FUTURE of Europe campaign in a nutshell
Invitation from the European Council President to engage Local and Regional Authorities and citizens in the EU-wide debate on the future of Europe

C. Rouillon Opinion on “Reconnecting Europe with its citizens”

Launch of the Re/f_lecting on Europe initiative

CoR /f_irst EU-institution to organise citizens dialogues at local level

CoR inducing stepped-up dialogues with citizens at local level

CoR first EU-institution to organise citizens dialogues at local level

CoR members organise genuine bottom-up dialogues with citizens in close cooperation with EU-institutions

CoR organisers are best placed to listen to the citizens’ concerns about the future of Europe and to report back to the EU-level

Bridge between ground game launched by the European Parliament and citizens dialogues

CoR members organise genuine bottom-up dialogues with citizens in close cooperation with EU-institutions

French President Emmanuel Macron

210 CoR members participating in local events

6,257 subscribers of the “Re/f_lecting on Europe” newsletter

Around 4,000 participants in local events

More than 120 local and regional partners of local events

EU Institutions, 500 Europe Direct Information Centres (EDICs)

First preliminary report shared with CoR organisers at the future of Europe

First preliminary report “Re/f_lecting on Europe. How Europe is perceived by people in regions and cities”

First preliminary report shared with CoR members at the future of Europe

First preliminary report shared with CoR members at the future of Europe

K-H. Lambertz/M. Markkula Opinion on the future of Europe #SOTREG

2nd address on the state of the European Union: the point of view of regions and cities (SOTREG)

November 2018

EuroPCom

December 2018

European Council Restitution of citizens consultations

March 2019

8th European Summit of Regions and Cities

23-26 May 2019

European Parliament elections

2020

New CoR mandate

March 2016

Launch of the Reflecting on Europe initiative

October 2017

1st address on the state of the European Union: the point of view of regions and cities (SOTREG)

11 April 2018

First preliminary report “Re/f_lecting on Europe. How Europe is perceived by people in regions and cities”

CoR conference on the future of Europe

17 April 2018

Launch of President Macron’s citizens’ consultations

October 2018

K-H. Lambertz/M. Markkula Opinion on the future of Europe #SOTREG

November 2018

2nd address on the state of the European Union: the point of view of regions and cities (SOTREG)

March 2019

8th European Summit of Regions and Cities

Sibiu European Summit

9 May 2019

March 2016

March 2019

March 2020

New CoR mandate

30 European countries and around 110 regions

more than 250 local events

over 260 CoR members

around 45,000 citizens

30,000 responses to the CoR survey by then
Future of Europe campaign: a dialogue between citizens, cities and regions and the European Union

In 2016 the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, asked the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) - as the voice of cities and regions - to submit its recommendations on the future of Europe. Subsequently, the CoR launched its “Reflecting on Europe” campaign whereby members held local events with citizens in their regions and cities to hear their views. This brochure gives an overview of what citizens said they want in the future of Europe.

Complemented by an EU-wide online survey and consultation of local and regional authorities, the feedback formed the basis of an opinion led by the CoR’s President, Karl-Heinz Lambertz, and its First Vice-President, Markku Markkula, which was adopted during its plenary on 9 October 2018. The opinion “Reflecting on Europe: the voice of regional and local authorities to rebuild trust in the European Union” was adopted shortly after the President Lambertz gave his second “State of the Union: view of regions and cities” speech during a debate with the European Parliament’s President, Antonio Tajani.

The opinion and speech form the basis of the CoR’s efforts to contribute to the debate on the Future of Europe ahead of the meeting of the EU leaders in Sibiu on 9 May and the European elections on 23-26 May 2019.

The CoR is committed to ensuring that the voice of regional and local authorities and their citizens is heard within the EU in an effort to make the European project more transparent, democratically accountable and develop new forms of participative democracy.

Share with us your ideas on the future of Europe!

How we communicate

Visit our web page www.cor.europa.eu/future.eu
The online survey/mobile App is the main feedback gathering mechanism of the campaign on the Future of Europe. Launched in February 2016, the survey has been successfully used in EU Members States, in the context of local events, with more than 22 000 collected replies so far.

It is also available as mobile app for all devices and in all EU languages. The collected feedback fed into the CoR opinion of 9 October 2018 on "Reflecting on Europe: the voice of regional and local authorities to rebuild trust in the European Union".

Find out how your views will be part of the dialogue on the future of Europe!

Download the Have your say on Europe App
Access real-time results and discover our local events all over Europe via www.cor.europa.eu/future.eu
Key figures

March 2016 - September 2018

- 180 local events/citizens’ debates
- 110 regions
- 30 countries

176 CoR members

- 40,000 citizens reached

22,000 survey responses

Cooperation with EU institutions

42 Europe Direct Information Centres (EDICs)

20 European Commission Representations

3 EU Commissioners as speakers in local events: Pierre Moscovici, Corina Creţu and Elżbieta Bienkowska

The President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker

13 Members of European Parliament as speakers in local events
Local events map & #eulocal hashtag usage

Social media

more than

5 400

social media posts using #Eulocal

over

10 000

likes, shares and comments with posts using #Eulocal

Media Impact

around

1 000

mentions of "citizens' dialogue" in the press across Europe
What people say

All politics is local
Local is real, national is not close enough, Europe is fading away. There is no direct link with the EU because of the lack of a local perspective

Key Messages

- Democratic accountability is a recurring theme when it comes to discussing the European Union in local fora.
- The local level is the right place to start engaging citizens in the shaping of the European Union, especially on issues closer to the daily concerns of people.
- More direct channels of dialogues between the European Union and its citizens are needed.

