

**FOLLOW-UP PROVIDED BY THE COMMISSION TO THE
OPINIONS OF THE**

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

PLENARY SESSION OF JUNE 2016

70th REPORT

N°	TITLE	REFERENCES
SG		
1.	<p>Mid-term revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework</p> <p>Rapporteur: Luc VAN DEN BRANDE (BE/EPP)</p>	<p>COR-2016-00009-00-00-PAC-TRA</p> <p>COTER-VI/014</p> <p>Own-initiative opinion</p>
GROW		
2.	<p>Steel: Preserving sustainable jobs and growth in Europe</p> <p>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank</p> <p>Rapporteur: Isolde RIES (DE/PES)</p>	<p>COM(2016) 155 - final</p> <p>COR-2016-01726-00-00-PAC-TRA</p> <p>ECON-VI/015</p>
REGIO		
3.	<p>The EU response to the demographic challenge</p> <p>Rapporteur: Juan Vicente HERRERA CAMPO (ES/EPP)</p>	<p>COR-2016-00040-00-03-PAC-TRA</p> <p>SEDEC-VI/008</p> <p>Own-initiative opinion</p>

ENV		
4.	<p>Legislative proposals amending waste directives</p> <p>Proposals for Directives of the European Parliament and of the Council</p> <p>Rapporteur: Domenico GAMBACORTA (IT/EPP)</p>	<p>COM(2015) 593 final – 2015/0272 (COD)</p> <p>COM(2015) 594 final – 2015/0274 (COD)</p> <p>COM(2015) 595 final – 2015/0275 (COD)</p> <p>COM(2015) 596 final – 2015/0276 (COD)</p> <p>COR-2016-00585-00-00-PAC-TRA</p> <p>ENVE-VI/010</p>
SANTE		
5.	<p>Food Waste</p> <p>Rapporteur: Ossi MARTIKAINEN (FI/ALDE)</p>	<p>COR-2015-06646-00-00-PAC-TRA</p> <p>NAT-VI/008</p> <p>Own-initiative opinion</p>
NEAR		
6.	<p>EU Enlargement Strategy 2015-2016</p> <p>Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions</p> <p>Rapporteur: Anna MAGYAR (HU/EPP)</p>	<p>COM(2015) 611 final</p> <p>COR-2015-05896-00-00-PAC-TRA</p> <p>CIVEX-VI/008</p>

HOME		
7.	Combatting Radicalisation and Violent Extremism: Prevention mechanisms at local and regional level	COR-2015-06329-00-00-PAC-TRA
DG EAC assoc	Rapporteur: Bartolomeus (Bart) SOMERS (BE/ALDE)	CIVEX-VI/010 Own-initiative opinion

<p>N°1 Mid-term revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) (own-initiative opinion) COR 2016/0009 - COTER-VI/014 118th Plenary Session - June 2016 Rapporteur: Mr Luc VAN DEN BRANDE (BE/EPP) SG – Vice-President GEORGIEVA</p>	
<p>Points of the CoR opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The opinion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – stresses the need for a full-scale mid-term revision of the MFF; – reiterates the need to reinforce Horizon 2020 and the CEF through the annual budgetary procedure, in order to compensate as much as possible for the cuts agreed during the EFSI negotiations; – calls for the continuation of the Youth Employment Initiative; – is in favour of flexibility in the MFF and the annual budgets; – notes that, due to the lack of payment appropriations, the Commission will not be able to meet its obligations; – notes the strong preference for a prolonged ten year budgetary period, with a compulsory substantial mid-term revision after the first five years; – considers that the reform of own resources is essential for a democratic and accountable management of European funds. 	<p>The Commission welcomes the Committee of the Regions' own-initiative opinion. The Commission has adopted the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) Mid-Term Review/Revision (MTR) package¹ on 14 September 2016, according to Article 2 of the Council Regulation 1311/2013 laying down the MFF for the years 2014-2020. The package of proposals addresses main aspects of the CoR opinion and it aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – to provide additional financial means for efficiently tackling migration and security risks, and fostering economic growth, job creation and competitiveness; – to increase the flexibility of the EU budget and its ability to quickly and efficiently address unforeseen circumstances; – to simplify financial rules and, hence, reduce the administrative burden on recipients of EU funds. <p>The package is currently under negotiation with the budgetary authorities. The Commission's aim is to reach an agreement with the European Parliament and the Council on the package and on the amendment of the MFF Regulation by the</p>

¹ COM(2016)603, 14.9.2016

	end of 2016; an agreement on the revised Financial Regulation (together with the "omnibus") is expected by mid-2017.
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<p>N°2 Steel: Preserving sustainable jobs and growth in Europe COM(2016) 155 – COR 2016/1726 – ECON-VI/015 118th Plenary Session - June 2016 Rapporteur: Ms Isolde RIES (DE/PES) DG GROW – Commissioner BIENKOWSKA</p>	
<p>Points of the CoR opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>17. The CoR urges that more emphasis be placed on digital skills and technologies in education and vocational training.</p>	<p>The need to invest in human resources is at the heart of the European Commission's New Skills Agenda adopted on 10 June 2016. The agenda aims to help people develop the skills necessary for the jobs of today and tomorrow. This is essential to boost employability, competitiveness and growth across the EU. The need to boost digital skills is stressed and streamlined across the whole agenda and addressed in several of the key measures, in particular through the launch of the "Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition", envisaged by end of 2016.</p> <p>The Skills Agenda also addresses sectoral skills needs, in particular through a Blueprint for sectoral cooperation on skills. The Blueprint is being piloted in six sectors: automotive, maritime technology, space (earth observation), defence, textile and tourism. Additional sectors, including steel, will be assessed in a second round of implementation in the course of 2017.</p>
<p>26. The CoR points out, however, that the European Council's decision to increase the annual reduction factor for maximum emissions allocated to industry from 1.74% in the third trading period (2013-2020) to 2.20% in the fourth trading period (2021-</p>	<p>The Commission's proposal for the revision of the EU Emission Trading System (ETS) is based on the strategic guidance of the European Council in the context of 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework. In order to</p>

<p>2030) while continuing with free-of-charge allocation of emission allowances based on benchmarks, may result in a considerable shortfall in allowances and thus in additional burdens for the steel sector, burdens to which competitors in countries without emissions trading are not subject.</p>	<p>deliver on the EU's target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40% domestically by 2030, the sectors covered by the EU ETS will have to reduce their emissions by 43% compared to 2005. The overall number of emission allowances will accordingly decline at an annual rate of 2.2% from 2021 onwards, compared to 1.74% currently.</p> <p>To address the risk of carbon leakage, free allocation of allowances will continue: roughly 6.3 billion allowances will be available for this purpose between 2021 and 2030. The Commission's proposal contains a number of rules to distribute the free allowances in such a way that energy intensive industries exposed to risk of carbon leakage, including the steel sector, receive an appropriate level of support while continuing to treat the best performers more favourably.</p>
<p>33. The CoR calls, therefore, for the proposal for a directive to be substantially revised in the subsequent stages of the legislative process and – while ensuring the effectiveness of EU emissions trading and appropriate burden-sharing among all economic sectors - in particular, for the following measures to be included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general waiving of charges for the most efficient plants; - continuation of incentives to pursue technical development and reduce environmental impact through realistic, and technically and economically achievable, benchmarks based on the most efficient 10% of plants; - full account to be taken of blast furnace gas (BFG) emissions from power 	<p>The Commission's proposal is based on the principles of the future carbon leakage regime, as strategically outlined by the European Council in the context of 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework. The proposal therefore already entails some of the listed elements (e.g. no undue carbon costs for most efficient installations, better alignment with changing production levels, retaining incentives for industry to innovate).</p>

<p>generation when setting benchmarks;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no across-the-board reduction of benchmarks; waiving of the correction factor; - no weakening of cost pass-through to electricity prices for energy-intensive industries; option to pass through all indirect costs while at least reference criteria should be considered at European level so as to avoid distortions in competition within the European single market; - inclusion of precursors of energy-intensive industries to be included in the rules in order to prevent relocation abroad; and - adjustment of allocation quantities to reflect changing production levels. 	
<p>34. The CoR believes that offsetting of emissions costs passed through to electricity prices is vital in order to counteract potential carbon leakage. As individual Member States have currently been able to choose different ways of doing this, distortions of competition cannot be ruled out. The European Commission should therefore consider whether in future this offsetting process should be harmonised or allowed at EU level.</p>	<p>In the Impact Assessment accompanying the Commission's proposal for the revision of the EU ETS, the Commission considered several policy options for indirect cost compensation, including further harmonisation at EU level. Following the assessment, the Commission proposed to continue with the existing state aid approach, while actively encouraging Member States to provide compensation from their auction revenues. State aid rules are designed in such a way to minimise competition distortions in the internal market, and are equally applicable to all Member States. The Commission therefore considers the continuation of the existing approach as the best way forward.</p>
<p>39. The CoR calls for the establishment of a mechanism to operate in third countries, to</p>	<p>Under the Waste Shipment Regulation (EC) No 1013/2006, Member States'</p>

<p>monitor the way secondary raw material (scrap) treatment plants are run in the countries of destination, so as to pre-empt exports to third countries whose waste treatment methods are not environmentally sound.</p>	<p>competent authorities shall require and endeavour to secure that any waste exported is managed in an environmentally sound manner in the third country of destination. In 2014, the Regulation was revised and it now ensures that the authorities involved in inspections may require the person who arranges the shipment to submit relevant documentary evidence, provided by the recovery facility and, if necessary, approved by the competent authority of destination. In addition, the Commission has examined the feasibility of an EU certification scheme for waste treatment facilities, and the Circular Economy Action Plan foresees the development of a voluntary certification scheme for key waste streams. However, the requirement of environmentally sound management only applies to treatment of waste; it does not apply to treatment of scrap that has achieved end-of-waste status under Council Regulation (EU) No 333/2011.</p>
<p>40. The CoR calls on the EU Institutions to authorise the Commission to use a non-standard methodology in anti-dumping and anti-subsidy investigations into Chinese imports under Section 15 of the China WTO Accession Protocol until China meets all five EU criteria required to qualify as a market economy. Moreover, it points out with great concern that the possible granting of market economy status (MES) to the People's Republic of China in December 2016 would make effective anti-dumping measures virtually impossible because the method of calculating dumping margins would then change. The CoR highlights at the same time that there is no requirement that WTO</p>	<p>On 9 November 2016, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a new method for calculating dumping on imports from countries where there are significant market distortions, or where the state has a pervasive influence on the economy. The proposal did not grant 'market economy status' to any country but aims at ensuring that the EU's Trade Defence Instruments are adapted to face the new challenges and legal and economic realities, while maintaining an equivalent level of protection. In essence, the Commission proposed a new anti-dumping methodology to capture market distortions linked to state intervention in third countries that mask the true extent of dumping practices. In</p>

members automatically grant China MES in 2016;

43. in the event of China being awarded MES, the CoR calls for the creation of equivalent and effective tools to protect fair trade.

determining distortions, several criteria will be considered, such as inter alia, state policies and influence, the widespread presence of state owned enterprises, discrimination in favour of domestic companies and the independence of the financial sector. This new methodology is country neutral as it can be applied equally to all members of the World Trade Organisation. It involves the removal of the list of non-market economy countries in the anti-dumping legislation. It brings EU legislation and practice closer to that of some other international partners such as the US and Canada. Where distortions are found, prices and cost will be disregarded for calculating dumping and the Commission will use other available benchmarks, including costs and prices in other economies. The Commission will draft specific reports for countries or sectors where it will identify distortions. As is the case today, it will be for the EU industry to file complaints, but they can rely on such reports by the Commission to make their case

The proposal should be seen in the context of the October European Council's call for an urgent and balanced agreement on the Council position on the comprehensive modernisation of all trade defence instruments by the end of 2016. Reforming the anti-dumping methodology would be an important part of the reforms needed, on top of the modernisation of all TDIs which the Commission proposed back in 2013.

