *Natural Disasters: Responding to Emergencies and Building Resilience in Cities and Regions* with the participation of Commissioner Lenarčič and Mami Mizutori, the UN Special Representative for DRR. Additionally, the CoR rapporteur was invited to speak at the [2021 European Forum for DRR](#) in November.

The CoR will continue to advocate for coordinated EU action and support for national, regional and local disaster preparedness structures, focus on resilience at local and regional level, promoting the need to ramp up prevention, preparedness and response, combined with climate adaptation and continue to cooperate with the UNDRR.

3.2.7 Horizon Europe/Joint Action Plan

Main impact:

- Stronger focus on regional innovation ecosystems and smart specialisation in the further development of the Horizon Programme and particularly the missions, resulting in a direct reference to the CoR in the recent EC Communication⁵²;
- Involvement of the CoR in the ERA Forum for transition and an ERA Hubs pilot project addressing regional and local needs is to be launched by the EC at the beginning of 2022⁵³;
- Agreement of the CoR with both Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya Gabriel, and Commissioner for Cohesion and Reform, Elisa Ferreira, to launch a pilot action with the Joint Research Centre to strengthen the green transition in the smart specialisation concept (S4)⁵⁴;

⁵⁰ NAT-VII/009 – A Reinforced Union Civil Protection Mechanism – rapporteur Alberto Cirio (IT/EPP) – COR-2020-03164-00-00-AC-TRA

⁵¹ [OJ L 185, 26.5.2021, p. 1–22](#)

⁵² https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/funding/documents/ec_com_heu_randi_missions_29092021.pdf

⁵³ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-widera-2022-era-01-30>

⁵⁴ Letter co-signed by both Commissioners to CoR president Tzitzikostas and SEDEC chair Karjalainen of 8 October 2021 (ARES 20210614785)

- The CoR managed to have a direct impact and make proposals to the EC⁵⁵, the Slovenian Presidency Conclusions⁵⁶ and other key documents⁵⁷ as detailed below.

Since the adoption of the **Joint Action Plan (JAP)** in November 2020,⁵⁸ the collaboration between the CoR and the European Commission's relevant services (DGs R&I, EAC and the JRC) has greatly intensified and has brought regions and cities to the centre of the European debate in the field of research and innovation, education, culture and sport policies. The strategic approach of a targeted Joint Action Plan has proven to be a useful **tool for inter-institutional cooperation** and it has led to tangible results in the above-mentioned policy areas. The Joint Action Plan will continue to provide the basis for cooperation in 2022 and in the years to come, including the expansion of its area of application with the New European Bauhaus and the initiative for Promoting European values through education and culture.

Following the adoption and swift implementation of the JAP with Commissioner Mariya Gabriel's services,⁵⁹ the CoR rapporteur on Horizon Europe was invited to join the European Research Area (ERA) Forum for Transition as observer. This EC-Member States structure is key to the implementation of the renewed agenda and Horizon Europe in general. As a result, the CoR managed to have a direct impact and make proposals to the EC⁶⁰, the Slovenian Presidency Conclusions⁶¹ and other key documents⁶²:

- In its Recommendation on the ERA adopted on 26 November 2021⁶³, the Council recommended that the EU should support efforts aiming "to connect R&I performers from lower-performing regions" and that it was necessary to exploit synergies between the Member States' national and regional funding and EU funds. This takes on board key recommendations from the latest CoR opinion on the ERA (adopted in February 2021)⁶⁴;
- In its Conclusions⁶⁵, the Council has provided for a dedicated action on the ERA Policy Agenda to "build-up regional and national R&I ecosystems to improve regional/national excellence and competitiveness". In this context, a number of ERA Hubs across the EU will be defined, piloted and delivered, enabling competitive R&I ecosystems across the EU, filling territorial gaps. This is in line with the key messages of the CoR opinion on the ERA and has been taken on board in the

⁵⁵ COM(2021) 407 for instance

⁵⁶ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-research-area/>

⁵⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/era_en

⁵⁸ <https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/COR-EC-boost-research-and-innovation-.aspx>

⁵⁹ <https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/COR-EC-boost-research-and-innovation-.aspx>

⁶⁰ COM(2021) 407 for instance

⁶¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-research-area/>

⁶² https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/strategy/strategy-2020-2024/our-digital-future/era_en

⁶³ The Council Recommendation on a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13701-2021-INIT/en/pdf> **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

⁶⁴ SEDEC-VII/010 – A new European Research Area (ERA) for research and innovation – rapporteur Christophe Clergeau (FR/PES) – COR-2020-04749-00-00-AC-TRA

⁶⁵ The Council has adopted conclusions on the European Research Area (ERA) <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/11/26/new-pact-and-governance-structure-for-the-european-research-area-era/>

Council Conclusions further to active participation of the rapporteur in the ERA Forum's Expert Group throughout 2021.

Not least, due to its insistence, an ERA Hubs pilot project addressing regional and local needs is to be launched by the EC at the beginning of 2022.

The five approved European Missions (Smart Cities, Climate Neutrality, Soils, Cancer and Waters) are directly financed by the Horizon Europe budget, but equally rely on local support and capacity building for their implementation⁶⁶. The CoR rapporteur⁶⁷ took the lead from the very beginning of the process in early 2021 and has been in constant touch with the responsible EC DGs (R&I, MOVE, CLIMA, AGRI, MARE and SANTE), as well as with the Mission Boards, in order to ensure that the LRAs and the CoR in particular are fully involved and their role recognised in this process. This engagement led to a direct reference in the recent Communication on the European Missions⁶⁸ to the role of the CoR in ensuring "complementarities with regional strategies and smart specialisation strategies [...] to help bridge the innovation divide between Member States and regions, with the support of the Committee of the Regions."

3.2.8 Health and COVID-19 resilience

Main impact:

- The CoR's call to establish an "EU **emergency reserve** and coordinate prompt **distribution and delivery** of essential resources across Europe" has been translated into the European Commission's proposal to establish the "HERA";
- The CoR's request regarding regional **health emergency preparedness plans** was repeated in the EP report on the future ECDC mandate and cross-border health threats;
- The CoR's **pro-vaccination campaign** was broadly publicised by the UN WHO.

The key policy objective pursued in this area is mapping the shortcomings of the current framework and delivering building blocks for the future EU health emergency preparedness and response architecture.

To do so the CoR has used an array of tools. It has renewed its **privileged partnership with the UN WHO** and the CoR president and first VP issued a joint statement to the annual WHO conference. The Committee has also adopted a **range of opinions**⁶⁹, building on the [CoR president's idea of the "Health Emergency Mechanism"](#) and responding to the legislative proposals. The CoR has engaged with the wider community too, discussing the **future health architecture under the Conference on the Future**

⁶⁶ COM(2021) 609 final

⁶⁷ SEDEC-VII/026 – European missions – rapporteur Markku Markkula (FI/EPP) – COR-2021-05656-00-00-DT-TRA

⁶⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/research_and_innovation/funding/documents/ec_com_heu_randi_missions_29092021.pdf

⁶⁹ NAT-VII/007 – EU Health Emergency Mechanism – rapporteur Birgitta Sacrédeus (SE/EPP) – COR-2020-02142-00-00-AC-TRA; NAT-VII/013 – European Health Union: Reinforcing the EU's resilience – rapporteur Roberto Ciambetti (IT/ECR) – COR-2020-05487-00-01-AC-TRA; NAT-VII/014 – Cross-border health threats and the mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control – rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-05624-00-00-AC-TRA; NAT-VII/015 – A pharmaceutical strategy for Europe and legislative proposal for changing the mandate of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) – rapporteur Birgitta Sacrédeus (SE/EPP) – COR-2020-05525-00-00-AC-TRA

of Europe heading⁷⁰. Finally, the Committee has used its expertise on the [F4F Platform](#), critically reviewing the [Directive on cross-border healthcare](#).

The CoR's call to establish an "EU **emergency reserve** and coordinate prompt **distribution and delivery** of essential resources across Europe" made in April 2020⁷¹ has been translated into the [European Commission's proposal to establish the HERA](#). Another CoR request – regional **health emergency preparedness plans**⁷² – was repeated in the [EP report on the future ECDC mandate and cross-border health threats](#). The Health chapter was identified as one of the most critical parts of the **CoR 2021 Barometer**⁷³ while the [CoR's pro-vaccination campaign](#) was broadly publicised by the UN WHO.

The [CoR set up its own COVID Platform](#) shortly after the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020 to serve first as a learning and exchange platform between local and regional authorities. In 2021 the platform also came to be a central point of information on CoR and EU COVID-related news and initiatives now largely focused on vaccination strategies and the post-COVID recovery.

Keeping the momentum for health policy reforms is the overarching goal. The CoR will strive to: (1) provide the LRA perspective and influence policy making on the health emergency and strategic security; (2) deliver joint initiatives with the UN WHO Europe and its specialised networks and (3) support the CoR delegation to the Conference on the Future of Europe with Health Union policy ideas.

3.2.9 Migration and integration

Main impact:

- An **integration partnership** was set up between the CoR and EC;
- The **Cities and Regions for Integration of Migrants network** received a boost and grew to **158 members** in 2021.

The key objective for 2021 was to ensure that the reform of the EU's migration policy initiated with the EC's proposals under the New Pact on Migration and Asylum effectively recognises the views and recommendations of CoR members, both through the uptake of the recommendations in the CoR's opinions during the legislative process and through their direct advocacy by the CoR members.

