



**European Committee
of the Regions**

Achievements in 2021

Summary of the
Annual Impact Report of the
European Committee of the Regions

January 2022

This document provides a summary of the Annual Impact Report of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) on its work and main achievements in 2021. The CoR is a consultative body for the EU institutions. It is composed of 329 members who are elected politicians in the regions, cities, villages and municipalities of the 27 Member States of the EU and who express the views and raise the profile of the more than one million locally elected politicians governing them. The CoR's impact on the EU decision-making process can be assessed on the basis of its influence on

- preparatory and final legal texts adopted by the EU institutions;
- the profile of local and regional aspects in agenda-setting at EU level;
- changes in the EU's working methods;
- EU legislation enhancing the daily lives of Europeans; and
- EU action promoted or initiated by the CoR.

The EU Treaties stipulate that the CoR advise the EU institutions on affairs that matter to regions and cities. In general, the CoR does so through opinions, which refer to legislative proposals made by the European Commission (referrals), and own-initiative opinions, which call on the EU institutions to take action. Moreover, CoR positions can be highlighted in resolutions. In 2021, the CoR adopted 69 such documents; the table below shows figures by category and how these figures have evolved since 2017.

	referrals	opinions based on EU documents	own initiative opinions (initiated by the CoR)	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

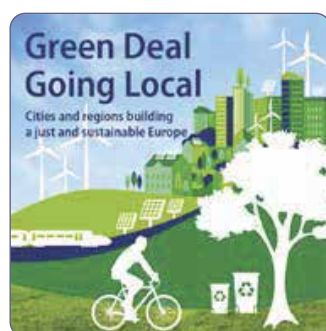
In addition to its opinions, the CoR develops joint activities with EU institutions, local and regional councils, parliaments, governments and associations representing local and regional interests, to bring EU affairs closer to regions and cities. In so doing, the CoR publishes studies and reports on particular issues, coordinates networks, holds more than 200 conferences and events every year and communicates its work through relevant channels and tools.

For the 2020-2025 period, the CoR has adopted three political priorities, which guide and structure its political work:

1) Bringing Europe closer to the people;



2) Building resilient local and regional communities;



3) Promoting cohesion as a fundamental value of the EU.



The remainder of this brochure presents the CoR's eleven key achievements under these priorities and explains in detail why they are important, what they mean concretely and how they will be followed up.

Bringing Europe closer to the people

CoR events (held and planned) in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe

type of event	number of events	target groups	main purpose	outreach
High-level events of the CoR	6	CoR members, representatives of EU institutions, stakeholders	presenting and debating CoR positions	4000 (including the Summit in Marseille)
CoR-Bertelsmann Stiftung project and local events organised by CoR members	60	citizens, local/regional politicians	input into the CoR works and the Conference	3800
EU Regions' Week	63	stakeholders, politicians, citizens	debates in the wider context the Conference	2500
Young elected politicians programme	7	Young politicians	input into the CoR debates and the Conference	350

1

Significantly extending the participation of local and regional politicians in the Conference on the Future of Europe from initially 4 to now 30 representatives



Apostolos Tzitzikostas, President of the CoR



Why is it important?

The Plenary of the Conference on the Future of Europe is composed of 449 delegates, including 18 representatives of the CoR and 12 locally and regionally elected politicians, the latter having been proposed by the CoR. In the initial drafts of the rules of procedure, only four CoR members had been proposed, while the now 30 regional and local representatives are able to have a greater impact on the outcome of the Conference.



What does it mean concretely?

Positions of the CoR and regions and cities on the topics of the Conference will be better represented. For example, in all nine thematic working groups of the Conference Plenary, there are now at least three local representatives giving voice to, and raising the profile of, local concerns.



How will it be followed up?

The final report of the Conference is scheduled for adoption in Spring 2022. The EU institutions are committed to following up its findings and recommendations, for example through new political and legal initiatives or even a revision of the EU Treaties.

Read more:
Future of Europe campaign



2

Increasing outreach to the one million elected regional and local politicians by successfully launching the "CoR Regional and Local EU Councillors Initiative".