The new anti-dumping methodology would apply to cases initiated once the amended rules are in force. The proposal also includes a transition period during which all anti-dumping measures currently in place as well as ongoing investigations would remain subject to the existing legislation. The Commission has also proposed a

	<p>strengthening of the EU anti-subsidy legislation so that in future cases, any new subsidies revealed in the course of an investigation can also be investigated and included in the final duties imposed. The European Parliament and the Council will decide on the proposal through the ordinary legislative procedure.</p>
<p>42. The CoR therefore urges the Commission, when studying the economic and social impact of market economy status for China, to await the opinions of the economic stakeholders affected and to seek close coordination with other key WTO members such as the United States before making its decision on market economy status.</p>	<p>The Commission is in regular contact with all relevant stakeholders. In particular, the Commission carried out an in-depth impact assessment including a public consultation to which more than 5 200 stakeholders replied, as well as dedicated meetings with stakeholders. The Commission also entrusted independent economic experts with preparing a study looking into the potential effects on EU employment.</p> <p>Moreover, the Commission is indeed in regular contacts with the EU's trading partners – such as the United States and Canada.</p>
<p>47. The CoR considers that applying this rule (<i>the LDR</i>) does not sufficiently protect the competitiveness of the European steel industry;</p> <p>49. it considers it important, therefore, to abolish the "lesser duty rule" when reforming the trade defence instruments, particularly in the case of existing excess capacity.</p>	<p>The Commission's trade defence instruments modernisation proposal of 2013 provides, among other things, that the lesser-duty-rule should not be applied in cases where governments of exporting countries distort the market in favour of their industry in case of raw material distortions and the provision of subsidies. Had this proposal already been adopted by the co-legislators, anti-dumping duties for steel products would have been higher. While the Parliament has adopted a first reading position, the Council has so far been unable to find a common position. The Commission is actively</p>

	<p>supporting the Council to find a compromise before the end of 2016, as mandated by the European Council of 20-21 October 2016.</p>
<p>52. The CoR nevertheless considers that the EU's anti-dumping procedures take too long, particularly when compared with practice in other WTO member states, so that they are less effective in protecting the competitiveness of the European steel industry.</p>	<p>As mentioned in the Communication, the Commission is determined to speed up the imposition of provisional measures. Its first aim is to impose provisional measures at the latest in eight months instead of nine. This can be achieved without requesting legislative changes. Further measures to speed up the procedures depend on the Council and the Parliament, since such steps would require legislative changes. This is the object of the TDI modernisation proposal made by the Commission in 2013, and which are still being discussed in the Council. The European Council of 20-21 October 2016 asked to find a balanced compromise on this matter by the end of 2016 and the Commission actively supports the Presidency in this endeavour.</p>
<p>56. The CoR calls on the Commission to include the CoR, as the institutional representative of European local and regional authorities, in the high-level group on energy-intensive industries set up in May 2015.</p>	<p>The CoR can participate as observer.</p>
<p>60. The CoR hopes that, given the specific nature of the steel sector, which requires both research and measures of a structural nature, the evaluation of research projects under Horizon 2020 will give more points to those that involve a European Partnership and use Structural Fund resources to secure better integration between the various European programmes.</p>	<p>All collaborative projects under Horizon 2020 entail European partnerships. However, the existence of potential funding synergies between different EU instruments can only be considered for assessment if explicitly specified in the Work Programmes.</p> <p>This is for instance the case for the Horizon 2020 call in 2016 for "Cluster</p>

	<p>facilitated projects for new industrial value chains", which is also open to those clusters in the steel sector that need to diversify, evolve towards new value chains and progress towards more resource- and energy-efficiency. This call for proposals supports the set-up of the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platform for Industrial Modernisation, which offers support to cooperation in implementing smart specialisation strategies of regions and countries that have chosen thematically-related smart specialisation priorities - some of which include innovation in the steel industry. This Platform aims to foster the development of investment project pipelines across several EU countries.</p>
<p>61. The CoR stresses the objective of maintaining the quality and level of employment as part of a more competitive EU steel industry, while acknowledging the importance of the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) in providing social support in cases of industrial restructuring involving potential staff cuts, as in situations where more than 500 workers employed by a single company (including suppliers and downstream enterprises) are made redundant, or where many workers from a particular sector lose their jobs in one or more neighbouring regions; this fund could be used to meet up to 60% of the cost of projects to help workers made redundant find a new job or set up their own business; however, it is doubtful whether the maximum annual budget of EUR 150 million for the 2014-2020 period will be enough to meet the challenges involved.</p>	<p>Should Member States experience further major layoffs in this sector, the EGF is available to provide support to cushion the negative side-effects in the local and regional communities affected.</p> <p>Until today, the steel sector has been subject to five EGF applications, and about EUR 15.3 million of financial support was granted by the EGF. It should be noted that other sectors, such as the automotive industry or the shipbuilding sector, are directly or indirectly affected by the difficulties of the steel industry as well.</p>

**N°3 The EU response to the demographic challenge (own-initiative opinion)
COR 2016/0040 - SEDEC-VI/008
118th Plenary Session - June 2016
Rapporteur: Mr Juan Vicente HERRERA CAMPO (ES/EPP)
DG REGIO – Commissioner CREȚU**

Points of the CoR opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>11. The CoR underlines the importance of European municipalities and regions as key actors in the implementation of European policies tackling the demographic challenge, in particular in setting up initiatives that build on diversity and promote an intercultural society. It is also necessary to work on the design of regional and local strategies to support the establishment of links between R&D centres, businesses and public bodies, promote business incubators, foster rural tourism, etc. in order to generate employment, with a view to making them more attractive to the working age population.</p>	<p>The Urban Agenda for the EU aims to promote cooperation between Member States, cities, the European Commission and other stakeholders, in order to stimulate growth, liveability and innovation in the cities of Europe. Under the Urban Agenda for the EU, the following four (pilot) partnerships have been created: Air Quality, Housing, Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees, Urban Poverty (other partnerships are under discussion). These partnerships will prepare Action Plans to respond to the identified challenges, which may include demographic change, ageing, etc. The Actions Plans should focus on better regulation, better use of financial instruments and better knowledge exchange.</p>
<p>17. The CoR indicates that cohesion policy should play a more vigorous role in tackling demographic challenges, in accordance with the explicit mandate of Article 174 TFEU. This Article stipulates that "particular attention shall be paid to rural areas, areas affected by industrial transition, and regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as the northernmost regions with very low population density and island, cross-border</p>	<p>Following Annex I point 5.5. ("<i>Addressing demographic challenges</i>") of the Common Provisions regulations (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013), Member States should make use of the European Structural and Investment Funds to tackle demographic problems and to create growth linked to an ageing society. In line with relevant national or regional strategies, Member States should address challenges in the</p>

<p>and mountain regions." Similarly, Article 175 TFEU stipulates that the objectives set out in the preceding article must be taken into account when formulating and implementing the Union's policies and actions; that their achievement must be supported by the Structural Funds, the EIB and other financial instruments. It adds that other specific actions might prove necessary. To date, however, these provisions have not been sufficiently implemented, while positive action measures corresponding to demographic handicaps have not been adopted.</p>	<p>regions most affected by demographic change. Measures may include actions to improve balance between working and family life, raising productivity and economic performance through investing in education, Information and Communication Technologies and research and innovation, improving the quality of education, training and social support structures, efficiency of social protection systems and cost-effective provision of health care and long-term care.</p>
<p>26. The CoR underlines that demographic change is affecting mobility in demographically challenged regions, particularly rural areas close to major urban areas experiencing a population influx, and reiterates its call for a Green Paper on the issue.</p>	<p>The 7th Cohesion Report to be adopted in 2017 will pay particular attention to demographic change, including in rural and urban areas.</p>
<p>31. The CoR calls on the European institutions to provide a precise definition of the term "severe and permanent demographic handicaps" in Article 174 TFEU. It also calls on the EU to develop statistical indicators at an appropriate level to back up this definition.</p>	<p>Demographic change is a complex and dynamic phenomenon. As a result, capturing the full spectrum of issues included under "severe and permanent demographic handicaps" in a precise definition may not be feasible.</p>
<p>33. The CoR also calls for cohesion policy to provide specific instruments for areas that are most affected by demographic challenges, such as a higher weighting for demographic criteria in the method used for allocating funding or greater flexibility with regard to co-financing rates or choosing thematic objectives. It reiterates, in this regard, what was stated in its opinion on "The demographic future of Europe", that is, that support for regions experiencing the most difficulties is "an appropriate way of tackling demographic change throughout</p>	<p>Annex I point 5.5. (<i>"Addressing demographic challenges"</i>) of the Common Provisions Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013) stipulates that Member States should make use of the European Structural and Investment Funds to tackle demographic problems and to create growth linked to an ageing society. In line with relevant national or regional strategies, Member States should address challenges in the regions most affected by demographic change.</p>

<p>Europe".</p>	<p>Member States may establish higher weighting for demographic criteria in the scope of selection criteria. Article 121 of the same Regulation clarifies the possibility for modulation of co-financing rates concerning the contributions from the European Structural and Investment Funds under some specific circumstances, including coverage of areas with severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps.</p>
<p>34. The CoR stresses that the European Regional Development Fund can help areas with high levels of ageing, rurality and population outflow to improve their transport, telecommunications and tourism infrastructure, bridge the digital divide, and enjoy better public services and support the adaptation of housing and residential accommodation, among other goals.</p>	<p>Article 10 of the European Regional Development Fund Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013) stipulates that particular attention should be paid to addressing the specific difficulties of those areas in operational programmes co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Special attention should be paid also to demographic challenges in the sustainable urban development strategies following Article 7 of that Regulation. Actions may include a wide range of ERDF investments in thematic objectives 1-10, depending on the identified needs.</p>