The EC's [Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027](#) extensively recognised the role played by LRAs and committed to providing support to LRAs via a partnership between the EC and the CoR.

⁷⁰ NAT commission meeting on 27 September, Debate on NAT contribution to the Conference on the Future of Europe: strengthening EU health policy framework with the participation of the CoR High Level Group Member Maria Joao Rodrigues and the former Commissioner for Health and UN Special Envoy Vytenis Andriukaitis, see agenda: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Documents/agenda%20NAT%20meeting%20september.pdf>

⁷¹ NAT-VII/007 – EU Health Emergency Mechanism – rapporteur Birgitta Sæverijdsen (SE/EPP) – COR-2020-02142-00-00-AC-TRA

⁷² NAT-VII/014 – Cross-border health threats and the mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control – rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-05624-00-00-AC-TRA

⁷³ CoR 2021 [Barometer](#), Chapter V – Analysis of the health situation in EU regions in the light of the COVID-19 crisis

An [integration partnership](#) was concluded by the CoR and the EC with the aim of supporting EU cities and regions in the field of integration of migrants through dialogues, capacity building and data collection. On 18 June 2021, the CoR and the EC operationalised this [Integration Partnership](#) by co-organising a peer-learning event entitled [Setting Up a Local Integration Strategy – Stakeholder Involvement and Ownership](#) in the framework of the CoR's [Cities and Regions for Integration of Migrants](#) network, bringing together over 70 participants representing [30 cities and regions from across the EU](#). The [Cities and Regions for Integration of Migrants](#) network established by the CoR in 2019 **grew to 158 members** in 2021 and received a boost with the concrete objectives set out for this area in the CoR-EC [Integration Partnership](#). The cooperation between the two institutions was further developed on 28 September 2021, when the CIVEX commission, supported by expertise from the EC, organised a debate on [Supporting EU cities and regions by funding inclusive communities through the new Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\)](#) to facilitate access to and understanding of the available funds, as well as to share and exchange good practices of our network members.

The CoR also strengthened its cooperation in this area with the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC), the OECD, members of the Urban Agenda [Inclusion Partnership](#), and the European territorial associations – EURO CITIES, CEMR, CPMR and AER. In the context of the Urban Agenda [Inclusion Partnership](#), the CoR has been active in two action groups in pursuit of the Partnership's [2021-2022 Action Plan](#).

Evidence-based policy making was supported by a study on the [Territorial impact of migration on frontline regions and cities on the EU shores of the Mediterranean](#), chapter VII of the [EU Annual Local and Regional Barometer](#) and a CoR-OECD survey on [Migrant integration at the subnational level](#).

In 2021, the CoR adopted **two opinions** addressing the proposals presented by the European Commission to reform the Common European Asylum System: *New Pact on Migration and Asylum*⁷⁴ and *Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – A new Agenda for the Mediterranean*⁷⁵. The [CoR plenary debate on the opinion on the New Pact on Migration and Asylum](#) on 19 March 2021 in the presence of Commissioner Ylva Johansson, responsible for Home Affairs, and EP rapporteur Tomas Tobé (SV/EPP) raised the visibility of the CoR's position in the EU political debate on migration and integration.

CoR policy recommendations were considered in legislative procedures when the CoR opinion on *the New Pact on Migration and Asylum* was presented by the CoR rapporteur at the [European Parliament's LIBE committee hearing](#)⁷⁶. The subsequent committee draft report on the [Crisis and force majeure Regulation](#) presented to the LIBE committee referred to the CoR opinion and took up some of its recommendations as proposed amendments to the regulation, namely under recital 20a, where it was proposed that a situation of crisis should not be based only on numerical parameters. Instead, "local and regional aspects can be major elements in its assessment, as a considerable functional failure at local or regional level might generate the same consequences as a situation of crisis at national level."

⁷⁴ CIVEX-VII/005 – New Pact on Migration and Asylum – rapporteur Antje Grotheer (DE/PES) – COR-2020-04843-00-01-AC-TRA

⁷⁵ CIVEX-VII/010 – Joint Communication on a renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – rapporteur Vincenzo Bianco (IT/PES) – COR-2021-01952-00-00-AC-TRA

⁷⁶ AGENCE EUROPE, [Committee of the Regions and European Economic and Social Committee also have critical opinion of Pact on Migration and Asylum](#), 03/09/2021.

Furthermore, under Article 1a, the definition of "a situation of crisis" was proposed as "(a) – an exceptional situation of mass influx of third-country nationals or stateless persons arriving irregularly, or following evacuation programmes, in a Member State or disembarking on its territory following search and rescue operations, being of such a scale, in proportion to the population, GDP and unemployment rate of the Member State concerned, and nature, which renders that Member State's asylum, reception or return system at local, regional or national level non-functional[...]". This is an important recognition of the territorial impact of migratory flows on the EU border regions.

The CoR position pertaining to migration and integration policies was also made visible thanks to the activity of CIVEX members, including at events such as the *Migration and the European Union: Multi-Level Governance as a Solution* webinar, the conference [Cities fostering democracy in the European Union – urban perspectives for the Conference on the Future of Europe](#), [Mediterranean City-to-City Migration \(MC2CM\) DAYS](#), at EURO CITIES' learning event on *Migrant children in cities: inclusion and rights on the local level*, the [sixth European Migration Forum: From pandemic to recovery: challenges and best practices in migration management](#).

In 2022, achievements in the EU legislative process (impact on preparatory or final legal texts) will be sought through CoR opinions, in particular through an opinion on the Legal Migration package. Raising the visibility of LRAs in EU agenda setting and in the EU political debate will be sought through an external CIVEX commission meeting and conference on *The impact of managing migration and integration on LRAs, especially in border regions, and the need to enhance support to LRAs by the EU institutions*.

3.3 Cohesion as a fundamental value

3.3.1 Cohesion package including transition and cross-border cooperation

Main impact:

- A strong partnership principle and the reference to the European Code of Conduct on partnership have been maintained in the Common Provisions Regulation and drawing up Partnership Agreements remained mandatory for all Member States;
- The co-financing rates have been increased in comparison to the initial proposal of the EC, although in some cases not as high as suggested by the CoR;
- Clarification that Member States shall prepare and implement the programmes at the appropriate territorial level, in accordance with their institutional, legal and financial framework;
- For the first time ever the ERDF regulation will consider and define territories that suffer from demographic decline, and not only demographic density, at the level of NUTS 3;
- The ERDF resources for sustainable urban development will be increased from 6 to at least 8%;
- Within the new European Urban Initiative, all urban areas will be covered, including functional urban areas and the final ERDF text followed the CoR's recommendation to exclude the specific financial allocations assigned to the Outermost Regions from the thematic concentration requirements;
- The REACT-EU Regulation extends flexible support to counter the negative impacts of the pandemic to border regions through the European Territorial Cooperation goal;

- Continued extensive alliance building with a wide range of partners, in particular through the #CohesionAlliance.

On 1 July 2021, the cohesion policy legislative package for the years 2021-2027 entered into force⁷⁷. The new regulations take on board many of the key recommendations suggested in the opinions on the *Common Provisions Regulation*⁷⁸, the Regulations on the *European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund*⁷⁹, the *European Social Fund Plus*⁸⁰, *European Territorial Cooperation*⁸¹, and the *European Cross-Border Mechanism*⁸² adopted in December 2018, with the objective of securing a strong and effective cohesion policy beyond 2020.

The significant impact of the CoR on the final texts would not have been possible without the continuous efforts of the rapporteurs, supported by the political groups and the COTER secretariat, the extensive alliance building with the main European territorial associations (AER, AEBR, CALRE, CEMR, CPMR and EUROCITIES) and a wide range of other partners in the #CohesionAlliance⁸³.

In terms of **alliance building**, the ongoing cooperation with DG REGIO was expanded through the organisation of a Multi-Level Dialogue on Just Transition as a part of the Just Transition Platform. Proposed in the CoR opinion on the *Just Transition Fund*⁸⁴, the event is organised in cooperation with DG REGIO and creates discussion on the involvement of local and regional authorities in the process of a just transition to climate neutrality.

Cross-border cooperation and European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)

Main impact:

- Maritime Cross-Border Cooperation maintained
- Small Project Fund in INTERREG clearly defined
- INTERREG Europe programme maintained

The CoR adopted two related opinions on legislative proposals put forward in the cohesion package in 2018 whose implementation was planned for 2020 and 2021. The opinion on the *Cross-Border*

⁷⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2021/06/30-06-2021-cohesion-policy-regulation-2021-2027-published

⁷⁸ COTER-VI/045 – Common Provisions Regulation – co-rapporteurs Catuscia Marini (IT/PES) and Michael Schneider (DE/EPP) – COR-2018-03593-00-00-AC-TRA

⁷⁹ COTER-VI/046 – European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund – rapporteur Michiel Rijsberman (NL/ALDE) – COR-2018-03594-00-00-AC-TRA

⁸⁰ COTER-VI/049 – European Social Fund Plus – rapporteur Susana Díaz Pacheco (ES/PES) – COR-2018-03597-00-00-AC-TRA

⁸¹ COTER-VI/047 – European Territorial Cooperation – rapporteur Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA) – COR-2018-03595-00-00-AC-TRA

⁸² COTER-VI/048 – Cross-border mechanism – rapporteur Bouke Arends (NL/PES) – COR-2018-03596-00-00-AC-TRA

⁸³ www.cohesionalliance.eu

⁸⁴ COTER-VII/02 – Just Transition Fund – rapporteur Vojko Obersnel (HR/PES) – COR-2020-00418-00-02-AC-TRA

*Mechanism*⁸⁵ and the opinion on *European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)*⁸⁶, as well as an own-initiative opinion on *People-to-people and small scale projects in cross-border cooperation programmes*⁸⁷ in 2017, which relates to the ETC, were adopted in recent years. While the Cross-Border Mechanism appears to be a major setback for the CoR as the dossier is totally blocked in the Council, the ETC is currently being implemented and the INTERREG programmes for the next period are being set up. A number of important improvements were made during the negotiations, in line with the CoR's proposals, which now makes the future INTERREG programme more suitable for border regions. A number of proposals by the CoR were accepted, namely maintaining maritime cross-border cooperation, precisely defining the Small Project Fund for the first time and maintaining the INTERREG Europe Programme.