"Europe" happens daily in our regions, cities and villages

Apostolos Tzitzikostas,
Governor of Central Macedonia, Greece,
and President of the CoR



Why is it important?

In the EU there are more than one million politicians who are elected representatives in governments, parliaments or assemblies of regions, cities, towns, provinces, municipalities and villages. They deal with European laws, funding programmes and debates on a daily basis, which is why it is important to involve them more actively in EU policy-making and the future of Europe.



What does it mean concretely?

On the occasion of the Conference on the Future of Europe, the CoR launched the "European Network of Regional and Local EU Councillors" in May 2021. By the end of 2021, more than 1000 local politicians from all 27 Member States had registered on the Network. They receive targeted information through newsletters and briefings, invitations to events and links to political debates at the CoR and can exchange information and comments with CoR members and other Network members.



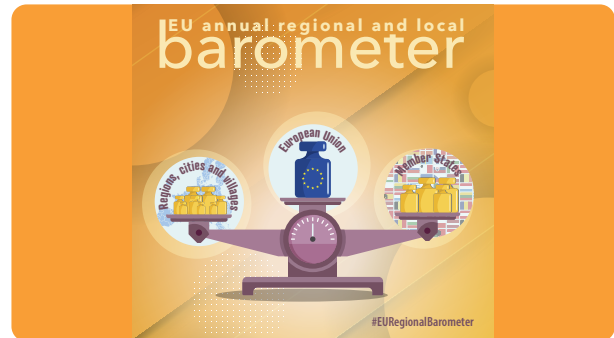
How will it be followed up?

As of 2022, the European Commission will roll out an initiative of the European Parliament entitled "Building Europe with Local Entities" (BELE), which will offer possibilities for bringing European affairs closer to the local level. The CoR's EU Councillors' Network will be invited to play an active role in the BELE initiative.

Read more:
European Network of Regional and Local EU Councillors

**3**

Publication of the second edition of the Barometer Report on the state of EU regions and cities, with unprecedented outreach



Why is it important?

Since 2020, the CoR has been presenting reports on the state of the regions and cities of the EU: the "Barometer" report. The 2021 edition brought together evidence and findings from more than 100 studies and reports on the economic, social and financial situation of the 240 regions, 600 cities and almost 90 000 municipalities in the EU.



What does it mean concretely?

The second edition of the "Barometer" report was seen as a valuable source of information for CoR members and regional and local politicians. Moreover, it provided the first-ever survey representative of the more than one million politicians elected at sub-national levels, had a significant impact in the media and helped persuade the EU institutions to take the territorial dimension into account in their policy initiatives.



How will it be followed up?

In 2022, the third edition of the "Barometer" report will most likely be presented on 11 October during the 20th European Week of Regions and Cities. Among other things, the report will reflect on the findings of the European Commission's 8th Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion and the roll-out of EU funding programmes for the 2021-2027 period.

Read more:
EU regional and local Barometer report 2021



4

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 opinions being dealt with by the platform



Why is it important?

Following a pilot phase, the CoR launched a new generation of its "Regional Hubs Network" (RegHub 2.0) in March 2021. Its more than 50 members and observers, local and regional authorities and bodies from 21 Member States monitor implementation of EU policies on the ground and make sure that the views of regional and local stakeholders are taken into account when these policies are evaluated at European level. This is just one of the main "better regulation instruments" of the CoR.

What does it mean concretely?

Beyond regular meetings and monitoring work by its members, the Network was represented on the European Commission's Fit-for-Future Platform, provided advice and feed information into the Platform's opinions.

How will it be followed up?

In 2022, the Network will continue its work through a number of targeted assessments and reports with regard to the implementation of EU legislation and policy initiatives.

Read more:
Network of Regional Hubs



5

Including the partnership principle in deployment of the Brexit Adjustment Reserve

CoR-UK Contact group



Why is it important?

On 6 October 2021, the Regulation on the "Brexit Adjustment Reserve" entered into force, providing the legal foundation for the roll-out of a EUR 5.4 billion programme to help regions deal with the economic and social consequences of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. The Regulation took into account a number of suggestions made by the CoR.