<p>N°4 Legislative proposals amending waste directives COM(2015) 593 final, COM(2015) 594 final, COM(2015) 595 final, COM(2015) 596 final – COR 2016/0585 - ENVE-VI/010 118th Plenary Session - June 2016 Rapporteur: Mr Domenico GAMBACORTA (IT/EPP) DG ENV – Commissioner VELLA</p>	
<p>Points of the CoR opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>The CoR welcomes the legislative proposals amending the waste directives. The CoR fully supports the necessity and benefits of the transition to a circular economy.</p>	<p>The new Commission takes note and welcomes the Committee for its Opinion and recommendations.</p> <p>The proposals are currently being negotiated by the co-legislators.</p>
<p>The CoR calls for increasing the proposed 2030 re-use and recycling target for municipal waste from 65% to 70% by weight (Amendment 7).</p>	<p>The proposed 65% recycling target for municipal waste is ambitious yet realistic and takes into account the new stricter method for the calculation of recycling rates and the differences in terms of waste management across the Member States. The Commission proposal (COM(2015)595, Article 1(10)(e)) envisages to review this target by the end of 2024 with a view to increasing it. Such a proposal would have to be underpinned by an impact assessment that is based on comprehensive data about the relevant waste stream.</p>
<p>The CoR reiterates its call for separate re-use targets, which should be binding, independent and geared to specific waste streams, particularly furniture, fabrics and waste electrical and electronic equipment (policy recommendation 18).</p>	<p>The Commission proposed a combined target of re-use, preparation for re-use and recycling for municipal and packaging waste with the view to promote both practices while providing more flexibility to the Member States and recognizing specific local conditions. In addition, the exercise of this combined target is optional to the</p>

	<p>Member States and limited to situations where Member States have reliable data on re-use. An implementing act is envisaged to define data to be reported for the purposes of counting re-use towards the combined target.</p> <p>The establishment of separate re-use targets at EU level need to be underpinned by an impact assessment based on comprehensive and comparable data across the Member States on re-use. At this moment, this data is not available.</p>
<p>The CoR calls for a new requirement for Member States to aim at the 10% reduction of municipal waste generated in 2025 compared to 2015 levels and to reduce food waste by at least 30% by 2025 and 50% by 2030 (Amendment 9).</p>	<p>A binding EU target on food waste cannot yet be established given the lack of sufficient, consistent data on food waste levels and absence of common measurement methodology including on baselines which take into account the different starting positions of the Member States in terms of waste prevention. Therefore, the Commission proposes that Member States define national food waste prevention targets and indicators based on a common methodology. The commitment made by the EU and the Member States to the Sustainable Development Goals on food waste are reflected in the legislative proposal and the Action Plan on Circular Economy.</p> <p>As for the reduction target for municipal waste generation, the Commission proposes that Member States define national municipal waste prevention targets and indicators.</p>
<p>The CoR calls on the European Commission to review the situation of non-hazardous industrial waste by 2020, evaluating targets on preparing for re-use and recycling for this</p>	<p>Industrial waste is extremely diversified in terms of composition and volume, and very different depending on the economic structure of a Member State, the structure of the industry or</p>

<p>waste stream (Amendment 6).</p>	<p>commerce sector that generates the waste and the industrial or commercial density in a given geographical area. Hence, for most industrial waste, an industry-oriented approach using Best Available Techniques reference documents and similar instruments to address the specific issues related to the management of a given type of waste is a suitable solution. Industrial waste continues to be covered by the requirements and recycling objectives of Directive 94/62/EC and Directive 2008/98/EC.</p> <p>The Commission proposal amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste (COM(2015)595, Article 1(10)(e)) already includes a review clause that envisages the possibility to set targets for waste other than municipal waste, such as industrial waste, by end of 2024.</p>
<p>The CoR calls for a new requirement for the European Commission to present a 2030 target for preparing for re-use and recycling of plastic packaging waste within the next few years, and to consider whether recycling targets for specific construction materials to be met by 2025 and 2030 should be set by 2020 (Amendment 10).</p>	<p>Targets for the recycling of plastic packaging waste for 2025 have been set, taking into account what was technically feasible at the time of the revision of the Directive. The Commission may propose revised levels of the targets for plastics for 2030 based on a review of progress made by Member States towards reaching those targets, taking into account the evolution of the types of plastics placed on the market and the development of new recycling technologies and the demand for recycled plastics.</p> <p>The Commission proposal amending Directive 2008/98/EC on waste (COM(2015)595, Article 1(10)(e)) already includes a review clause that envisages the possibility to set targets for waste other than municipal waste, such as specific construction material</p>

	<p>waste streams, by end of 2024.</p> <p>Independently, the Commission is working on a dedicated strategy for plastics and is preparing a Construction and Demolition Waste Management Protocol which will effectively pave the way for increased recycling levels for plastics and construction and demolition waste in the EU.</p>
<p>The CoR calls on the European Commission to examine the possibility of extending the maximum 10% landfill target by 2030 beyond the municipal waste and applying it to all types of waste (policy recommendation 24).</p>	<p>The Commission proposal amending Directive 1999/31/EC on landfill of waste (COM(2015)594, Article 1(2)(c)) envisages to review this target by the end of 2024 with a view to reducing it and introducing restrictions to the landfilling of non-hazardous waste other than municipal waste, where appropriate. The legislative package aims to promote recycling by restricting landfilling. To prevent the creation of incineration overcapacities, it is essential to have a coherent policy framework where action on landfilling is synergetic and supportive of our long-term objectives on recycling. Past experience shows that landfill reductions can be implemented more quickly than increases in recycling as the latter cannot be achieved without wide active participation from the general public (e.g. for separate collection and recycled products acceptance) and economically viable value chains of recycling businesses.</p>

<p>The CoR calls for reinforcing the obligation for separate collection of biowaste and on the European Commission together with the Member States to assess, no later than 2018, whether minimum quality criteria should be set for compost and digestate produced from biowaste (Amendment 8).</p>	<p>The Commission's proposal that conditions the obligation for separate collection of biowaste to "where technically, environmentally and economically practicable" mirrors the provisions providing for separate collection for other waste streams. These conditions should be applied in a most stringent way, but they are necessary to address those cases where, for example, separate collection is economically not feasible due to sparsely populated nature of the area and/or small volumes.</p> <p>The Commission has proposed quality criteria for compost and digestate in the framework of the Commission's proposal COM(2016)157 for a Regulation on the making available on the market of CE marked fertilising products and amending Regulations (EC) No 1069/2009 and (EC) No 1107/2009.</p>
<p>The CoR recommends reinforcing the proposed common minimum criteria for extended producer responsibility schemes, in particular by detailing the costs they have to cover and by including the obligation to cover litter prevention and collection and clean-up initiatives (Amendment 3).</p>	<p>The Commission takes note and welcomes the detailed proposals. The proposals are currently being negotiated by the co-legislators and any additional general requirements for extended producer responsibility schemes would need to take account of their adaptability to various waste streams and circumstances and the principle of subsidiarity.</p>
<p>The CoR recommends excluding from the scope of Directive 2006/66/EC on batteries and accumulators and waste batteries and accumulators, batteries and accumulators whose energy storage contains no metals or their compounds and no hazardous substances (Amendment 1).</p>	<p>The Commission will take into account this recommendation in the framework of the review of Directive 2006/66/EC which is already underway.</p>

<p>The CoR is concerned about the considerable power that the proposed directives confer on the European Commission to adopt delegated acts (policy recommendation 27).</p>	<p>The Commission notes the concerns as regards the delegated or implementing powers conferred on the Commission. The Commission has proposed delegated acts to supplement certain non-essential elements of the legislative proposals, i.e. where there is a need to establish technical rules to implement the provisions of the Directive so that the framework legislation can remain relatively simple and stable.</p>
<p>Given the notable success of the Covenant of Mayors, the CoR proposes that a similar structure on waste management be set up (policy recommendation 28).</p>	<p>The Commission is committed to close cooperation with the Committee and the local and regional authorities.</p>

<p>N°5 Food Waste (own-initiative opinion) COR 2015/6646 – NAT-VI/008 118th Plenary Session – June 2016 Rapporteur: Mr Ossi MARTIKAINEN (FI/ALDE) DG SANTE – Commissioner ANDRIUKAITIS</p>	
Points of the CoR opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>1. The CoR regards food waste and waste generated in the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food as a serious global problem which significantly inhibits the achievement of economic, social and environmental development goals. The problem can only be addressed through broad and determined cooperation bringing together different levels of government and areas of policy-making. Civil society and businesses must be fully involved in measures.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that food waste prevention requires action at all levels (EU, regional, national and local) carried out in close cooperation with all key players. Food waste prevention is an integral part of the strategy put forward by the Commission to support the EU's transition towards a Circular Economy.</p>
<p>2. The CoR regards as unsustainable the current situation, in which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – fully one third of products intended for human consumption are lost at various stages of the production process (as raw materials, semi-finished products or finished products); – 28% of global arable land (1.4 billion hectares) produces food every year that goes to waste; – the climate impact of unutilised products generated at various stages of the process amounts to 3.6 Gt of CO₂ equivalent (without taking into account emissions resulting from changes in land 	<p>According to the EU-funded research project FUSIONS², which provides estimations of food waste in the EU, the EU-28 produces about 88 million tonnes of food waste per year amounting to an estimated 143 billion euros. The study indicates that more than 70% of the EU 28 food waste volume arises in the food distribution and consumption side (in order of contribution: households, food service and wholesale and retail sector), with the production and processing sectors (including both fisheries and agriculture) contributing the remaining 30%.</p> <p>The Commission shares the view that preventing and reducing food waste can</p>

²Estimates of European food waste levels, FUSIONS, March 2016 (<http://www.eu-fusions.org/phocadownload/Publications/Estimates%20of%20European%20food%20waste%20levels.pdf>).