Specific case: The Outermost Regions, territories with geographical specificities:

On 12 May 2021, the European Commission announced its intention to revise the EU's Strategy on the Outermost Regions, following the CoR's recommendations put forward in the opinion⁸⁸ on the report on the implementation of the renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions. In this sense, the EC also undertook a study on the preliminary impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the outermost regions. On 4 October 2021 the European Parliament adopted an own-initiative report⁸⁹ on this matter which took the CoR's opinion into consideration. The new Communication on an updated EU strategy is expected by the second quarter of 2022 and the CoR will be requested to express its views through an opinion.

3.3.2 The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights: for an inclusive and socially fair recovery

Main impact:

- The EC's **European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) Action Plan** is very much in line with the views and proposals expressed by the CoR; More than 20 references are made to the local and regional level when implementing key parts of the EPSR;
- The **Staff Working Document accompanying the EPSR Action Plan** makes several references to the CoR opinion on *a Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions*⁹⁰. The paper also included an appreciation of the monitoring work of the CoR with regard to the EPSR;
- The CoR was invited to attend the High-level Conference in Porto⁹¹, taking part with the CoR's First Vice-President and the SEDEC chair in the workshop on social and employment policies;

⁸⁵ COTER-VI/048 – Cross-border mechanism – rapporteur Bouke Arends (NL/PES) – COR-2018-03596-00-00-AC-TRA

⁸⁶ COTER-VI/047 – European Territorial Cooperation – rapporteur Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA) – COR-2018-03595-00-00-AC-TRA

⁸⁷ COTER-VI/023 – People-to-people and small scale projects in cross-border cooperation programmes – rapporteur Pavel Branda (CZ/ECR) – COR-2017-01527-00-00-AC-TRA

⁸⁸ COTER VII/007 – The European Commission report on the implementation of the renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions – rapporteur Ángel Víctor Torres Pérez (ES/PES) – COR-2020-03319-00-02-AC

⁸⁹ European Parliament resolution of 14 September 2021 towards a stronger partnership with the EU outermost regions (2020/2120(INI))

⁹⁰ SEDEC-VII/004 – A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions – rapporteur Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES) – COR-2020-02167-00-00-AC-TRA

⁹¹ <https://www.2021portugal.eu/en/porto-social-summit/programme/>

- The **Porto Social Commitment** directly refers to the CoR and contains an important reference to regional and local levels of government;
- The implementation of the EPSR was included as a key part of the areas of **enhanced cooperation between the CoR and DG EMPL**;
- In the area of enhanced cooperation between DG EMPL and the CoR, there has been a lot of progress in three out of four identified areas for enhanced cooperation⁹² (**EPSR, preparation of the ESF+ & REACT-EU to provide adequate funding for youth employment measures, Skills Agenda**), while more areas of cooperation have been agreed on and pursued already (**homelessness**) and others have been agreed to be pursued together in 2022 (**minimum income**);
- The CoR is being represented in both the **Steering Board of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (EPOCH) and the Platform itself** by a CoR member who is also rapporteur of the opinion *Eradicating homelessness in the EU: the local and regional perspective*⁹³;
- In the EC [Green Paper on Ageing](#)⁹⁴, there was a direct reference to the CoR opinion on *Demographic Change: proposals for measuring and tackling its negative effects in the EU regions*⁹⁵.

The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights

The CoR was involved from the very beginning in the design and the implementation of the EPSR. The CoR has delivered opinions on the EPSR⁹⁶ in the past and has also prepared an own-initiative opinion on the EC communication on *A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions*⁹⁷, adopted at the plenary in October 2020 in order to contribute to the roadmap for the action plan of the EPSR in a timely manner.

Following the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU request the CoR adopted its opinion on *The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights from a local and regional perspective*⁹⁸ in May 2021. This opinion provided early input into the action plan on the implementation of the EPSR from the local and regional level and stressed the Pillar's central role in the European recovery and adaptation to climate, digital and demographic transitions and that the difficult project of the implementation of the EPSR can only be achieved with the full involvement of local and regional authorities. This opinion was also the CoR's contribution to the Porto Social Summit⁹⁹.

⁹² The planned recurring European Local Job Forum event has been put on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions, as it is planned as an event to take place in-situ rather than online.

⁹³ SEDEC-VII/023 – Eradicating homelessness in the European Union: The local and regional perspective – rapporteur Mikko Aaltonen (FI/PES) – COR-2021-03911-00-00-AC-TRA

⁹⁴ Adopted on 27 January 2021

⁹⁵ SEDEC-VII/001 – Demographic change: proposals on measuring and tackling its negative effects in the EU regions – rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP) – COR-2019-04647-00-01-AC-TRA

⁹⁶ SEDEC-VI/010 – The European pillar of social rights – rapporteur Heinz-Joachim Höfer (DE/PES) – COR-2016-02868-00-00-AC-TRA

⁹⁷ SEDEC-VII/004 – A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions – rapporteur Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES) – COR-2020-02167-00-00-AC-TRA

⁹⁸ SEDEC-VII/019 – The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights from a local and regional perspective – rapporteur-general Anne KARJALAINEN (FI/PES) – COR-2021-01127-00-00-AC-TRA

⁹⁹ The Porto Social Summit was a pivotal moment for social rights in Europe as for the first time, social partners and civil society called on the EU Heads of State or Government to endorse the EPSR Action Plan and its headline targets and to set ambitious national targets that can adequately contribute to the achievement of the European targets.

The impact of the CoR on the preparation of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and on the Social Summit in Porto over the year can be summarised as follows:

- The EC's EPSR Action Plan clearly underlines that its implementation is a collective endeavour of all levels of government by clearly referring to regional and local authorities. Furthermore, the Action Plan is very much in line with the views and proposals expressed by the CoR such as: (i) the delivery on the EPSR is a shared political commitment and responsibility of the EU institutions, national, regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society; (ii) the Pillar must be put at the centre of the investments and reforms powering the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic; (iii) the implementation of the EPSR must be accelerated by all relevant actors, such as regional and local authorities, within their respective spheres of competence; (iv) the Pillar can guide policy decisions in the Member States and their regions, including in the context of national recovery and resilience plans under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and in line with the relevant country-specific recommendations;
- More than 20 references are made to the local and regional level when implementing key parts of the EPSR supporting entrepreneurship, industrial ecosystems, the Skills Agenda as well as combatting stereotypes or supporting the social economy;
- The Staff Working Document accompanying the Action Plan makes several references to the CoR opinion on *a Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions*¹⁰⁰. The paper also included an appreciation of the monitoring work of the CoR with regard to the EPSR;
- The implementation of the EPSR was included as a key part of the areas of enhanced cooperation between the CoR and DG EMPL;
- For the first time, the CoR was invited to attend the High-level Conference in Porto¹⁰¹, taking part with the CoR First Vice-President and the SEDEC chair in the workshop on social and employment policies;
- The Porto Social Commitment, which was signed by the Presidents of the EU institutions and the social partners, directly refers to the CoR and contains an important reference to the need to "reinforce territorial and social cohesion, with the involvement of the European, national, regional and local levels of government, namely focusing in sectors, groups and territories with deep and long-lasting structural weaknesses and undergoing rapid and major transformations, and support the reinforcement of essential services and infrastructures in this endeavour";
- The Porto Summit Declaration, while not referring directly to the local and regional level, included a commitment to "a collective, inclusive, timely, and cohesive recovery", which "will strengthen Europe's competitiveness, resilience, social dimension [...]".

The above-mentioned impacts clearly show the significant progress the CoR has made in engaging in the social agenda of the EU and in being recognised as a strong voice of the local and regional level in this process.

The European Skills Agenda

¹⁰⁰ SEDEC-VII/004 – A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions – rapporteur Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES) – COR-2020-02167-00-00-AC-TRA

¹⁰¹ <https://www.2021portugal.eu/en/porto-social-summit/programme/>

One of the main CoR political priorities for 2020-2025¹⁰² is the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights, especially as an instrument for the socio-economic recovery of the EU. The **Skills Agenda** is one of the three headline areas of the European Pillar Action Plan. This includes up- and reskilling, which is strategic for social recovery and job creation.