What does it mean concretely?

Regions, and specifically coastal communities, are now more closely involved in deployment of the instrument than was originally proposed by the European Commission. Other CoR suggestions concerned the allocation criteria for the funding and delivery of the Reserve. A constant exchange between the CoR rapporteur and Members of the European Parliament facilitated changes to the initial proposal of the Regulation.

How will it be followed up?

Following the definition of eligible areas and projects in early 2022, deployment of the Reserve will cover the 2021-2023 period. The CoR will monitor the deployment, possibly through own reports or opinions.

Read more:
Relationship with the UK



7

Establishing a number of strategic co-operations in implementing the Green Deal such as the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform, the launch of Green Deal Going Local campaign and others



Why is it important?

The "European Green Deal" is a key policy initiative, the delivery of which is shared by all EU institutions and bodies. As part of the activities of the CoR's "Green Deal Going Local Working Group", the CoR agreed to enhanced cooperation with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment in 2021, which includes the establishment of a "Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform". This is another example of our work on the Green Deal.

What does it mean concretely?

Launched on 16 December 2021 through a joint event held by the CoR and the European Commission, the Platform will bring together players from different communities and areas of expertise to tackle inter-related challenges, such as strengthening the joint environment and health agenda.

How will it be followed up?

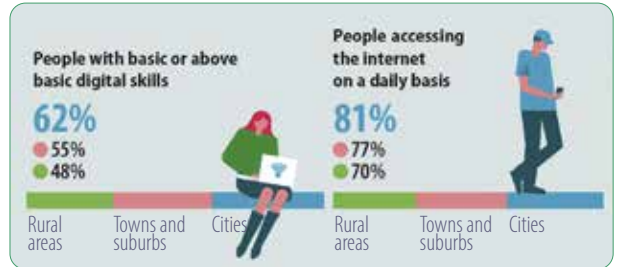
The Platform's activities will be based on a work programme for 2022-2024, which will be developed as of early 2022 and delivered through flagship projects, including ones implemented by regions and cities. Other measures involving the CoR concern the establishment of a scoreboard for EU regions' green performance, which will be the basis for the future "Green Region of the Year" award.

Read more:
Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform



8

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 a very early stage in collaboration with the Joint Research Centre and the European Parliament



Why is it important?

In 2021, several CoR opinions and publications highlighted regional aspects of one of the key priorities on the EU agenda, "Europe fit for the digital age". The impact of CoR opinions on legislative proposals, such as the Digital Services and Digital Markets Acts and the "2030 Digital Compass", has been significant and is supported by the CoR's Broadband Platform, which was relaunched jointly with the European Commission in January 2021.

What does it mean concretely?

In 2021, the European Commission suggested the implementation of "European Digital Innovation Hubs" as part of the EU's "Digital Europe" programme. The Hubs will have both local and European functions and EU funding will be made available for national, regional and local hubs to cover activities with clear European added value, based on networking the hubs and promoting the transfer of expertise.

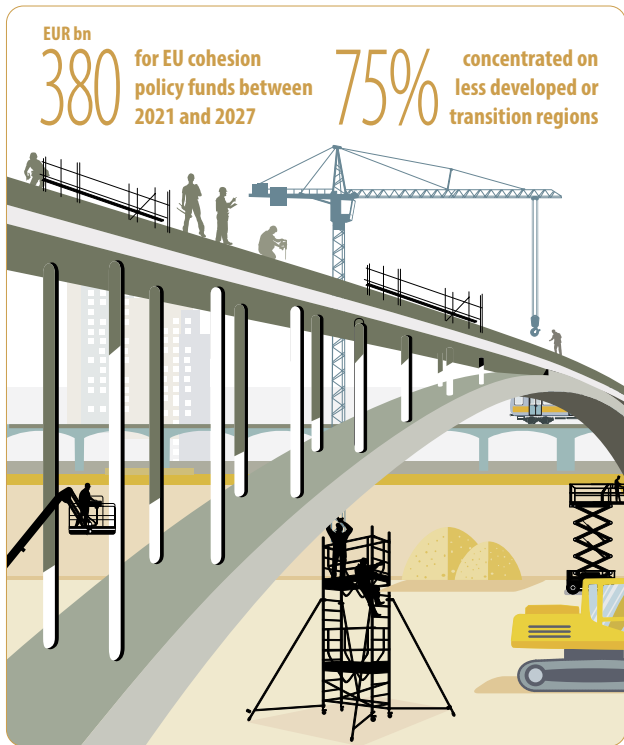
How will it be followed up?