<p>use);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – wasteful production and consumption patterns entail substantial loss of global water resources, pose a threat to biodiversity in the form of arable land that has been unnecessarily cleared or is unproductive, impoverish the soil, and squander other finite natural resources; – the great volume of food lost along the production chain or at the finished product stage devalues agriculture and food production, and skews distribution between every player – also at the level of the consumer – in the food product value chain, with unfair results; the annual financial loss due to food waste is estimated at USD 1 trillion, the environmental cost at USD 700 billion and the social cost at USD 900 billion. 	<p>contribute to delivering a threefold benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lowering pressure on climate, water, land, soil and biodiversity; - having a positive economic impact on farmers, operators in the food supply chain and households; and - better guaranteeing food security, by allowing access of more people to the food currently produced. <p>The Commission notes that preventing and reducing food waste can also contribute to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 2, SDG target 12, SDG 13 and SDG 15³.</p>
<p>3. The CoR has drawn up this own-initiative opinion to support and encourage the entire international community, as well as the UN and its specialised agencies, in their endeavours to improve the current situation, namely, on achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2 and 12 (Zero Hunger and Responsible Consumption and Production) which aims at halving food waste by 2030.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the own-initiative opinion of the Committee of the Regions, which makes an important contribution in supporting the EU's progress towards SDGs. The Commission agrees with the importance of working together with international organisations in achieving these goals. The international organisations dealing with food waste issues in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (FAO and UNEP) have been invited to join the newly established EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, as has the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).</p>

³ SDG 2 (End Hunger, Achieve Food Security and Improved Nutrition and Promote Sustainable Agriculture);, SDG 12 (Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns); SDG 13 (Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts); SDG 15 (Protect, Restore and Promote Sustainable Use of Territorial Ecosystems, Sustainably Manage Forests, Combat Desertification, and Halt and Reverse Land Degradation and Halt Biodiversity Loss).

<p>4. The CoR believes that the initiatives of the European Commission relating to resource efficiency and the circular economy also provide a good opportunity to develop projects and legislation to improve the sustainability of food production and consumption.</p>	<p>The Commission considers that preventing food waste and optimising resource use throughout the food value chain may contribute to new models for producing, marketing, distributing and consuming food. The multi-stakeholder action and integrated strategies required to prevent and reduce food waste will thereby help strengthen the sustainability of food systems.</p>
<p>5. The CoR asks the European Commission to take action to develop standard terminology and definitions in this area at European level, and urges it to take part in and shape international dialogue and also to ensure that international observations and recommendations inform EU action. This would make it easier to identify the problems and draw comparisons, and to take the issues into account in the EU's own legislation and cooperation with its trading and development partners. The EU is among other things an internal market and it has a common agricultural policy, and common concepts, procedures and comparable indicators are therefore needed. This could be the basis for establishing comparable criteria at regional level and interregionally for reducing and preventing the generation of food waste.</p>	<p>The definitions of food and waste are already established in the EU regulatory framework; hence, a specific definition of "food waste" is not included in the legislative proposal of the Commission to revise the Waste Framework Directive.</p> <p>The Commission considers that the concept of food waste includes "waste generated in the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food" (see for instance the <i>Preparatory Study on Food Waste across EU 27</i> (October 2010)⁴ or <i>FUSIONS definitional framework for food waste</i>⁵).</p> <p>Further terminology may be introduced in the EU regulatory framework, as needed, by an implementing act establishing a methodology for measuring food waste in the entire value chain and setting up a monitoring system for food waste. The methodology, which</p>

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/archives/eusd/pdf/bio_foodwaste_report.pdf.

⁵ <http://www.eu-fusions.org/index.php/download?download=5:fusions-definitional-framework-for-food-waste>.

	<p>is one of the deliverables of the Circular Economy Action Plan, will describe what should be quantified as food waste in relation to the monitoring and reporting obligations.</p> <p>In this respect, it should be made clear that food losses do not necessarily equate to food waste. Distinguishing food waste from food losses appears to be particularly relevant in relation to the production, postharvest and processing stages in the food supply chain, where inedible parts of food or food not destined to further consumption is not wasted but destined for other uses (e.g. animal feed).</p> <p>Dialogue at EU and international levels to optimise food waste prevention and reduction efforts will be continued and intensified as the key actors at international level (UN organisations) are invited to participate in the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste.</p>
<p><i>European Union policies</i></p>	
<p>The CoR considers that the European Union's own policies and common policies with the Member States offer considerable potential for addressing the food waste problem.</p>	
<p>6. The proposal for revision of the Waste Directive (Directive 2008/98/EC) signals an attempt to further reduce the generation of waste, including food waste.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the view of the CoR on the proposal, which indeed requires Member States to take active measures to prevent food waste and obliges them to monitor and report the amount of food waste, which is expected to have a significant impact on Member States' policies on food waste prevention.</p>

<p>7. As far as the Common Agricultural Policy is concerned, more effort should be made to ensure that both resource-efficient food production and measures to protect nature and the environment are considered fields of activity in their own right. "Farming for subsidy" and restricting production effort are practices that lead to low yields and crops remaining unharvested, which entails waste in terms of both the end result and the entire effort of production;</p>	<p>Sustainable management of natural resources and climate action are key objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)⁶.</p> <p>The mix of policy instruments of the CAP (cross-compliance, green direct payments and several focus areas of the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programmes) provides significant leverage to the EU environmental agenda, aiming at contributing to EU goals regarding resource efficiency, preservation of biodiversity and habitats, soil and water protection, and climate change mitigation and adaptation:</p> <p>(a) the cross compliance mechanism, applying to both Pillars, links the granting of full CAP support to farmers respecting a number of obligations related to environment protection, climate change and good agricultural condition of land;</p> <p>(b) 30% of the direct payment budget is spent for supporting the implementation of "greening practices" (crop diversification on arable land, maintaining existing permanent grassland, and having ecological focus areas);</p> <p>(c) under the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programmes, 51.7% of the total EAFRD funding (i.e. about 51.1 Billion EUR) is allocated to the Union Priorities 4⁷ and 5⁸; and</p>
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⁶ Article 110(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 352/78, (EC) No 165/94, (EC) No 2799/98, (EC) No 814/2000, (EC) No 1290/2005 and (EC) No 485/2008 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 549–607).

⁷ Union Priority 4: "Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems dependent on agriculture and forestry"

(d) the above set of policy instruments is accompanied by related training measures and other support from the Farm Advisory System, insights gained from the Innovation Partnership and applied research, which is expected to help farmers to implement appropriate solutions for their specific situations.

Regarding concerns about "Farming for subsidy" and its possible effects in terms of food losses and waste, it is worth recalling that the CAP as reformed in 2013 includes provisions that can reasonably be expected to contribute to limiting the extent of the issue:

- to avoid granting aid to individuals and companies whose agricultural activity is marginal, direct payments are paid only to 'active farmers';
- Member States have the option to 'cap', i.e. to limit, the amount of the Basic Payment that any farmer receives⁹;
- over 90% of CAP support is now decoupled, encouraging farmers to react to market conditions.

Moreover, regarding the issue of crops remaining un-harvested, the Commission notes that this may be caused by unfavourable market prices, which would not cover the harvesting costs. In other cases, un-harvested crops may be linked to crop failure due to climatic reasons or plant

⁸ Union Priority 5: "Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in the agriculture, food and forestry sectors".

⁹ The funds 'saved' under this mechanism stay in the Member State concerned and are transferred to the Rural Development envelope.

	diseases.
<p>8. Both on the domestic market and in international trade, trade and consumer policy should promote contractual practices and processes that reduce waste. For instance, packaging sizes adopted by the retail trade and standards applying to the shape and size of food products result in significant waste of edible food; promoting the sale of bulk products involving the use of recyclable household containers and so reducing the cost for consumers can help to teach people to buy only what they need rather than set portions which are often over-sized or attractive because they are cheaper.</p>	<p>Since 2009 the Commission has been actively engaged in combating unfair trading practices among actors in the food chain, which in certain cases might lead to over-production by small producers and result in unnecessary food waste. This could especially be the case when parties fail to agree on the essential terms of contract, such as volume or prices or when one of the parties unilaterally modifies the terms of the contract after its conclusion. The Commission's efforts in this area enabled the creation in 2013 of the voluntary EU-wide Supply Chain Initiative, which aims to increase fairness in vertical trade relationships. The Commission continues to closely monitor the development of this initiative.</p> <p>Furthermore, a dialogue between the public, private and civil society stakeholders on the issue of unfair trading practices and sustainability (including food waste) is fostered in the context of the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning of the Food Supply Chain.</p>
<p>9. The food expiration practices and labelling made to promote consumer protection and public health are not fit for purpose in the case of all products, with the result that edible food is unnecessarily thrown away. The Commission has a key role to play in establishing whether it would be possible to draw up guidelines on better resource use, for instance with respect to donating food products to charities and food banks, and employing as fodder food that has passed its use-by date,</p>	<p>The Commission also shares the view that a considerable share of household food waste could be linked to date marking due, amongst other things, to consumer misunderstanding of the meaning of these dates. In addition, how date marking is utilised by food business operators (who establish date marking on food products) and regulatory authorities to manage the food supply chain can contribute to the waste of safe, edible food.</p>

<p>subject to compliance with food safety requirements. It is necessary to educate all stakeholders, producers, retailers and consumers to improve understanding of expiration date labels; for instance, it should be made clear that the "best before" date does not mean that the food will become toxic after that date.</p>	<p>As part of the Circular Economy Action Plan, the Commission will further examine ways to improve the use of date marking by actors in the food chain and its understanding by consumers, in particular "best before" labelling. Further research to map date marking practices by food business operators and control authorities has been initiated and will be carried out in 2016/2017.</p> <p>Moreover, as stated in the Circular Economy Action Plan, the Commission will clarify EU legislation relating to waste, food and feed in order to facilitate food donation and use of former foodstuffs and by-products from the food chain in animal feed without compromising food and feed safety. To this end, the Commission will develop guidelines, currently under preparation, in order to foster better use of food resources in the food value chain.</p>
<p>10. In its development policy, the European Union must join forces with other major donors to secure regional economic and trade cooperation agreements, and to invest in processes that are better at linking production with consumers, in infrastructure and technology, and above all in sustainable development of the natural resources and agriculture sectors. Fair trade programmes, not least those supported by local and regional authorities, can be an important tool in this respect. It is important to enhance the functioning of local markets and access to them for local products, not least through the internalisation of external costs (e.g. transportation of food).</p>	<p>The Commission has agreed recently with other donors within the framework of the G20 to establish a technical platform for sharing information and experiences in measuring and reducing food losses and waste. This platform builds on existing systems, including the future work of the newly established EU Platform on Food Losses and Waste, and will be relevant to both G20 members and low income and developing countries.</p> <p>Regarding the enhanced functioning of local markets, the Commission has increased its support to the development of inclusive and sustainable agriculture-based value</p>