In order to respond to the EC agenda on skills, the CoR adopted an opinion on *the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience*¹⁰³. Following this the CoR and the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL) have agreed that the European Skills Agenda will be a priority under the Joint Action Plan with Commissioner Schmit. The joint note of the CoR and DG EMPL sets out the relevant areas for intensified collaboration and the main instruments, which includes the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) which is focused on the role of regions and cities in providing high-quality apprenticeships in different sectors. The CoR has co-organised three online roadmap events¹⁰⁴ and a high-level conference¹⁰⁵ in 2021 with DG EMPL-EAfA which undoubtedly indicate that regions and cities can act as catalysts for apprenticeships within the local and regional environment. DG EMPL and the renewed EAfA clearly recognise the pivotal role of local and regional authorities in the European Skills Agenda. One of the renewed EAfA priorities for 2021, and also for 2022, published in its Action Plans and planned activities, is "Mobilising local and regional authorities as catalysts for apprenticeships within the local business environment."¹⁰⁶ In the 2022 Action Plan, DG EMPL-EAfA clearly acknowledges the fruitful cooperation that took place with the CoR in 2021, through the implementation of the joint DG EMPL-CoR action plan on the Skills Agenda and the important role the CoR is playing in this field and wishes to continue the collaboration in 2022.¹⁰⁷

It is evident that the above-mentioned events provide opportunities to move this collaboration to the next level. Another example is the participation of the new Cities Network for Apprenticeships¹⁰⁸ in the joint EAfA/CoR webinars. The CoR and EAfA will further work together in 2022 and update their joint DG EMPL-CoR action plan on skills accordingly.

The CoR and DG EMPL, along with DG GROW, have also agreed to jointly promote the Pact for Skills initiative as a way for the regions to build partnerships with industry and training providers on upskilling and reskilling of the local population and an online workshop was co-organised during the European

¹⁰² This is linked to the second and third priority of the CoR's Political Priorities 2020-2025: Managing fundamental societal transformations: Building resilient regional and local communities and Cohesion, our fundamental value: Place-based EU policies.

¹⁰³ SEDEC-VII/006 – European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience – rapporteur Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP) – COR-2020-03878-00-00-AC-TRA

¹⁰⁴ on (i) the impact of COVID-19 on apprenticeships (ii) the impact of the twin transition on apprenticeships and (iii) the upskilling and reskilling in the health sector

¹⁰⁵ On 3-4 June 2021 the conference on *The role of regions and cities in delivering high-quality apprenticeships for all* was co-organised with the participation of Commissioner Schmit, the SEDEC chair and many CoR members.

¹⁰⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1147&furtherNews=yes&newsId=9812&fbclid=IwAR28ukvrocSxvo2-eFlj48Ki473hINf4fFRPBw3vJKJlp9uGBc5Dnrpg_Uw

¹⁰⁷ [EAfA activities hub – Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion – European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/employment-social-inclusion/)

¹⁰⁸ One of the primary goals of the network will be to raise awareness of the potential that cities have to support apprenticeships. Ultimately, through the network, cities will be able to learn from each other, collaborate, develop tools, share good practices and provide and receive technical and policy assistance.

Week of Cities and Regions entitled *What can regions and cities do for up- and reskilling with the Pact for Skills?*

The CoR will follow up on the implementation of the European Skills Agenda in 2022. The CoR, through its SEDEC commission, is willing to adopt an opinion on how upskilling and reskilling can foster social recovery and job creation from the local and regional perspective. This opinion would be a follow-up to the previous related CoR opinions on the matter, such as the *European Skills Agenda* and *The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights from a local and regional perspective*, incorporating lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. It would also showcase the CoR's strong support for the implementation of the EPSR and EASE (Effective Active Support to Employment).

Homelessness

Since homelessness corresponds to principle 19 of the EPSR *Housing and assistance for the homeless* the CoR has repeatedly asked in a number of opinions, such as the one on *Combating Homelessness*¹⁰⁹, on the *European Homelessness Strategy*¹¹⁰, on the *European Pillar of Social Rights and Reflection Paper on the social dimension of Europe*¹¹¹ and on *The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights from a local and regional perspective*¹¹² for stronger EU involvement in the area of homelessness.

These fed into the European Parliament [resolution on tackling homelessness rates in the EU](#)¹¹³ and [on decent and affordable housing for all](#)¹¹⁴ – with the former asking for an EU plan to eradicate homelessness by 2030. On 21 June 2021 the Lisbon Declaration launching the European Platform on Combating Homelessness¹¹⁵ was signed by the EU institutions, social stakeholders and all 27 Member States. Its goal is to work towards eradicating homelessness in the EU by bringing together all interested parties, closer coordination and monitoring and exchange of good examples.

The CoR managed to nominate a member to the **Steering Board of the European Platform on Combating Homelessness and the Platform itself**, who is also rapporteur of the opinion *Eradicating homelessness in the EU: the local and regional perspective*¹¹⁶.

¹⁰⁹ ECOS-V-001 – Combating homelessness – rapporteur Tore Hult (SE/PES) – COR-2010-00018-00-00-AC-TRA

¹¹⁰ ECOS-V-058 – A European homelessness strategy – rapporteur Gábor Bihary (HU/PES) – COR-2014-02234-00-00-AC-TRA

¹¹¹ SEDEC-VI/027 – The European Pillar of Social Rights and Reflection Paper on the social dimension of Europe – rapporteur Mauro D'Attis (IT/EPP) – COR-2017-03141-00-00-AC-TRA

¹¹² SEDEC-VII/019 – The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights from a local and regional perspective – rapporteur-general Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES) – COR-2021-01127-00-00-AC-TRA

¹¹³ European Parliament resolution of 24 November 2020 on tackling homelessness rates in the EU (2020/2802(RSP))

¹¹⁴ European Parliament resolution of 21 January 2021 on access to decent and affordable housing for all (2019/2187(INI))

¹¹⁵ <https://www.2021portugal.eu/en/news/lisbon-declaration-on-the-european-platform-on-combating-homelessness/>

¹¹⁶ SEDEC-VII/023 – Eradicating homelessness in the European Union: The local and regional perspective – rapporteur Mikko Aaltonen (FI/PES) – COR-2021-03911-00-00-AC-TRA

The CoR's involvement is going to continue through the participation of its rapporteur in the Platform. The Platform, under the auspices of Slovenian Presidency, held its first plenary on 30 November 2021 and will be followed by a ministerial level meeting in March 2022 under the French Presidency.

Furthermore, the CoR established close cooperation with various stakeholders, in particular with FEANTSA (European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless) on this topic to ensure greater achievements in the field. Therefore the CoR and FEANTSA have started preparatory steps for a joint event on homelessness during the European Week of Regions and Cities in 2022.

Demographic change

Following the meeting of the rapporteur of the CoR opinion on *Demographic change: proposals on measuring and tackling its negative effects in the EU regions*¹¹⁷ with Vice-President of the European Commission, Dubravka Šuica, in December 2020 the EC **Green Paper on Ageing** cited the opinion as one of the sources used for drafting the document. This green paper launches a debate on one of the defining demographic transformations in Europe. It must be noted, however, that the continuous CoR demand for a clearer definition of what constitutes a demographically challenged region in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union has not been properly addressed; the CoR will continue to call for a clearer definition.

Additionally, on 25 March 2021 the European Parliament adopted the [Report on reversing demographic trends in the EU using cohesion policy instruments](#)¹¹⁸. The report included several amendments tabled by MEPs at the CoR's suggestion as expressed by the the CoR opinion. Furthermore, the CoR positions on the topic were incorporated into the EP report as a result of an exchange of views in early 2020 between the CoR rapporteur and EP rapporteur Daniel Buda.

Adequate minimum wages

On 28 October 2020, the EC released its proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on adequate minimum wages in the European Union¹¹⁹. In this proposal, the EC argued that an EU intervention on creating a framework for adequate minimum wages was necessary, while at the same time not interfering with the Member States' competency on setting wages and labour law. It also underlined the need to strengthen collective bargaining across the EU, especially in Member States where minimum wages were statutory.

On 19 March 2021 the CoR adopted the opinion on *Adequate minimum wages in the European Union*¹²⁰. Before the adoption, the rapporteur had met with Commissioner Nicolas Schmit and several stakeholders, including regional parliaments that had raised objections to the proposal on the grounds

¹¹⁷ SEDEC-VII/001 – Demographic change: proposals on measuring and tackling its negative effects in the EU regions – rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP) – COR-2019-04647-00-01-AC-TRA

¹¹⁸ European Parliament resolution of 20 May 2021 on reversing demographic trends in EU regions using cohesion policy instruments (2020/2039(INI))

¹¹⁹ COM(2020) 682 final

¹²⁰ SEDEC-VII/014 – Adequate minimum wages in the European Union – rapporteur Peter Kaiser (AT/PES) – COR-2020-05859-00-00-AC-TRA

that it did not respect the principle of subsidiarity. On 28 September 2021, the European Parliament's Legal Service on the draft Minimum Wage Directive fully validated the line taken in the CoR opinion regarding the subsidiarity principle.

3.3.3 Building a Europe of Equality for our next generation through education and culture

Main impact:

- The **CoR commitment to inclusion and equality** was recognised by the main EU institutions through the invitation of CoR members and rapporteurs to high-level events on equality organised by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Presidency of the Council;
- In response to the CoR opinion on *Achieving the **European Education Area** by 2025*¹²¹, the EC recognised the important role that the local and regional authorities play in achieving the European Education Area (EEA), with several proposals having already been taken into consideration for the implementation phase;
- The call by the CoR¹²² to further involve the LRAs in delivering on the EEA vision was also echoed by the **European Parliament report on the EEA**¹²³;
- Strengthened cooperation between the CoR and EC in delivering the EEA.