In 2022, the CoR's Broadband Platform will continue to monitor implementation of key EU initiatives on digital, including the "European Digital Innovation Hubs" initiative. Moreover, activities will be undertaken to boost members' expertise on the digital transformation in order to facilitate their participation in policy discourse at local and EU level, firmly rooting the concept of digital cohesion in implementation of the "2030 Digital Compass" initiative and its promotion as an additional dimension of the concept of economic, social and territorial cohesion.

Read more:
Cities, villages and regions strengthen cooperation with the European Commission to bridge the digital divide in Europe



Promoting cohesion as a fundamental value of the EU



9

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



Why is it important?

In July 2021, the Regulations governing EU cohesion policy between 2021 and 2027 entered into force. During that period, almost EUR 380 billion will be available under different funds to tackle the economic, social and environmental challenges that EU regions and cities are facing.



What does it mean concretely?

Article 8 of the Common Provisions Regulation covering EU cohesion policy funds refers to "partnership and multilevel governance", a principle that will entail the involvement of regions throughout the programming, implementation and evaluation of 400+ national and regional programmes that will be in place for the delivery of EU cohesion policy in the years to come. The CoR, together with the European Parliament, has lobbied for maintaining a strong position for the principle in the Regulation.



How will it be followed up?

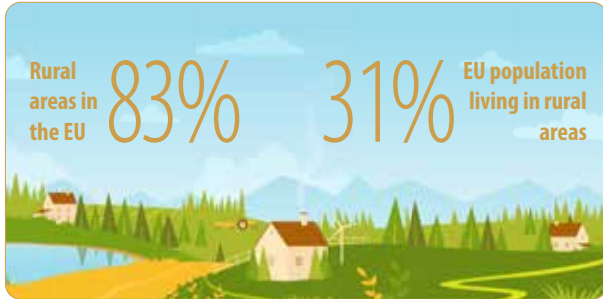
Implementation of EU cohesion policy programmes in 2021-2027 and application of the partnership principle will most likely be a matter for debate within the CoR, as well as with the partners of the "Cohesion Alliance" in 2022 and beyond.

Read more:
Cohesion, Our Fundamental Value campaign



10

Ensuring the inclusion of a Rural Pact in the European Commission's proposals for a long-term vision for rural areas in Europe



Why is it important?

Since 2016, the CoR has advocated a "rural agenda of the EU". Adoption of the "long-term EU vision for rural areas" in June 2021 by the European Commission finally resulted in considerable involvement of the CoR in its governance mechanism, in particular as regards "Rural Pacts".

What does it mean concretely?

On 20 December 2021, the European Commission launched the "Rural Pact" initiative to mobilise public authorities and stakeholders to act on the needs and aspirations of rural communities. It will provide a common framework to engage and cooperate at EU, national, regional and local level.

How will it be followed up?

During the first half of 2022, stakeholders will join the initiative and share thoughts and ideas on its implementation. In June 2022, the "Rural Pact" high-level conference will provide the opportunity to bring all the contributions together and define the measures to be taken.

Read more:
Local leaders welcome EU Rural Pact and long-term vision



11

Strengthening the role of the local and regional level in implementation of the National Recovery Plans through regular cooperation with the European Parliament's working group on the Recovery and Resilience Facility and a clear commitment given by the European Commission to include the territorial dimension in the future scoreboard of the Facility



Why is it important?

In February 2021, the Regulation establishing the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility entered into force, providing the legal basis for distributing funds and loans of up to EUR 672.5 billion (in 2018 prices) to the Member States between 2021 and 2026. Based on Articles 174 and 175 of the Treaty on European Union, delivery of the Facility also aims to support economic, social and territorial cohesion and to address disparities between the regions of the EU.