	<p>chains in developing countries. These actions are focussing on issues such as smallholder agriculture, rural livelihoods, sustainable supply and marketing chains and responsible private investment with the overall objective of increasing food and nutrition security. The Commission will furthermore continue its considerable support provided to third countries to improve food safety and quality.</p>
<p>11. Measures to provide assistance to deprived people should continue to include a food aid component and should improve the link between relief organisations and local producers, retailers and catering services, as well as providing for the sale of food products approaching their use-by date directly at a token cost and guaranteeing dignity and privacy for people receiving or buying products under these terms. Cooperation with the third sector should be based on proximity, with the focus on local networks and donations or home deliveries to individual towns or networks of towns, as far as possible avoiding storage and distribution of donations via major regional networks. The amount of food that goes to waste will be reduced by diversifying food products and including local and seasonal products in such programmes.</p>	<p>The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) has been set up to contribute to alleviating the worst forms of poverty in the EU through the provision of non-financial assistance to the most disadvantaged persons in the EU.</p> <p>With a view to reducing food waste, the food distributed under the FEAD may be donated.</p> <p>Bearing in mind the need for proximity of the support to the end beneficiaries, Regulation (EU) no 223/2014 provides that Member States should, where appropriate, promote cooperation between regional and local authorities and bodies representing civil society and the participation by all those involved in drawing up and implementing activities financed from the Fund.</p> <p>As a general principle, the selection criteria for the food products to be distributed under the FEAD, shall also take into consideration climatic and environmental aspects, in particular with a view to reduction of food waste.</p>

<p>12. Public procurement rules could contain clauses aimed at reducing and preventing food waste.</p>	<p>The Commission considers the possible inclusion of provisions on the prevention of food waste in the new version of Green Public Procurement Criteria for Food and Catering Services, which is currently under development. It is expected to be adopted in 2017.</p>
<p><i>Proposals for practical measures from the perspective of local and regional authorities</i></p>	
<p>13. The CoR reminds the European Commission of its past call for more specific objectives to be set for reducing food waste by 30% by 2025 and urges the Commission to develop uniform methodologies for data collection in order to review the food waste reduction targets.</p>	<p>As pointed out in the opinion of the Committee of Regions, the Commission's 2014 legislative proposal¹⁰ related to Circular Economy included an aspirational food waste reduction objective. In the light of the global Sustainable Development Goal related to food waste reduction¹¹, the Commission has chosen to refer to this target to which the EU and its Member States committed as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.</p> <p>The Commission's legislative proposal to revise the Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC)¹² requires Member States to reduce food waste at each stage of the food supply chain as part of waste prevention.</p> <p>The development of methodology to measure food waste is one of the key deliverables on food waste envisaged in the Circular Economy Action Plan. The first outline of the methodology is planned to be discussed within the EU Platform of Food Losses and Food</p>

¹⁰ COM/2014/0397 final - 2014/0201 (COD).

¹¹ SDG 12.3: halve per capita food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030, and reduce food losses along the food production and supply chains.

	Waste.
14. The CoR welcomes the European Commission's commitment to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals through appropriate steps, the involvement of stakeholders, the sharing of valuable and successful innovation and relevant benchmarking.	The Commission welcomes the CoR's support.
15. The CoR urges the Commission to consider the possibility of setting individual reduction targets for every phase of the food production chain: production, processing, selling and distribution, catering services, households and food waste treatment. These targets could form an overarching common EU target, with country-specific programmes and targets being drawn up to achieve it, based on each country's characteristics in each of the phases mentioned, as has been done for example with climate change policy. In order to fully take into account the technical, economic and environmental context, country-specific programmes and plans would be drawn up by all levels of government in cooperation.	The Commission recognizes the value of setting targets for each stage of the food supply chain as a driver for waste prevention. The Commission recalls that the SDG 12.3 includes sectoral targets for food waste at retail and consumer levels. However, in the Commission's view, due to low availability of data on food waste levels at different stages of the food supply chain in the EU, it would be premature to set more specific and legally binding targets at present. As a first step, the Commission has committed to set up a monitoring system for food waste along the food supply chain in close cooperation with Member States and stakeholders as a pre-requisite for any further policies in this area, including the possible setting of food waste prevention targets at EU level.
16. The CoR recommends that the European Commission set up a European platform bringing together different levels of government and relevant stakeholders for the purpose of preventing and reducing food waste and improving the ways in which food waste is managed; it expresses	The set-up of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste announced in the 2015 EU Action Plan for Circular Economy is well advanced. On 1 August 2016, the Commission published the composition of the Platform ¹³ . Its first

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu_actions/eu-platform/index_en.htm

<p>its interest in being involved in activities relating to benchmarking of practical measures and promoting best practice.</p>	<p>gathering held on 29 November 2016 in Brussels¹⁴.</p>
<p>17. The CoR calls on the European Commission to promote and encourage the creation of conventions between the retail food sector and charity associations in EU Member States (i.e. the initiative taken by France who recently passed a law preventing large shops from binning good quality food approaching its best-before date as well as from destroying unsold food fit for consumption). Food donation guides are also needed for industry and charities to clarify liability and encourage businesses to integrate redistribution mechanisms in their supply chain processes. Similar procedures should also be created in other parts of the food sector, such as catering and tourism services. Safety and public health concerns should be assessed in each area of application, using criteria tailored to these areas.</p>	<p>The Commission considers that initiatives taken to facilitate food redistribution and prevent food waste in the food supply chain, for instance the establishment of conventions between the retail food sector and charity associations in EU Member States, require close cooperation between the actors directly concerned. Regulatory authorities working closely with actors in the food chain including food banks are best placed to define actions adapted to the national, regional and/or local contexts. The EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste can provide a forum for exchange of practices implemented in the Member States and results achieved.</p> <p>The guidance clarifying EU legislation in order to facilitate food donation is one of the key deliverables on food waste envisaged in the Circular Economy Action Plan and is currently under preparation. The document is planned to be presented for discussion to the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste.</p>
<p>19. The CoR draws the attention to the fish discards which represents one of the important sources of food waste; it invites the European Commission to envisage a comprehensive plan (recommendations/guidelines) for the processing and marketing of fish products</p>	<p>The Commission would like to recall that the new Common Fisheries Policy has among its primary aims the elimination of discards and the reduction and avoidance of unwanted catches. The gradual introduction of the landing obligation, coupled with</p>

¹⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu_actions/eu-platform/meetings-eu-platform-food-losses-and-food-waste_en

<p>originating from bycatch. Such a plan could include recommendations on how to use unwanted catch that is suitable for human consumption.</p>	<p>the adoption of simpler and more effective technical measures and further effort in improving the selectivity of fishing activities, is expected to deliver on these goals and to ensure an effective management of fisheries resources that will contribute to avoiding food waste. To this end, the Commission is already cooperating closely with the Member States across the different sea basins to ensure smooth implementation of the landing obligation and to find alternative uses for fish landed that cannot be destined for direct human consumption in order for it not to become waste. Furthermore, the EU provides financial support to investments in added value to unwanted catches through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) and promotes the creation of producer organisations. These collective bodies that bring together fishermen have as one of their main objective to avoid and reduce as far as possible unwanted catches. Producer organisations also help fishermen to make the best possible use of these unwanted catches, while ensuring that markets are not developed for undersized catches.</p>
<p>21. The CoR stresses the importance of promoting the exchange of good practice on a wide scale. This should primarily involve promoting programmes supporting local consumption of products marketed by local producers through short supply chains and donations. Use of best practice can, through accumulated experience, promote the adoption of appropriate measures by providing local administrations with sufficient information to implement such</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the importance of dissemination and exchange of good practice. This issue will be one of the key tasks for the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste. The food waste monitoring obligations in the waste legislation proposal will help ensure that sharing of best practice is informed by an appropriate evidence base.</p>

<p>development programmes, while encouraging administrations which have not yet made any progress in this regard.</p>	
<p>22. The CoR recommends that as far as possible local and regional products and seasonal products be used as raw materials for catering services (including public catering services, tourist facilities and guest houses, restaurants and other establishments carrying out similar activities) and advocates lobbying on behalf of locally produced food to shorten the production and consumption chain, which reduces the number of processing stages and thus also the waste generated during the various phases.</p>	<p>The Green Public Procurement Criteria for food and catering services include provisions on the use of seasonal produce. The new version of the criteria is expected to include similar provisions.</p> <p>Both the EU-Ecolabel criteria for tourist accommodation services and for campsite services promote the use of local food products.</p> <p>The Commission also recalls that, through Rural Development Programmes, the CAP provides support for horizontal and vertical cooperation among supply chain actors for the establishment and development of short supply chains and local markets and for promotion activities in a local context relating to the development of short supply chains and local markets.</p>
<p>23. The CoR recommends implementing codes of good practice in businesses in the food, catering and hotel sectors to aim to make optimal use of products so that excess food is used for social purposes, through effective distribution networks and with all the guarantees so it can be used by social entities and disadvantaged families.</p>	<p>The EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste can provide a platform for exploring, together with food business operators and public authorities, the possible role of codes of good practice in fostering food waste prevention at each stage in the food supply chain.</p> <p>Moreover, in the context of the Supply Chain Initiative (see paragraph 8) developed within the framework of the High Level Forum on a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain, a number of Principles of Good Practice were agreed, that are aiming at limiting the occurrence of unfair trading practices and could indirectly</p>

	<p>contribute to food waste prevention. Numerous national codes of conducts were also inspired by the Supply Chain Initiative. The Commission will continue to actively support and promote the initiatives that could help in fostering best practice regarding the prevention of food waste in the food supply chain.</p>
<p>24. The CoR encourages municipalities and local authorities delivering basic school education and other education services to include the issue of food waste and its mitigation as part of the curriculum, for instance through theme days, study visits and students learning how food is managed in their own institution, as well as for instance involving students and other catering service customers in developing catering services. It is important that as many schoolchildren and students as possible get an overall picture during their studies of the way food production and consumption affect the economy, the environment and socially and ethically sustainable consumer behaviour.</p> <p>It is also important to carry out information and training campaigns on responsible consumption aimed at all consumers, not only schoolchildren, focusing particularly on buying products that meet actual needs and conserving these products.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes and supports the view that basic school education and other education services should include the issue of food waste and its mitigation as part of the curriculum.</p>
<p>25. The CoR advocates also including the reduction and prevention of food waste in lifelong learning programmes, in which learning methods and approaches geared to different age groups and life stages can be developed.</p>	<p>The reduction and prevention of food waste is currently not one of the priorities of the Erasmus+ Programme which are defined together with Member States on an annual basis. However, Erasmus+ applies a bottom-up approach which means that projects dealing with this topic are eligible and can be supported if they fulfil all</p>

	formal and quality-related requirements.
<p>28. The CoR recommends that local and regional authorities responsible for waste management develop waste sorting and recycling schemes, indicate the proportion of food waste more clearly and make the data collected universally accessible, so as to help increase the level of recycling of food waste, for instance as biogas and compost. This could also have a positive effect on the local economy, employment and local innovation.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes and supports this recommendation.</p> <p>The Commission's proposal COM(2016)595 introduces an obligation for separate collection of bio-waste. The proposal also envisaged the development of an implementing act establishing a common methodology for monitoring of food waste.</p> <p>The Commission has proposed quality criteria for compost and digestate in the framework of the Commission's proposal COM(2016)157 for a Regulation on the making available on the market of CE marked fertilising products and amending Regulations (EC) No 1069/2009 and (EC) No 1107/2009.</p>
<p>29. The CoR encourages all CoR members in their own local or regional authorities to publicise the objectives of this opinion and to implement their own food waste reduction and prevention programmes. This is one of the most efficient and rapidly effective methods that local and regional authorities can deploy directly to achieve ecologically and economically sustainable development.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes and supports this call to action. The involvement of local and regional authorities and actors is crucial for effective introduction and implementation of food waste prevention measures.</p>