A Union of Equality

In 2021, EC President Ursula von der Leyen indicated that "equality for all and equality in all its senses" was one of the major priorities of her Commission. The CoR brought the issue of equality to the fore by adopting **four opinions on the Union of Equality**: *A Union of Equality: EU Roma framework for equality, inclusion and participation*¹²⁴; *A Union of Equality: EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025*¹²⁵; *Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities*¹²⁶, and *Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025*¹²⁷.

The CoR's commitment to inclusion and equality was recognised by the main EU institutions through the invitation of CoR members and rapporteurs to high-level events on equality organised by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Presidency of the Council. Such events included the inter-parliamentary Committee meeting celebrating **International Women's Day**, the first **European Anti-racism Summit** and the 14th meeting of the **European Platform for Roma Inclusion**.

¹²¹ SEDEC-VII/012 – Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 – rapporteur Emil Boc (RO/EPP) – COR-2020-04756-00-00-AC-TRA

¹²² SEDEC-VII/012 – Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 – rapporteur Emil Boc (RO/EPP) – COR-2020-04756-00-00-AC-TRA

¹²³ 2020/2243(INI), available at [Procedure File: 2020/2243\(INI\) | Legislative Observatory | European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹²⁴ SEDEC-VII/013 – A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation – rapporteur-general Jácint Horváth (HU/PES) – COR-2020-05625-00-00-AC-TRA

¹²⁵ SEDEC-VII/009 – A Union of equality: EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025 – rapporteur Yoomi Renström (SE/PES) – COR-2020-04617-00-00-AC-TRA

¹²⁶ SEDEC-VII/020 – Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – rapporteur-general Daniela Ballico (IT/ECR) – COR-2021-01679-00-00-AC-TRA

¹²⁷ SEDEC-VII/015 – Union of equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 – rapporteur Kate Feeney (IE- RENEW E.) – COR-2020-05861-00-00-AC-TRA

Moreover, the CoR rapporteur on the *Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025*¹²⁸ was invited to contribute to the drafting of the **European Parliament Declaration of the EU as an LGBTIQ Freedom zone**, resulting in the CoR's consultation being explicitly mentioned in the text.

Investing in education and culture

Throughout 2021, the CoR continued to underline the need for **investments in education and culture** on the rationale that they are two central factors in making communities more resilient and enabling them to cope more easily with crises and to adapt faster to new circumstances.

The CoR also continued its activities for **promoting European values through education and culture** and a political debate was held at the June plenary with European Commission Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis Schinas. As a follow-up to this debate and building on the existing examples from many regions and cities, work has started on setting up a community of best practice to facilitate dialogue and the exchange of information, with more than 100 contributions received so far.

In response to the CoR opinion on *Achieving the **European Education Area (EEA)** by 2025*¹²⁹, the EC recognised the important role local and regional authorities (LRAs) play in achieving the EEA, with several proposals having already been taken into consideration for the implementation phase:

- LRAs to have access to EU financial resources to implement the EEA objectives, either as direct beneficiaries or through investments benefitting the local and regional level;
- develop an innovative approach for gathering evidence and developing indicators with a view to fostering evidence-based policymaking in achieving the EEA;
- strengthen cooperation between higher education institutions as well as vocational education and training (VET) and higher VET institutions and their local and regional authorities;
- create synergies between the EEA and ERA and link them with relevant other policies and programmes, such as those linked to regional development and employment.

Moreover, the Joint Action Plan being implemented by the CoR and the EC is strengthening cooperation in delivering the EEA, notably in the following areas:

- strengthening the links between European universities and their regions and cities, in particular with the aim of fostering knowledge ecosystems;
- highlighting initiatives at the regional and local level (through the European Education Area portal) and funding opportunities;
- strong involvement of the Committee in the Education for Climate Coalition;
- close cooperation in the context of the Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027.

¹²⁸ SEDEC-VII/015 – Union of Equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 – rapporteur Kate Feeney (IE/Renew Europe) – COR-2020-05861-00-00-AC-TRA

¹²⁹ SEDEC-VII/012 – Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 – rapporteur Emil Boc (RO/EPP) – COR-2020-04756-00-00-AC-TRA

The call by the CoR¹³⁰ to further involve LRAs in delivering on the EEA vision was also echoed by the **European Parliament report on the EEA**¹³¹, urging the EC and the Member States "to commit to the type of participation required from Member States and other levels of government, including local and regional authorities, as well as the EU institutions, and to devise effective multi-level governance arrangements that respect the principle of subsidiarity, while aiming to generate European added value."

DG EAC and DG RTD appreciated the increased engagement of the CoR through a targeted consultation meeting on higher education policy initiatives stemming from the EEA in synergy with the ERA held on 5 July 2021. Commissioner Gabriel discussed with CoR members the upcoming developments regarding the European Strategy for Universities, as well as the European approach to micro-credentials and Education for Environmental Sustainability, thus involving the local and regional authorities in the designing phase of further reforms and proposals in this policy field.

The adoption of the CoR opinion on the *Restart of Cultural and Creative Sectors* (CCS)¹³² benefitted from the political debate with Commissioner Gabriel at the CoR plenary in February. The CoR own-initiative opinion rightly identified the challenges faced by these sectors that have been heavily impacted by the pandemic and called for commensurate support and strong assistance throughout the restart and recovery phases. Following this type of call and responding to an urgent need expressed by various stakeholders, the EC launched a dedicated platform, [CreativesUnite](#), to provide information about cultural and creative sector initiatives responding to the coronavirus crisis, relevant also for actions at local and regional level. In June, the European Commission also published the [EU guidelines for the safe resumption of activities in the cultural and creative sectors – COVID-19](#)¹³³ and the Recovery and Resilience Facility also plays an important role in supporting investment and restructuring in all the cultural and creative sectors.

However, while the CCS benefitted from EU support during the pandemic, the CoR opinion insists that more efforts are needed to ensure recovery. One specific proposal, namely the development of a "**Status of the European artist**", has also gained traction in the European Parliament, a report¹³⁴ having been adopted in this area.

¹³⁰ SEDEC-VII/012 – Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 – rapporteur Emil Boc (RO/EPP) – COR-2020-04756-00-00-AC-TRA

¹³¹ 2020/2243(INI), available at [Procedure File: 2020/2243\(INI\) | Legislative Observatory | European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](#)

¹³² SEDEC-VII/008 – Restart of cultural and creative sectors – rapporteur Giuseppe Varacalli (IT/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-04616-00-01-AC-TRA

¹³³ C(2021) 4838 final

¹³⁴ [2020/2261\(INI\)](#) – Report on the situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU

The CoR members and their regions contributed actively to the design phase of the [New European Bauhaus \(NEB\) initiative](#), while a very successful high-level event on 14 April 2021 with the participation of both Commissioners Gabriel and Ferreira was jointly organised with the CoR and included Mayors of European Capitals of Culture and Innovation. The Communication *New European Bauhaus: Beautiful, Sustainable, Together*¹³⁵ already includes the proposal by the CoR to establish a NEB label on the model of the Seal of Excellence. The JRC will continue to involve the regional and local level in the further development of the NEB and counts on the CoR to raise awareness via its members throughout Europe's regions and cities.¹³⁶

3.3.4 Rural development

Main impact:

- Successfully promoting the adoption of a **strategic long-term EU vision** for rural areas with a strong involvement of the CoR in the governance mechanism (Rural Pact).

The key policy objective is achieving the territorial cohesion objective enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty and closing the urban-rural divide.

Since 2016, the CoR has been calling for a rural agenda, first in its opinion on *Innovation and modernisation of the rural economy*¹³⁷ and more recently in its opinion on an *EU strategy for rural revival*¹³⁸. The NAT commission organised **various events to promote the rural agenda among the EU institutions**, working closely together with the EP (AGRI and Intergroup RUMRA), ENRD, #CohesionAlliance, EESC, CoR Regional Hubs, OECD, UNESCO, European Rural Parliament and National Rural Parliaments.

On 30 June 2021, the EC adopted the communication *A long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas – Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040*¹³⁹, as strongly requested by the CoR in the above-mentioned opinions. The communication announces the launch of a governance mechanism (Rural Pact), linking with the CoR, by the end of 2021. The rapporteur for the ongoing opinion¹⁴⁰ presented the **CoR position during the informal AGRI Council** in September 2021, under the Slovenian Presidency. The opinion on the long-term vision will contribute to the implementation of the communication in the short and medium term.

This opinion was and will be embedded in further CoR activities promoting the rural agenda in the context of cohesion, recovery and the Conference on the Future of Europe:

¹³⁵ COM(2021) 573 final

¹³⁶ First yearly monitoring of the Joint Action Plan, October 2021

¹³⁷ NAT VI/004 – Innovation and modernisation of the rural economy – rapporteur Randel Länts (EE/PES) – COR-2015-02799-00-00-AC-TRA

¹³⁸ NAT-VII/006 – EU Strategy for Rural Revival – rapporteur Enda Stenson (IE/EA) – COR-2020-01066-00-00-AC-TRA

¹³⁹ COM (2021) 345

¹⁴⁰ NAT-VII/021 – A Long-term vision for the EU's rural areas – rapporteur Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla (ES/EPP) – CDR-3533-2021

- 24 September 2021, The CoR High-Level Forum on Regional Recovery and Resilience
- 26 January 2022, CoR Forum on Rural recovery and the place of rural areas in the future EU (plenary debate)
- 3-4 March 2022, Local and regional summit, Marseille (French Presidency)

3.3.5 Reform of the common agricultural policy

Main impact:

- Recognition of the role of the regions in the future CAP: Introduction of the role of the regions in 11 articles of **the common agricultural policy (CAP) national strategic plans regulation**;
- CoR request to "End the Cage Age" mentioned in the **Farm to Fork resolution of the European Parliament** and the Commission will adopt a legislative proposal by 2023 to prohibit cages for a number of farm animals.