What does it mean concretely?

The Facility's delivery will be framed by six policy pillars and National Recovery and Resilience Plans will facilitate implementation. The latter will be monitored through a scoreboard, which is built on 14 common indicators laid down in a Commission Regulation of December 2021.

How will it be followed up?

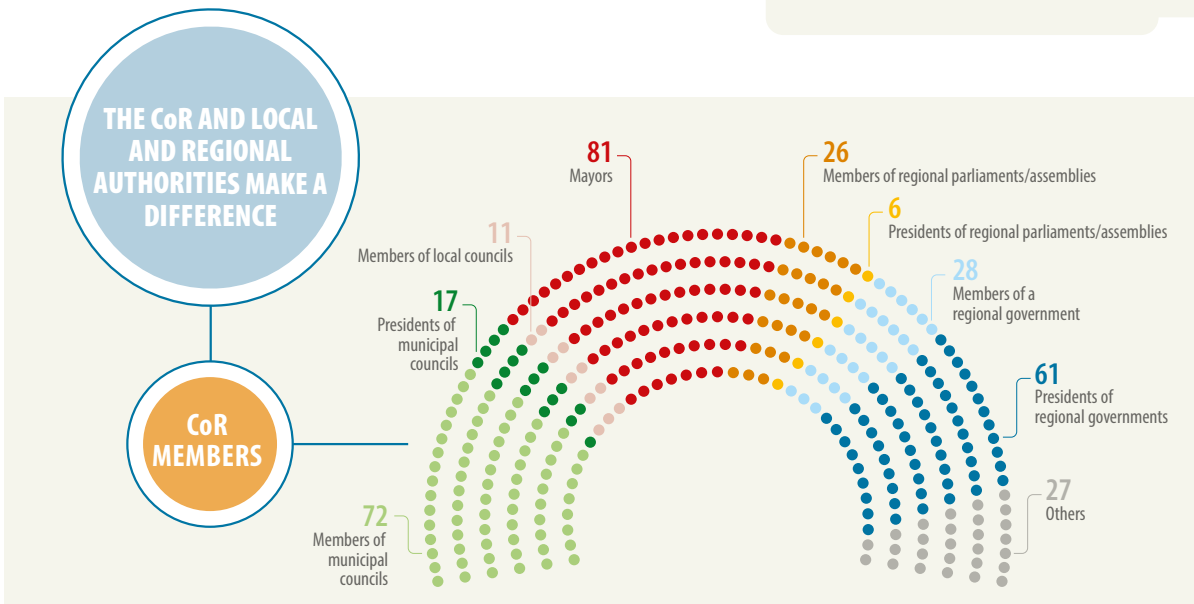
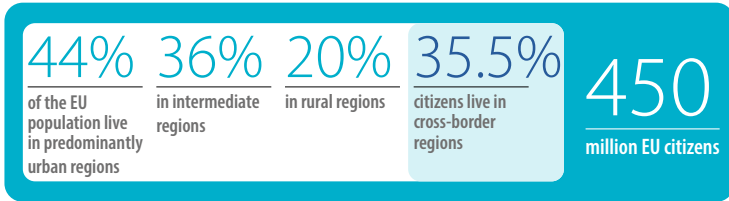
Based on the results from the Scoreboard, there will be two reports per year on progress made with the Facility, also taking territorial aspects into account. The CoR may decide to share its views on the Facility's implementation with the EU institutions and issue opinions on the subject matter.

Read more:
the CoR's Commission for Economic Policy





The regions, cities and villages of the European Union





European Committee of the Regions

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

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

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

Brussels, January 2022

Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 101 | 1040 Bruxelles/Brussel | BELGIQUE/BELGIË

Tel. +32 22822211 | e-mail: visuals@cor.europa.eu | www.cor.europa.eu

[@EU_CoR](https://twitter.com/EU_CoR) | [/european.committee.of.the.regions](https://www.facebook.com/european.committee.of.the.regions) | [/european-committee-of-the-regions](https://www.linkedin.com/company/european-committee-of-the-regions)