<p>N°6 EU Enlargement Strategy 2015-2016 COM(2015) 611 final – COR 2015/5896 – CIVEX-VI/008 118th Plenary Session - June 2016 Rapporteur: Anna MAGYAR (HU/EPP) DG NEAR - Commissioner HAHN</p>	
Points of the CoR opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>7. The CoR "welcomes the reference by the Commission to the key role of local and regional authorities (LRAs); it stresses, however, as it has done on numerous previous occasions, that better and more detailed focus is needed in future communications and reports on local and regional governance, even when there is no separate acquis chapter or established EU model on the issue of decentralisation and multi-level governance; but considers that ensuring strong, democratic and effective local and regional governance is an essential element of pre-accession preparation as implementation of reforms and a consistent, credible track record of them is often achieved at local level, and points to the importance of subsidiarity as a key EU principle enshrined in the treaties".</p>	<p>The development of functioning, strong, democratic and effective local and regional administration in the candidate countries and potential candidates is supported by the Commission.</p> <p>The 2015 EU Enlargement Strategy indicates that countries need to find an appropriate balance between central, regional and local government that best supports implementation of reforms and the delivery of services to citizens.</p> <p>The 2015 EU Enlargement Strategy stresses that the role of regional and local authorities in the EU alignment process and eventual application of EU rules is also key.</p> <p>While, indeed, there is no specific acquis in this area or an established EU model of decentralisation and multi-level governance, the 2015 EU Enlargement Strategy, the Country Reports, Screening Reports (published on the internet¹⁵) and the Enlargement negotiation documents increase the focus on public administration reform and administrative capacity required for implementation of the acquis, which are relevant for national, regional and local levels of governance.</p> <p>The Instrument for Pre-Accession</p>

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/package/index_en.htm.

	<p>Assistance (IPA) funding helps candidate countries and potential candidates to address these issues. Additionally, the sector-based approach applied for the first time under this Instrument in the 2014-2020 period, places special emphasis on strengthening administrative capacity and, brings together, in integrated interventions, support to reforms including investments where appropriate and efforts to build the capacities of institutions responsible for policy development and implementation in a given sector (incl. LRAs).</p>
<p>11. The CoR believes that the fundamentals and priority areas in the Commission Communication and reports are generally properly identified; it invites the Commission to consider also focusing on other relevant, horizontal issues which are important in every candidate and potential candidate for enlargement among its priority areas (e.g. social policy, focus on vulnerable/disadvantaged groups and minorities).</p>	<p>The 2015 Communication sets out a medium-term strategy for EU enlargement policy to cover the period of the mandate of the Commission. Enlargement policy remains focused on the "fundamentals first" principle. Those fundamentals are: the rule of law, fundamental rights including freedom of expression and fighting discrimination and hostility towards vulnerable groups, notably the LGBTI community and Roma, strengthening democratic institutions, including public administration reform, as well as economic development and competitiveness. Such priorities are crucial for addressing the issues of vulnerable/disadvantaged groups and minorities.</p> <p>These issues are treated also in the Country Reports and Screening Reports (published on the internet) in chapters 23 (judiciary and fundamental rights) and 19 (social policy and employment)¹⁶. These issues are targeted also by funding from the Instrument for Pre-Accession</p>

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/package/index_en.htm.

	Assistance (IPA).
<p>15. The CoR calls for further efforts to depoliticise public administration and increase transparency in every candidate and potential candidate for enlargement, as high political interference remains a challenge and hinders cooperation between government levels.</p> <p>16. The CoR stresses the importance of the fight against public and private corruption at all levels of government and society, underlining that credible results in this field usually require progress at local level as well.</p>	<p>Indeed, as emphasised in the 2015 Enlargement Strategy, the public administration reform needs to be pursued with vigour, to ensure the necessary administrative capacity as well as to tackle high levels of politicisation and a lack of transparency.</p> <p>The Commission in its 2015 EU Enlargement Strategy emphasises that a well-functioning public administration at all levels is necessary for democratic governance and accountability. The quality of administration at all levels also directly impacts a governments' ability to provide public services, to prevent and fight against corruption and to foster competitiveness and growth. Embedding meritocratic principles in the management of the civil service and ensuring adequate administrative procedures is essential.</p> <p>IPA funding helps candidate countries and potential candidates to address these issues.</p>

<p>N°7 Combatting radicalisation and violent extremism: prevention mechanisms at local and regional level (own-initiative opinion) COR 2015/6329 – CIVEX-VI/010 118th Plenary Session - June 2016 Rapporteur: Mr Bart SOMERS (BE/ALDE) DG HOME –Commissioner AVRAMOPOULOS</p>	
<p>Points of the CoR opinion considered essential</p>	<p>Commission position</p>
<p>4. The CoR encourages European and national authorities to share intelligence as much as possible with local authorities, without endangering security.</p>	<p>The European Agenda on Security¹⁷ and the subsequent Communication on delivering on the European Agenda on Security¹⁸ acknowledge the need for a stronger exchange of intelligence and cooperation, and a corresponding action plan is being developed.</p> <p>Furthermore, in the Communication on enhancing security in a world of mobility¹⁹, the Commission has identified an approach to enhance the exchange of information not only between law enforcement authorities, but also between the law enforcement and the intelligence community.</p> <p>In the area of prevention of radicalisation, the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) Centre of Excellence is looking into recommendations on building multi-agency approaches involving the relevant (local) authorities facilitating information exchange concerning individuals at risk.</p>
<p>7. The CoR urges the Commission, the</p>	<p>The Commission reiterated the need for</p>

¹⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52015DC0185&from=EN>.

¹⁸ http://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:9aae420-0797-11e6-b713-01aa75ed71a1.0022.02/DOC_1&format=PDF.

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-security/legislative-documents/docs/20160914/enhancing_security_in_a_world_of_mobility_en.pdf.

<p>Member States, the local and regional authorities, as well as civil society and notably the scientific community to intensify their efforts and in particular their cross-country/cross-sector cooperation in order to investigate the root causes of violent radicalisation, the process and the various influences and factors leading to violent radicalisation, with a view to the development of tools for Member States and the EU to develop evidence-based policies.</p>	<p>targeted research on radicalisation in its June 2016 Communication on the prevention of Radicalisation²⁰. EU research has produced, and continues to produce, concrete tools and policy analysis directly usable by Member States' security practitioners and policy-makers. Under Horizon 2020, further research is foreseen on the complex root causes of violent radicalisation. A conference on 'Addressing Radical Ideologies and Violent Extremism: The Role of Research' was held in Brussels on 26 September 2016.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Radicalisation Awareness Network Centre of Excellence is tasked to map research findings directly relevant for the practitioners' work, and identify research gaps. Following a RAN research early in 2016, the findings will be presented in a report to be published later in 2016.</p>
<p>8. The CoR underlines the need for an EU network to be developed to help achieve stronger EU local and regional collaboration on combatting radicalisation and violent extremism and terrorism; it further encourages the Radicalisation Awareness Network and the Strategic Communications Network in continuing the development of effective preventive measures, especially by improving early detection of signs of radicalisation at local level, countering rhetoric through communication strategies and the development of robust rehabilitation programmes.</p>	<p>The RAN Centre of Excellence fosters the exchange of practices amongst first line practitioners in the field of radicalisation. The RAN furthermore develops close linkages with networks at national, EU and international level (e.g. Strong Cities Network, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Hedaya/ Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)).</p> <p>As to the Syria Strategic Communications Advisory Team (SSCAT), given the success of the first project in supporting Member States in</p>

²⁰<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1475675675519&uri=CELEX:52016DC0379>.

	<p>developing their strategic communications in tackling the Foreign Terrorist Fighters phenomenon, the Commission has committed to fund the follow-up project "European Strategic Communications Network" (ESCN).</p>
<p>10. The CoR underlines the importance of action on causes to tackle radicalisation and the recruitment of terrorists, stepping up prevention, mainly by monitoring the internet and holding dialogue with faith-based communities and their leaders, as well as meetings, information days, awareness-raising activities and, in general, sensitising civil society to these issues.</p>	<p>In December 2015, the Commission launched the EU Internet Forum with the objective to reduce accessibility to terrorist material and to empower civil society partners to counter the violent extremist propaganda with positive narratives. The EU Internet Referral Unit at Europol helps identify terrorist content online, and refers the material to the companies for removal. A Joint Referral Platform is to be developed by the internet industry to prevent removed material from being re-uploaded on to other platforms.</p> <p>Such monitoring should not amount to general monitoring obligations on intermediaries, as prohibited by Article 15 of the E-Commerce Directive²¹, and should be carried out by law-enforcement and NGOs, in line with existing legal provisions (e.g. in the context of data protection rules).</p> <p>The Commission has furthermore committed EUR 10 million to develop a Civil Society Empowerment Programme to boost alternative narratives online.</p> <p>Moreover, the Communication on the prevention of Radicalisation explicitly recognises the crucial role of dialogue with communities and their leaders (including faith-based communities). In 2016 the Commission has allocated EUR 4.5 million to projects aimed at creating better understanding between</p>

²¹ OJ L 178, 17.7.2000.

	communities to prevent and combat racism and xenophobia through interreligious and intercultural activities.
12. The CoR stresses that the RAN should make an extra effort to reach smaller cities and communities, enabling small entities to equally access the RAN.	<p>The RAN brings together a continuously growing number of front line practitioners (currently over 2 400), to exchange experiences, pool knowledge and identify best practices in tackling radicalisation. To engage more proactively with the local policy level, the RAN has established a dedicated working group bringing together local prevent coordinators from across the EU.</p> <p>The working group has already put together recommendations on how to create a local network²². Furthermore, efforts are focused on developing practical guidelines for an effective local approach in a multi-agency setting, to be presented at the upcoming RAN High Level Conference on 9 November 2016.</p>
13. The CoR calls on the European Commission to seek swift agreement on a common definition of the phenomenon of violent radicalisation, as a starting point for a more coordinated approach by the various countries and with the contribution of the regional and local authorities, also taking into account that each Member State's experience is deeply shaped by unique political, cultural, and legal elements.	Since the phenomenon of radicalisation is constantly evolving, the Commission adopts a flexible and holistic approach which allows it to address evolving challenges.
24. The CoR calls for it to be ensured that all measures undertaken by the Member States and the EU to combat violent radicalisation fully respect fundamental	As stated in the Communication on delivering on the European Agenda on Security, both the EU and its Member States have a responsibility towards

²² http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-local/docs/ran_local_how_to_create_local_networks_kick-off_meeting_rotterdam_22-23022016_en.pdf.