The key policy objective is maintaining and strengthening the role played by Europe's regions in managing and implementing the CAP, especially for the second pillar, so as to bring policy options into line with specific territorial and sectoral characteristics, and improving the well-being of animals to respond to consumers' demands but also to improve the quality of our food and to reduce health risks for animals and humans.

In 2018 the CoR was the first EU institution to request the end of cages for animals in its opinion on the *Reform of the CAP*¹⁴¹. Following the adoption of the CoR opinion, the rapporteur supported the European Citizens' Initiative *End the Cage Age*. After the adoption on 23 October 2020 by the European Parliament of the CoR's key amendments on Articles 93, 107, 110 and 111 of [the CAP strategic plans regulation](#), the rapporteur, in close collaboration with the coalition of the AGRI Regions network, continued to put pressure on the Council and the European Commission in 2021. The agreement reached on 25 June 2021 between the Council and the European Parliament included **the introduction of the role of the regions in 11 articles of the CAP national strategic plans regulation**. On 30 June the European Commission proposed a legislative response to the [End the Cage Age European Citizens' Initiative \(ECI\)](#): The EC will adopt a legislative proposal by 2023 to prohibit cages for a number of farm animals. **The role of the regions in the future CAP and the CoR request to End the Cage Age** is also **mentioned in [the Farm to Fork resolution of the European Parliament](#)** adopted on 20 October 2021.

The CoR will follow and evaluate the role of the regions in the development and implementation of the CAP national strategic plans and the implementation of animal welfare measures in the CAP national strategic plans.

3.3.6 External relations: the Nicosia initiative

¹⁴¹ NAT-VI/034 – Reform of the CAP – rapporteur Guillaume Cros (FR/GREENS) – COR-2018-03637-00-02-AC-TRA

Main impact

- Official start of two projects "Towards A new Multilevel Shared Approach for Libya Local governance" (TAMSALL) and "Research and Education Building Urban Institutions for Local Development" (REBUILD) for over 7 million EUR for the next 3 respectively 4 years

The Nicosia Initiative is the European Committee of the Region's open platform of cooperation between European local and regional authorities and Libyan municipalities. In 2021, the two projects "Towards A new Multilevel Shared Approach for Libya Local governance" (TAMSALL) and "Research and Education Building Urban Institutions for Local Development" (REBUILD) officially started. This can be seen as the turning point marking a shift to more structural funding of together over 7 million EUR for the next 3 respectively 4 years, and thus confirming the specific added value of this peer-to-peer cooperation. In 2021, both projects organised their first steering committee meetings. TAMSALL held a training for City Managers in Bologna on 13-15 December 2021. REBUILD started preparations for establishing a continuous learning system for Libyan public administrators and a community of practices among Libyan and foreign local authorities promoting exchanges and sharing of practice, knowledge and expertise.

Following the CoR's successful cooperation experience within the Nicosia initiative as well as with Ukraine, and the guidelines given by the CoR's conference of presidents, the CoR recently launched a survey among its members and alternates to extend peer to peer cooperation activities.

An external CIVEX external seminar was organised in Rome 9-10 December 2021 hosted by First Vice Chair of CIVEX (in cooperation with ANCI), in this perspective.

4. Conclusions – Outlook

2021 marked the second year of implementation of the five-year political mandate of the CoR. Despite the COVID-19 crisis the CoR was largely able to implement the political programme.

This year's Impact Report shows the highlighted role of cities and regions in addressing the health, economic and social challenges of the pandemic, its impact on the cultural sector and on education, to name just a few.

In particular, this year's Regional and Local Barometer Report¹⁴² has proven the ability of the CoR to present a consistent and coherent assessment of the state of the local and regional level in the EU, which was largely missing in the State of the Union address of the European Commission President.

The CoR provided lessons learned from the COVID pandemic to the EU institutions in June and carried out a number of **consultations about the way the emergency measures** put forward by the European Commission were working. The [CoR's COVID Platform](#), which first served as a learning and exchange platform between local and regional authorities, continues to be a central point of information on the CoR's COVID-related news and initiatives, now largely focused on vaccination strategies and recovery.

Thanks to the political commitment of all CoR members, notably the efforts of the CoR commission chairs and the proposals by the impact coordinator and NAT chair Ulrika Landergren, it was possible to significantly improve the overall impact of our consultative work. A new module in the KIKLOS application on "Follow-up to opinions" was made operational in July 2021, which helps gather relevant information. The KIKLOS application was reassessed this year, which led to a stronger focus on its modules to achieve greater impact. These achievements and the scope for future action were acknowledged by the joint meeting of the CoR commission chairs and the Conference of Presidents at the end of November.

This discussion has shown that it will be important to maintain this positive dynamic particularly through measures aiming to:

- strengthen the **cooperation between rapporteurs and across CoR commissions**, given the fact that many policy initiatives (such as the Green Deal or the digital transition) affect many policy areas;
- continue our **outreach activities to the EU institutions**;
- reinforce our efforts to **underline the territorial impacts of EU policies** and the need to ensure that no region is left behind;
- **strengthen the evidence base of our consultative work** through strengthened collaboration with key partners such as the EPRS, ESPON, the JRC or the OECD, to name but a few;
- **ensure a smooth transition of the mid-term renewal of political leadership** that is foreseen for mid-2022.

¹⁴² <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/pages/euregionalbarometer-2021.aspx>

In 2022 the CoR will carry out a **CoR consultative works survey** to gain first hand quantitative and qualitative feedback from the EU institutions about our performance.

In 2021, similarly to 2020, CoR communication was centred around the three campaigns reflecting the [2020-2025 political priorities](#) and thus based on a hand-in-hand approach to the CoR's political work and communication. The three campaigns focus on taking local and regional needs and concerns into account in order to increase legitimacy, ownership and added value, both for the EU's policies and their effectiveness on the ground so as to serve the well-being of citizens. First results indicate an increase of all key performance indicators such as media mentions, web and social media outreach. Among the most impactful communication activities in 2021, the following can be highlighted:

- **[Bringing Europe closer to people](#)**: Some 180 local events, most of which were online, were held – more than [130 of which were in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe](#) – reaching out to 10 000 citizens, local politicians and stakeholders. To deliver them, the CoR worked together with the Bertelsmann Stiftung, local and regional administrations, associations representing local and regional interests, and EU institutions. In addition, the [first ever representative survey for the more than 1.17 million locally elected politicians](#) on their views on the future was carried out. The CoR's [Young Elected Politicians](#) (YEP) programme was further developed: Its 200+ members participated in several briefings and events and delivered their recommendations to the Conference on the Future of Europe. In November, [EuroPCom](#), the inter-institutional flagship event on European public communication, was dedicated to democracy, the Green Deal and digitalisation and reached some 1400 attendees. Finally, 2021 saw the start of the CoR's [European Network of Regional and Local EU Councillors](#), which now reaches out to more than 1000 politicians in all EU Member States.
- **[Building resilient communities](#)**: At the centre of this campaign was the launch of the CoR's [Green Deal Going Local](#) group in the first half of 2021, the [CoR's engagement in the UN COP26 in Glasgow](#) in November, as well as an [event on zero pollution](#) in December. Other than that, public events and publications focused on [integration of migrants](#), digitalisation and the urban-rural divide.
- **[Cohesion, our fundamental value](#)**: Like every year, the [European Week of Regions and Cities](#) marked the highlight of the campaign. The event's 19th edition, held completely virtually, saw a record number of 17 000 participants, who highly appreciated the format, as the [evaluation](#) confirmed. Moreover, the Cohesion Alliance continued its work, in particular with a view to the interaction between cohesion policy funds and the new instruments financed by Next Generation EU including through a number of well-attended outreach events.

In 2022, the revised **Rules of Procedures (RoP) of the CoR** will also enter into force, changing some aspects of its work which will allow a better coverage of cross-cutting topics, for instance through the nomination of shadow rapporteurs or the creation of special cross-commission working groups. Additionally, reporting on the follow-up to opinions as well as on the CoR's impact will be reinforced. In 2022 the CoR will also seek to reinforce inter-institutional cooperation by exploring the possibilities to revise the Cooperation Agreement with the European Parliament and work closely with the other EU institutions on the follow-up to the Conference on the Future of Europe. The new RoP envisages a more direct link between own-initiative proposals and the CoR's strategic planning. These proposals should focus not only on the political objectives but also on the expected political impact.

The Going for IMPact! strategy of the Secretary General will be continued in 2022 to modernise the CoR administration. Planned actions are:

- Optimisation of budget use in support of members' activities
- Better administrative support for communication of opinions (visualisation, factsheets, etc.)
- Better alignment of the Strategic Management Plan and the political and administrative priorities
- Continued simplification of the administrative environment and cutting red tape
- Gradual equipment of all CoR meeting rooms for hybrid meetings
- Digitalisation of the workflows for the approval of all documents for the statutory meetings
- Introduction of the electronic signature
- Optimisation of IT governance
- Possible synergies with other EU institutions in the area of buildings, the library and salaries
- Further development of the policy on mobility and talent management
- Development of a CoR in-house research policy supporting rapporteurs and foresight

In 2022 it will also be important to combine the long-term political priorities of the CoR – which have been defined at the beginning of the mandate – with regular dialogue and cooperation with the other EU institutions.

These measures should lead to the CoR opinions having stronger impact overall.

5. Annexes

5.1 Annex 1: List of opinions included in this report

CIVEX

- CIVEX-VII/001 – Local and regional authorities in the permanent dialogue with citizens – rapporteur Declan McDonnell (IE/EA) – COR-2019-04989-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/005 – New Pact on Migration and Asylum – rapporteur Antje Grotheer (DE/PES) – COR-2020-04843-00-01-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/007 – Better Regulation – rapporteur Piero Mauro Zanin (IT/EPP) – COR-2021-04071-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/008 – European democracy action plan – rapporteur Aleksandra Dulkiewicz (PL/EPP) – COR-2021-01278-00-02-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/010 – Joint Communication on a renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – rapporteur Vincenzo Bianco (IT/PES) – COR-2021-01952-00-00-AC-TRA

COTER

- COTER-VI/023 – People-to-people and small scale projects in cross-border cooperation programmes – rapporteur Pavel Branda (CZ/ECR) – COR-2017-01527-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VI/045 – Common Provisions Regulation – co-rapporteurs Catuscia Marini (IT/PES) and Michael Schneider (DE/EPP) – COR-2018-03593-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VI/046 – European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund – rapporteur Michiel Rijsberman (NL/ALDE) – COR-2018-03594-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VI/047 – European Territorial Cooperation – rapporteur Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA) – COR-2018-03595-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VI/048 – Cross-border mechanism – rapporteur Bouke Arends (NL/PES) – COR-2018-03596-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VI/049 – European Social Fund Plus – rapporteur Susana Díaz Pacheco (ES/PES) – COR-2018-03597-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/001 – The renewal of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities – rapporteur: Juan Espadas Cejas (ES/PES) – COR-2019-04829-00-01-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/002 – Just Transition Fund – rapporteur Vojko Obersnel (HR/PES) – COR-2020-00418-00-02-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/007 – The European Commission report on the implementation of the renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions – rapporteur Ángel Víctor Torres Pérez (ES/PES) – COR-2020-03319-00-02-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/011 – Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – rapporteur Robert Van Asten (NL/RE) – COR-2021-00497-00-00-AC-TRA

ECON

- ECOS-V-001 – Combating homelessness – rapporteur Tore Hult (SE/PES) – COR-2010-00018-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECOS-V-058 – A European homelessness strategy – rapporteur Gábor Bihary (HU/PES) – COR-2014-02234-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/004 – A strategy for Europe's digital future and a strategy for data – rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP) – COR-2020-02354-00-01-AC-TRA

- ECON-VII/012 – The Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act – rapporteur Rodi KRATSA (EL/EPP) – COR-2020-05356-00-02-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/013 – Proposal for a Regulation establishing a Brexit Adjustment Reserve – rapporteur-general Loïg Chesnais-Girard (FR/PES) – COR-2021-00718-00-01-TRA
- ECON-VII/019 – European Digital Identity – rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP) – COR-2021-03686-00-00-AC-TRA

ENVE

- ENVE-VII-001 – Fitness check of the Water Framework Directive, Groundwater Directive, Environmental Quality Standards Directive and Floods Directive – rapporteur Piotr CAŁBECKI (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-00541-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/002 – Bio-diverse cities and regions beyond 2020 at the UN CBD COP 15 and in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – rapporteur Roby Biwer (LU/PES) – COR-2020-00539-00-01-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII-003 – The future of EU Clean Air Policy in the framework of the zero-pollution ambition – rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP) – COR-2020-00540-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/004 – Towards a Roadmap for Clean Hydrogen – the contribution of local and regional authorities to a climate-neutral Europe – rapporteur Birgit Honé (DE/PES) – COR-2020-549-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/006 – New Circular Economy Action Plan – rapporteur Tjisse Stelpstra (NL/ECR) – COR-2020-01265-00-02-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/007 – The European Climate Pact – rapporteur Rafał Kazimierz Trzaskowski (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-01360-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/008 – A Renovation Wave for Europe – greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives – rapporteur Enrico Rossi – COR-2020-2786-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/009 – The impact of climate change on regions: an assessment of the European Green Deal – rapporteur Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA) – COR-2020-03120-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/010 – Opportunities and synergies of a precautionary adaptation to climate change to promote sustainability and quality of life in regions and municipalities – rapporteur Markku Markkula – COR-2020-3121-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/011 – Powering a climate-neutral economy: An EU Strategy for Energy System Integration – rapporteur Gunārs Anšiš (LV/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-4014-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII-012 – 8th Environment Action Programme – rapporteur-general Dimitrios Karnavos (EL/EPP) – COR-2020-05234-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/013 – Stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition towards COP26 – rapporteur Vincent Chauvet – COR-2020-5068-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII-014 – Safe and sustainable chemicals for a toxic-free environment in Europe's cities and regions – rapporteur Adam Struzik (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-05137-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/015 – Local and regional authorities protecting the marine environment – rapporteur Emma Nohrèn (SE/Greens) – COR-2021-00292-00-01-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/016 – Revised Trans-European Energy Infrastructure Regulation fit for the Green and Digital Transition – rapporteur Robert Sorin Negoită – COR-2021-722-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/017 – Forging a climate-resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change – rapporteur Markku Markkula – COR-2021-1903-AC-TRA
- RESOL-VII/017 – Resolution on the COP26 and global and local alliances for climate action – COR-2021-03276-00-01-RES-TRA

NAT

- NAT-VI/004 – Innovation and modernisation of the rural economy – rapporteur Randel Länts (EE/PES) – COR-2015-02799-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VI/034 – Reform of the CAP – rapporteur Guillaume Cros (FR/GREENS) – COR-2018-03637-00-02-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/006 – EU Strategy for Rural Revival – rapporteur Enda Stenson (IE/EA) – COR-2020-01066-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/007 – EU Health Emergency Mechanism – rapporteur Birgitta Sacrédeus (SE/EPP) – COR-2020-02142-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/009 – A Reinforced Union Civil Protection Mechanism – rapporteur Alberto Cirio (IT/EPP) – COR-2020-03164-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/013 – European Health Union: Reinforcing the EU's resilience – rapporteur Roberto Ciambetti (IT/ECR) – COR-2020-05487-00-01-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/014 – Cross-border health threats and the mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control – rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-05624-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/015 – A pharmaceutical strategy for Europe and legislative proposal for changing the mandate of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) – rapporteur Birgitta Sacrédeus (SE/EPP) – COR-2020-05525-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/021 – A Long-term vision for the EU's rural areas – rapporteur Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla (ES/EPP) – CDR-3533-2021

SEDEC

- SEDEC-VI/027 – The European Pillar of Social Rights and Reflection Paper on the social dimension of Europe – rapporteur Mauro D'Attis (IT/EPP) – COR-2017-03141-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/001 – Demographic change: proposals on measuring and tackling its negative effects in the EU regions – rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP) – COR-2019-04647-00-01-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/004 – A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions – rapporteur Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES) – COR-2020-02167-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/006 – European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience – rapporteur Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP) – COR-2020-03878-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/008 – Restart of cultural and creative sectors – rapporteur Giuseppe Varacalli (IT/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-04616-00-01-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/009 – A Union of equality: EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025 – rapporteur Yoomi Renström (SE/PES) – COR-2020-04617-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VI/010 – The European pillar of social rights – rapporteur Heinz-Joachim Höfer (DE/PES) – COR-2016-02868-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/012 – Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 – rapporteur Emil Boc (RO/EPP) – COR-2020-04756-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/013 – A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation – rapporteur-general Jácint Horváth (HU/PES) – COR-2020-05625-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/014 – Adequate minimum wages in the European Union – rapporteur Peter Kaiser (AT/PES) – COR-2020-05859-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/015 – Union of equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 – rapporteur Kate Feeney (IE-RENEW E.) – COR-2020-05861-00-00-AC-TRA

- SEDEC-VII/019 – The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights from a local and regional perspective – rapporteur-general Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES) – COR-2021-01127-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/020 – Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – rapporteur-general Daniela Ballico (IT/ECR) – COR-2021-01679-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/023 – Eradicating homelessness in the European Union: The local and regional perspective – rapporteur Mikko Aaltonen (FI/PES) – COR-2021-03911-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/026 – European missions – rapporteur Markku Markkula (FI/EPP) – COR-2021-05656-00-00-DT-TRA

5.2 Annex 2: List of opinions adopted in 2021

CIVEX

- CIVEX-VII/004 – Enlargement Package 2020 – rapporteur Nikola Dobroslavić (HR/EPP) – COR-2020-05059-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/005 – New Pact on Migration and Asylum – rapporteur Antje Grotheer (DE/PES) – COR-2020-04843-00-01-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/006 – Strategy to strengthen the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in the EU – rapporteur Jean-Luc Vanraes (BE/RENEW E.) – COR-2021-00433-00-01-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/007 – Better Regulation – rapporteur Piero Mauro Zanin (IT/EPP) – COR-2021-04071-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/008 – European Democracy Action Plan – rapporteur Aleksandra Dulciewicz (PL/EPP) – COR-2021-01278-00-02-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/009 – A Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU: Anticipate, Prevent, Protect, Respond – rapporteur Karl Vanlouwe (BE/EA) – COR-2021-01900-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/010 – Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood. A new Agenda for the Mediterranean – rapporteur Vincenzo Bianco (IT/PES) – COR-2021-01952-00-00-AC-TRA