<p>rights and civil liberties, namely the right to private life, the right to data protection, the presumption of innocence, the right to a fair trial and due process, freedom of expression, freedom of conscience and freedom of association.</p>	<p>their citizens to deliver an area of internal security where individuals are protected, in full compliance with EU fundamental rights. At EU level we need to build an effective and genuine Security Union in which the rights and freedoms of citizens are well protected. This principle is enshrined, amongst others, in the European Charter of Fundamental Rights, and constantly recalled and duly taken into account, e.g. in the recent Communication supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism.</p>
<p>28. The CoR calls on the Commission to encourage the Member States and their local and regional authorities to pursue more active and more interventionist anti-discrimination policies, especially in education and in the labour and housing markets, inter alia taking their cue from the policies already put in place by regions which have implemented integration measures, such as the distributed reception approach. To tackle the spread of radicalism, the priority objective should be to work for genuine social and cultural integration, based on a constructive dialogue between different groups and on education. To this end, all civil society players whose work is geared to this aim should be given every support and enabled to work in the most effective way</p>	<p>Inclusive education, equality, equity, non-discrimination and the promotion of civic competences constitute a new priority for European cooperation in education and training up to 2020 (ET 2020), as agreed by the Council and Commission in November 2015. This notably includes mutual learning between the Member States on enhancing access to quality and inclusive mainstream education and training for all learners, including disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>The Commission will therefore encourage mutual learning and support authorities dealing with the prevention of violent extremism, notably through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - developing a policy framework for promoting inclusion and common EU values through education and an online-compendium of good practices under ET 2020, as well as via a proposal for a Council Recommendation, as announced in the Commission Communication on the prevention of Radicalisation;

- expanding the European Toolkit for Schools which is a new online platform offering good practice examples and resources on how to introduce collaborative approaches in schools to improve inclusiveness and achieve success for all;
- enhancing the use of e-Twinning, an online platform connecting 300 000 teachers across Europe, in particular with the aim of promoting fundamental values and citizenship. The Commission will explore the possibility of extending e-Twinning to other countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Furthermore, a key element of effective integration policies is combatting racism, xenophobia and in particular hate speech. The Commission is pursuing a strong enforcement policy of the Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law.

As regards countering hate speech in audiovisual media services, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)²³, in its current form, already prohibits incitement to hatred based on race, sex, religion or nationality in TV broadcasts and video-on-demand services. The Commission proposal for the revision of the AVMSD adopted on 25 May 2016 envisages reinforcing the measures addressing hate speech.

The proposal would require video-sharing platforms to take appropriate

²³ OJ L 95, 15.4.2010.

	<p>measures (such as flagging, reporting and parental control systems) to protect citizens from incitement to hatred. In addition, the proposal envisages aligning the grounds on which hate speech is based to those of the Framework Decision on combatting certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia. The proposal thus contributes to clarify the scope of incitement to violence or hatred prohibited in audiovisual media services. It will also create better coherence with the Framework Decision.</p> <p>In June 2016, the Commission set up a High Level Group on combatting racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. It brings together national authorities, civil society organisations and community representatives to step up cooperation and coordination between relevant actors and to maximize the impact on countering hate crime and hate speech on the ground.</p>
<p>30. The CoR urges the Commission to support efforts in the Member States and the regional and local authorities to catch up with regard to diversity in the labour market in general.</p>	<p>Member States can make use of the financial resources provided by the European Structural and Investment Funds for social inclusion, and in particular the European Social Fund to support the integration of disadvantaged groups into the labour market, including minorities and migrants, and to combat all forms of discrimination. In case this requires an amendment of their operational programme, the Commission stands ready to assess Member States' requests. In addition, funding from the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI Programme) can support innovative projects at the</p>

	<p>local level. Likewise, in the context of social inclusion and social integration the European Regional Development Fund programmes may support a wide range of social inclusion measures, thus preventing radicalisation. Actions may cover investments in social, health, education, housing and childcare infrastructure, support for business start-ups, regeneration of deprived urban areas, actions to reduce spatial and educational isolation, Furthermore, the Commission provides funding to public authorities through the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme to support their efforts in promoting non-discrimination and diversity, including in the labour market.</p>
<p>32. The CoR calls for EU initiatives, in close cooperation with Member States and the regional and local authorities, to tackle neighbourhoods and regions where various forms of organised crime are rife. These specific areas should be identified on the basis of consultations, and prioritised and given additional support on the basis of quantitative and qualitative criteria; illegal networks where money can be laundered and where the rule of law is undermined should be tackled effectively by the police and the judicial system. This will prevent the development of neighbourhoods where the rule of law is absent, where lawlessness and a lack of moral standards prevail, and where the foundations of democracy and the rule of law are no longer a visible part of people's social reality and individual lives. This vacuum gives extremist networks every opportunity to obtain financial</p>	<p>The EU has set up strong rules to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism, to prevent the EU financial system from being misused for these purposes. The Fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive²⁴, adopted on 20 May 2015, sets high standards to ensure that credit and financial institutions are equipped to detect and take action against such risks.</p> <p>Given the evolving risks, the Commission proposed in July 2016 some amendments to improve the current legislative framework. Furthermore and in accordance with the Action Plan on Terrorist Financing, the Commission intends to present a proposal for a Directive on criminal offences and sanctions.</p>

²⁴ OJ L 141, 5.6.2015.

<p>resources from illegal activities, to recruit, and to undermine the legitimacy of democracy and the rule of law.</p>	
<p>34. The CoR highlights the importance of preventing the emergence of deprived non-diverse neighbourhoods dominated by one ethnic-cultural community. The European Commission should assist the Member States and the regional and local authorities in promoting social cohesion and inclusion as a tool in the prevention of violent radicalisation, and encourage Member States to make the necessary means available to take this work forward.</p>	<p>Under the European Structural and Investment Funds programmes, Member States can support the regeneration of urban and rural deprived neighbourhoods. It may cover a wide range of measures, such as education, employment, housing and health in order to ensure comprehensive actions. European Structural and Investment (ESI) Fund support should not contribute to further isolation of deprived communities, on the contrary physical and social integration is the expected outcome.</p>
<p>35. The CoR calls on the European Commission to provide the financial means enabling local authorities to identify and connect people and networks capable of producing a counter-narrative.</p>	<p>The RAN Centre of Excellence and its working group on 'Communication and Narratives' works with industry and civil society partners on ways to support the development of alternative and counter-narratives and share experiences and insights.</p> <p>Furthermore, the national envelopes of the Internal Security Fund (please refer to point 10 on the Civil Society Empowerment Programme), managed by Member States, may also be used for developing actions in the field of radicalisation and counter narratives.</p> <p>Under the Erasmus+ Programme, special attention is given to the dissemination and upscaling of good practices from grassroots level, also to the benefit of local authorities. This includes support for the development of counter-narratives (through a dedicated call launched in 2016). To accelerate mutual learning on this topic, a special peer learning activity has been devoted</p>

	<p>to “Strengthening media literacy and critical thinking among young people as a tool to prevent and combat violent radicalisation” under ET 2020 (The Hague, 20-22 April 2016).</p> <p>Under the Rights Equality and Citizenship Programme, the Commission is funding projects on preventing and combatting racism and xenophobia, including hate crime and hate speech, including through the development of positive counter-narratives; creating a better understanding between communities; and fostering interreligious and intercultural activities.</p> <p>Counter-narratives are provided, in addition, under the URBACT Programme, co-financed by the ERDF, and under Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). It should also empower local communities by reinforcing their voices and involvement in decision making (examples: Roma-Net, Open cities).</p>
<p>38. The CoR urges the Commission to seriously address unemployment and school drop-out rates among ethnic minorities in cooperation with local and regional authorities.</p>	<p>The Commission mobilises the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to promote and improve inclusive education and labour inclusion. For 2014-2020, ERDF has allocated EUR 6 billion for education measures. Some relevant examples include: modernising the education infrastructure or financing actions to reduce educational segregation of marginalised groups. In this regard, the Commission promotes an integrated approach combining measures across various areas to reinforce multidimensional social integration.</p> <p>Youth unemployment is addressed via</p>

the Youth Guarantee. It underlines the importance of outreach and personalised support, especially to young people furthest away from the labour market and who often face multiple barriers to (re)entering employment and education. In 2015, the Commission adopted a proposal for a Council Recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market, adopted in 2016 by the Council, which is urging Member States to undertake a variety of actions. Establishing partnerships between key stakeholders, including local and regional authorities, can help provide more effective service delivery and improve outreach and support to the target audience.

Reducing early school leaving (ESL) is another long-standing priority for European cooperation in education and training under ET 2020. The Europe 2020 headline target aims to reduce ESL to less than 10% by 2020. Progress is followed up every year under the European Semester and through the Education and Training Monitor.

As regards ethnic minorities, under the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies, Member States should explicitly target Roma for Early-School Leaving strategies, who continue to be overrepresented among early school leavers. The Commission furthermore calls on Member States to eliminate segregation in education and housing through legislation, inclusive policy reform, teacher education, dissemination of inclusive methods and explicit desegregation measures

	<p>combined with targeted support to tackle all barriers to access (specific guidance has been issued in respect of the use of ESI Funds).</p>
<p>42. The CoR points out that European funds must be allocated to European towns and regions and local and regional authorities in order to implement projects and programmes to prevent violent radicalisation, campaigns to identify problems which are at the root of the conflicts, and awareness-raising activities.</p>	<p>The Commission mobilises various EU funding instruments for inclusive growth and to fight marginalisation. The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) play an important role as a funding instrument to support social inclusion policies. For the 2014-2020 programming period, Member States plan to allocate a total of EUR 21.47 billion from the ERDF for inclusive growth measures. ERDF supports the social inclusion of marginalised and disadvantaged groups through: providing social, education, health, housing and childcare infrastructure; regenerating deprived urban areas; etc.</p> <p>In case a Member States wishes to amend its programme under ESF and ERDF to include new target groups, the Commission stands ready to assess Member States' requests and to help them.</p> <p>Under the Erasmus+ Programme, the Commission is promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through mainstreaming and dedicated action. Education and training stakeholders at local and regional level are invited to participate in the dedicated Erasmus+ projects and partnerships.</p> <p>Please refer to point 35 for the Rights Equality and Citizenship Programme and the Internal Security Fund.</p>

44. The CoR agrees that there is a need to step up information sharing and operational cooperation and to make progress in curbing illicit firearms trafficking and the financing of terrorism. It also sees a need to introduce effective instruments to monitor the dark web, which is often used as a means of disseminating radical content, as well as to beef up external border controls on the basis of risk indicators.

On 18 November 2015, the Commission adopted a package of legislative measures to strengthen the control of firearms in the European Union composed of a Proposal to revise the Firearms Directive (Directive 477/91) and an implementing Regulation on common minimum standards for deactivation of firearms. The latter entered into force on 8 April 2016. This legal package has been backed up with an Action Plan (adopted on 2 December 2015) stepping up operational cooperation at EU level among Member States and with third countries against illicit trafficking in and use of firearms and explosives.

The EU has supported and is leading a number of activities in relation to illegal activities on the Darknet: funding of projects investigating the structure of illegal trade on anonymous marketplaces online and boosting cooperation among law enforcement to tackle the phenomenon; operations supported by the European Cybercrime Centre (EC3) at Europol; funding of capacity building and expertise-sharing projects for EU law enforcement agencies in this area and help bridging law enforcement and cyber-resilience communities.

The Commission facilitated the establishment of risk indicators to support border guards in carrying out more targeted checks. Following a consultation with Member States' counter-terrorism experts and border guards, and with the support of Europol and Interpol, a first list was issued in June 2015 and operationalized by

	<p>Frontex as a guidance booklet.</p> <p>Please refer to point 32 on terrorism financing.</p>
<p>45. The CoR asks the Commission to assist Member States in the coordination of their strategies, by sharing the information and experience gained by local and regional authorities, gathering good practices and skills, evaluating the measures taken, and working together to take new initiatives to combat violent radicalisation;</p> <p>46. The CoR calls on the Commission to highlight the essential role of local authorities in preventing violent radicalisation and violent extremism, and to support this pivotal role by prioritising the establishment of a European framework for action to combat violent radicalisation at local, regional and national levels, which would give the Member States recommendations for (further) developing their own policy.</p>	<p>The Communication assists Member States in exchanging expertise and experience in setting up prevent strategies and networks, inter alia through the establishment of a repository of prevent strategies at a national, regional or local level and national/regional contact points in Member States.</p> <p>Please refer to points No 8 and 12 on the RAN Centre of Excellence, which fosters the exchanges of best practices as well as exchanges between front-line practitioners and policy makers, and to point No 28 for sharing of information and experience in education.</p>
<p>47. The CoR urges the Commission to focus on further collecting and publicising best practices in a workbook of guidelines of the kind already available, for example, from the RAN Centre of Excellence, in order to support local authorities – who often have limited capacities – in developing their own local approach.</p>	<p>Please refer to point No 12 for the local dimension of RAN. Furthermore, the RAN brings together practitioners to discuss the challenges they face and develop and share best practices. The most promising practices are gathered in the “RAN Collection – approaches, lessons learned and practices”²⁵, which contains some 100 peer reviewed practices alongside lessons learned and recommendations. This Collection continues to grow. This Collection contains also generalised learnings and insights which are supplemented by issue papers and guidance documents on specific topics such as the ex-post</p>

²⁵http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-best-practices/docs/ran_collection-approaches_and_practices_en.pdf.

	<p>papers: “RAN LOCAL 'What projects and initiatives should be supported by local authorities?’²⁶” or “RAN LOCAL 'How to create local networks?’²⁷”.</p>
<p>48. The CoR considers it necessary for the Commission to support local and regional authorities in developing local and national prevention strategies to counter violent radicalisation, for example by providing experts from the RAN Centre of Excellence for the relevant authorities to consult; it underlines the importance of exchange of experiences between local and regional authorities such as best-practices and lessons-learnt.</p>	<p>The RAN Centre offers tailor-made expertise to Member States when requested. Since 2014, the RAN Centre has provided its expertise to 19 Member States supporting, <i>inter alia</i>, the launching of new Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programmes and strategies, developing exit programmes, or establishing national networks of practitioners. In 2016, 20 such deployments are offered to Member States.</p> <p>The RAN Centre of Excellence will provide a toolbox to provide guidance to the relevant authorities to establish local multi agency approaches, including guidance on prevent strategies, intervention models as well as the establishment of the necessary structures.</p> <p>Please also refer to points No 8 and 12.</p>
<p>56. The CoR urges the Commission to support Member States in conducting information campaigns to make young people and young adults more aware of the issue of violent radicalisation and to</p>	<p>The Commission's activities in the field of media literacy (e.g. via the exchange of best practices) aim to contribute to increasing the ability of citizens to access, understand, create and critically evaluate different types of media. This is</p>

²⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-local/docs/ex_post_ran_local_athens_23-24_05_2016_en.pdf.

²⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/about-ran/ran-local/docs/ran_local_how_to_create_local_networks_kick-off_meeting_rotterdam_22-23022016_en.pdf.

<p>encourage them to think critically.</p>	<p>in view of encouraging the critical thinking of citizens in the converged digital media environment.</p> <p>In the field of education, the Commission also announced the establishment of a network of positive role models for inclusion, who would go to schools, youth and sport clubs and prisons to speak and bond with young people. The network of role models would complement the activities of education professionals contributing to the prevention of violent extremism. The Commission is also planning to examine the feasibility of moderated virtual exchanges among young people in and outside Europe, as a means to increase mutual understanding of different cultures and traditions.</p> <p>The Syria Strategic Communications Advisory Team (SSCAT) project supports Member States in exchanging best practices and providing tailored advice in the area of strategic communications with a view to preventing and countering terrorist crime and violent extremism (which includes youth as target group). The RAN has a dedicated working group on families, youth and communities which focusses <i>inter alia</i> on the exchange of practices and insights as regards engagement with youth including ways to enhance critical thinking. Please also refer to points No 10 and 35 on the role of the RAN Communications and Narrative working group, as well as the Civil Society Empowerment Programme.</p> <p>In the framework of the Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online, signed with IT</p>
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	<p>companies in 2016, it was agreed to identify and promote independent counter-narratives as well as supporting educational programmes that encourage critical thinking.</p> <p>Furthermore, under the Rights Equality and Citizenship Programme, media literacy is addressed by supporting efforts to create buy-in among media users, media platforms, content providers and community leaders to promote responsibility and common values in the public information space.</p>
<p>58 and 63. The CoR strongly urges the Commission to investigate how individual mentoring programmes can be validated as a measure in the fight against violent radicalisation, thus ensuring that attention is focused not only on detecting violent radicalisation, but also on reintegrating people into society.</p>	<p>The Commission is already supporting Member States in their efforts to prevent and counter radicalisation in the prisons and probation context, notably by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - using the RAN Centre of Excellence and High Level Expert Group to exchange good practices and formulate policy recommendations on the prevention of radicalisation for first-line practitioners, as well as to provide case-specific support to Member States' prison and probation services. This includes the RAN general awareness train-the-trainer programme, which provides prison and probation trainers with additional tools to train their local staff on the topic of radicalisation as well as more broadly on exit programmes; - supporting the development of training programmes in prisons to enable detainees to ease their reintegration into society; - supporting the development of rehabilitation programmes for

	<p>prisoners;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promoting the sharing of information at Eurojust by specialised prosecutors. <p>Outside the prison context, the RAN Collection (point 47) provides insights into peer-reviewed practices for setting up programmes of de-radicalisation or disengagement aiming at re-integrating radicals or at least dissuading them from violence. The dedicated RAN Working Group RAN EXIT explored the methodological minimum requirements for exit interventions, providing therefore valuable learning for exit workers, organisations implementing de-radicalisation programmes and policy makers commissioning and/or facilitating de-radicalisation approaches. Learning was shared with Member States in dedicated workshops on setting up successful exit programmes.</p>
<p>66-67. The CoR urges the Commission and the Member States, in cooperation with the regional and local authorities, to develop a more proactive policy of gender equality on the basis that it is a cornerstone of our European social model; it calls in this connection for tougher preventive and punitive action against sexual intimidation and violence.</p> <p>The CoR urges the Commission to provide support for general programmes to encourage young women in their struggle for greater equality.</p>	<p>The Commission reaffirmed its commitment to gender equality in the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019 which is implemented through specific actions under five priority areas covering access to the labour market; fighting poverty among women; promoting equality in decision-making; combating gender-based violence; promoting women's rights across the world.</p> <p>More specifically, addressing the issue of gender gaps in education and training and promoting more gender-balanced educational choices are part of the new priorities for European cooperation in education and training under ET 2020.</p>

	<p>Furthermore, understanding the role of women in radicalisation processes is key. This is why the Commission has supported the development of specific initiatives and frameworks to involve and encourage women in countering extremism and violent radicalisation via targeted projects. In the context of the RAN, learning has been distilled in an issue paper on the gender aspects in radicalisation.</p>
<p>69. The CoR notes in this regard that "hotlines" have been successful, but that a distinction should be made between lines for reporting violent radicalisation (tip lines) and those for supporting friends and families dealing with these disruptive situations (helplines).</p> <p>70. The CoR calls on the Commission to examine whether it is possible to set up such a system in all European Member States.</p>	<p>A number of countries have set up helplines to individuals who are witnessing signs of radicalisation (e.g. parents, other relatives, friends, teachers, but also the police, the mosque etc.). In the framework of the support provided to Member States, the RAN Centre of Excellence organised a workshop providing practical guidelines on how to set up helplines, what factors to take into account and in what way earlier experiences and practices may be translated to other Member States.</p>
<p>71. The CoR calls on the Commission to pay close attention, when developing measures to combat violent radicalisation, to the long-term impact that these measures could have on the future of Europe's inclusive and intercultural society.</p>	<p>Article 3 of the TUE states that the Union shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States. The Commission is fully aware of the fact that all these leading values have an intrinsic long-term nature and contribute to the creation of more resilient societies, which are in turn the most appropriate answer to the threats of violent extremism. The promotion of inclusive, open and resilient societies is one of the seven specific areas mentioned in the Communication on the prevention of Radicalisation, which will be translated into concrete long-term actions.</p>

	<p>The Commission's actions within the context of education and training are particularly geared to the long- and medium-term and aim to support Member States in promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination. They also enhance intercultural competences, understanding of democratic values and respect for fundamental rights, thus equipping all people to interact positively with their peers from diverse backgrounds.</p>
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