COTER

- COTER-VII/005 – Cross-border public services (CPS) in Europe – rapporteur Pavel Branda (CZ/ECR) – COR-2020-02615-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/010 – The future of regional airports – challenges and opportunities – rapporteur Władysław Ortyl (PL/ECR) – COR-2021-00471-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/011 – Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – rapporteur Robert Van Asten (NL/RENEW E.) – COR-2021-00497-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/012 – Effectively engaging local and regional authorities in the preparation of the Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes for the 2021-2027 period – rapporteur Juraj Droba (SK/ECR) – COR-2021-02505-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/014 – The gender dimension of structural and cohesion funds 2021-2027, with a focus on the preparation of the operational programmes – rapporteur Donatella Porzi (IT/PES) – COR-2021-02503-00-00-PAC-TRA

ECON

- ECON-VII/010 – Trade Policy Review – rapporteur Willy Borsus (BE/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-03380-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/011 – Action Plan on Critical Raw Materials – rapporteur Isolde Ries (DE/PES) – COR-2020-04292-00-01-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/012 – The Digital Services Act and the Digital Markets Act – rapporteur Rodi Kratsa (GR/EPP) – COR-2020-05356-00-02-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/013 – Regulation on establishing a Brexit Adjustment Reserve – rapporteur Loïg Chesnais-Girard (FR/PES) – COR-2021-00718-00-01-AC-TRA

- ECON-VII/014 – Delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 – rapporteur Ricardo Rio (PT/EPP) – COR-2021-00103-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/015 – European Commission Report on Competition Policy in 2020 – rapporteur Tadeusz Truskolaski (PL/EA) – COR-2021-04309-00-00-PAC-TRA
- ECON-VII/016 – Protecting Industrial and Craft Geographical Indications in the European Union – rapporteur Martine Pinville (FR/PES) – COR-2021-02689-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/017 – Updating the new Industrial Strategy for Europe – rapporteur, Jeannette Baljeu (NL/RENEW E.) – COR-2021-02688-00-01-PAC-TRA
- ECON-VII/018 – The implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility – rapporteur Rob Jonkman (NL/ECR) – COR-2021-03682-00-00-PAC-TRA
- ECON-VII/019 – European Digital Identity – rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP) – COR-2021-03686-00-00-AC-TRA

ENVE

- ENVE-VII/008 – A Renovation Wave for Europe – greening our buildings, creating jobs, improving lives – rapporteur Enrico Rossi (IT/PES) – COR-2020-02786-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/011 – Powering a climate-neutral economy: An EU Strategy for Energy System Integration – rapporteur Gunārs Anšīns (LV/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-04014-00-01-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/012 – 8th Environment Action Programme – rapporteur Dimitrios Karnavos (GR/EPP) – COR-2020-05234-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/013 – Stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition towards COP26 – rapporteur Vincent Chauvet (FR/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-05068-00-01-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/014 – Safe and sustainable chemicals for a toxic-free environment in Europe's cities and regions – rapporteur Adam Struzik (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-05137-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/015 – Local and regional authorities protecting the marine environment – rapporteur Emma Nohrèn (SE/GREENS) – COR-2021-00292-00-01-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/016 – Revised Trans-European Energy Infrastructure Regulation fit for the Green and Digital Transition – rapporteur Robert Sorin Negoită (RO/PES) – COR-2021-00722-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/017 – Forging a climate-resilient Europe – the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change – rapporteur Markku Markkula (FI/EPP) – COR-2021-01903-00-00-AC-TRA

NAT

- NAT-VII/010 – Agroecology – rapporteur Guillaume Cros (FR/GREENS) – COR-2020-03137-00-01-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/011 – Experiences and lessons learned by regions and cities during the COVID-19 crisis – rapporteur Joke Schauvliege (BE/EPP) – COR-2020-04155-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/012 – A new approach to the Atlantic maritime strategy – Atlantic action plan 2.0 – rapporteur Paula Fernández Viaña (ES/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-04163-00-01-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/013 – European Health Union: Reinforcing the EU's resilience – rapporteur Roberto Ciambetti (IT/ECR) – COR-2020-05487-00-01-AC-TRA

- NAT-VII/014 – Cross-border health threats and the mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control – rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-05624-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/015 – A pharmaceutical strategy for Europe and legislative proposal for changing the mandate of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) – rapporteur Birgitta Sacrédeus (SE/EPP) – COR-2020-05525-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/016 – New Consumer Agenda Strengthening consumer resilience for sustainable recovery – rapporteur Alexia Bertrand (BE/RENEW E.) – COR-2021-00407-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/017 – Resilience of critical entities – rapporteur Mario Guarente (IT/ECR) – COR-2021-00570-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/018 – Europe's Beating Cancer Plan – rapporteur Birgitta Sacrédeus (SE/EPP) – COR-2021-02072-00-00-PAC-TRA
- NAT-VII/019 – EU action plan for organic farming – rapporteur Uroš Brežan (SI/GREENS) – COR-2021-01968-00-00-PAC-TRA
- NAT-VII/020 – Sustainable blue economy and aquaculture – rapporteur Bronius Markauskas (LT/EA) – COR-2021-03054-00-00-PAC-TRA

SEDEC

- SEDEC-VII/006 – European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience – rapporteur Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP) – COR-2020-03878-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/007 – Youth Employment Support: a Bridge to Jobs for the Next Generation Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee – rapporteur Romy Karier (LU/EPP) – COR-2020-03454-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/008 – Restart of cultural and creative sectors – rapporteur Giuseppe Varacalli (IT/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-04616-00-01-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/009 – A Union of equality: EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025 – rapporteur Yoomi Renström (SE/PES) – COR-2020-04617-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/010 – A new European Research Area (ERA) for research and innovation – rapporteur Christophe Clergeau (FR/PES) – COR-2020-04749-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/011 – Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 – rapporteur-general Gillian Coughlan (IE/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-04769-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/012 – Achieving the European Education Area by 2025 – rapporteur Emil Boc (RO/EPP) – COR-2020-04756-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/013 – A Union of Equality: EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation – rapporteur-general Jácint Horváth (HU/PES) – COR-2020-05625-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/014 – Adequate minimum wages in the European Union – rapporteur Peter Kaiser (AT/PES) – COR-2020-05859-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/015 – Union of equality: LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025 – rapporteur Kate FEENEY (IE-RENEW E.) – COR-2020-05861-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/016 – An action plan for the social economy – rapporteur Mikel Irujo Amezaga (ES/EA) – COR-2020-05860-00-00-AC-TRA

- SEDEC-VII/017 – Future plan for care workers and care services – local and regional opportunities in the context of a European challenge – rapporteur Heinrich Dorner (AT/PES) – COR-2020-05862-00-02-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/018 – Media in the Digital Decade: An Action Plan – rapporteur Jan Trei (EE/EPP) – COR-2021-00051-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/019 – The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights from a local and regional perspective – rapporteur-general Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES) – COR-2021-01127-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/020 – Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – rapporteur-general Daniela Ballico (IT/ECR) – COR-2021-01679-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/021 – EU strategy on the rights of the child and the European Child Guarantee – rapporteur Jari Andersson (FI/EPP) – COR-2021-02601-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/022 – European approach to artificial intelligence – Artificial Intelligence Act (revised opinion) – rapporteur Guido Rink (NL/PES) – COR-2021-02682-00-00-PAC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/023 – Eradicating homelessness in the European Union: The local and regional perspective – rapporteur Mikko Aaltonen (FI/PES) – COR-2021-03911-00-00-PAC-TRA

RESOLUTIONS

- RESOL-VII/10 – Resolution on the COVID-19 pandemic vaccination campaign – COR-2021-00519-00-00-RES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/11 – Resolution on the Conference on the Future of Europe – COR-2021-01674-00-01-RES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/12 – Resolution on free movement during the COVID-19 pandemic (Digital Green Certificate) and the scaling up of vaccine production – COR-2021-01992-00-00-RES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/13 – Resolution on the European Committee of the Regions' proposals regarding the European Commission Work Programme for 2022 – COR-2021-02507-00-00-RES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/14 – Resolution on a vision for Europe: future of cross-border cooperation – COR-2021-02499-00-01-RES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/15 – The 2021 EU Annual Regional and Local Barometer – COR-2021-03857-00-00-RES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/16 – Draft resolution on the 2022 work programme of the European Commission and the CoR political priorities for 2022 – COR-2021-05507-00-01-PRES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/17 – Resolution on the COP26 and global and local alliances for climate action – COR-2021-03726-00-01-RES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/18 – Draft resolution on the proposal for a European Year of Youth – COR-2021-05388-00-00-PRES-TRA

5.3 Annex 3: References of the six Committee commissions' contributions to the Impact Report 2021

Commission	Presentation of the document (meeting date)	Reference number of the document
CIVEX	16 November 2021	COR-2021-05205-00-00-TCD-TRA
COTER	10 December 2021	COR-2021-05638-00-00-TCD-TRA
ECON	14 December 2021	COR-2021-05241-00-00-TCD-TRA
ENVE	23-24 November 2021	COR-2021-05163-00-00-TCD-TRA
NAT	22 November 2021	COR-2021-04929-00-01-TCD-TRA
SEDEC	13 December 2021	COR-2021-05554-00-00-TCD-TRA