We need to improve citizens’ participation and democratic accountability.
Nikola Dobroslavić, Dubrovnik, Croatia 28/10/2016

Europe is not Brussels. Europe is made by the citizens. EU needs permanent dialogues with citizens, mainly with those who do not believe in the EU.
Karl-Heinz Lambertz, Brussels, Belgium 01/07/2018

The CoR should facilitate a permanent channel of dialogue with young people.
Georgios Kaminis, Athens, Greece 19/06/2017

Relations between European citizens and the EU have become distorted. In view of the various crises it faces, it is necessary to improve the democratic accountability and functioning of the EU.
Paris, France 04/04/2016

There is a need to improve the quality of democracy.
Budapest, Hungary online survey

With Europe – yes. With the bureaucratic union of the euro-officials – never!
Poland social media
What people say

Trust is the key

People doubt that politics and politicians can bring concrete solutions to their problems and this fuels mistrust

Key Messages

- People perceive the European Union as too distant, too bureaucratic and too slow in responding to new challenges.
- People trust their local and regional politicians more than they trust the European Union or national politicians.
- The European Union must work to offer solutions to problems at a more regional level.

We need to return to a sense of ‘Community’, which has been moved away from in recent years, to pro-actively engage with local and regional government, and to promote the benefits of EU membership.

Kieran McCarthy, Cork, Ireland
19/11/2016

We need to bring the EU closer to its citizens, notably young people.

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Thessaloniki, Greece
20/06/2017

It is important to make people understand about the necessity of Europe in reality. For young people, the daily usefulness of Europe is not always clear.

Micaela Fanelli, Bolzano, Italy
17/03/2017

There is a need for the EU to support the bottom-up approach to provide solutions.

Milan, Italy
05/12/2017

The EU must be more present and closer to its citizens, and not merely a distant voice through national government and heavy bureaucracy.

Rheinbach, Germany
online survey

A positive narrative on Europe against populism and anti-European politics is needed.

Bolzano, Italy
17/03/2017
What people say

Europe still generates strong feelings

Key Messages

- People are still enthusiastic about Europe but at the same time they feel disconnected from the way decisions are taken at the European Union level. This is a feeling that does not only concern their perception of the European Union but politics in general.
- Compared to the EU, “Europe” still has a positive image for most people, in particular when it comes to the values and benefits that the young generation associates with it.
- The notion of unity and a common European identity is particularly cultivated by the younger generations.

More social Europe! In order to fight against populism and nationalism, we have to first reinforce a common European identity and a common sense of European community.

Seville, Spain
13/09/2017

We are all Europeans! There is one way – the European way!

Municipality of Nea Propontida, Greece
14/10/2016

Europeans cultural integrity and values should be preserved. People should have the freedom of choice whether to accept non-European migrants.

Oeiras, Portugal
online survey

Being a European activist is part of my DNA, just like fighting for the values of the Republic, defending freedom and striving to reduce inequality.

Christophe Rouillon, Coulaines, France
28/05/2018

There is no single way of being European. We think the time has come to tell Europe our story, so that, together, we might find new solutions for the challenges we face.

Emil Boc, Cluj Napoca, Romania
13/06/2017

My advice to citizens and regions is to get everyone on board. Citizens, schools, universities, businesses need to work together to have a positive impact on people’s live.

Tanya Hristova, Gabrovo, Bulgaria
03/10/2016
What people say

An alarming signal
People don’t know what Europe is and what Europe is doing

Key Messages

- Lack of knowledge about what the European Union means and does emerge from local debates across Europe.
- Understanding the role of the European Union requires improving information flow and people’s engagement.
- Educating and communicating with citizens in an open and transparent manner should be a priority.

We need a roadmap to renew our Union, to make it simpler and reform the institutions and decision-making processes. We need to show that politicians can provide answers to people’s concerns.
François Decoster, Caen, France
22/05/2018

The knowledge about the EU is vague, especially when it comes to understanding which issues can be addressed at city, regional and country levels and which issues can be solved at EU level.
Stanisław Szwabski, Gdynia, Poland
02/06/2017

People feel Europe is distant from them and unable to solve their problems. The alternative is to start from the bottom: a Europe of people and regions.
Raffaele Cattaneo, Milan, Italy
15/12/2017

We need to improve citizens’ knowledge and gain a better understanding of how Brexit and the EU legislative, political and socio-economic developments affect daily lives.
Huddinge, Sweden
16/10/2017

Improve awareness of citizens about the EU and its policies, trying to fight disinformation, populism and regain trust.
Agrigento, Italy
online survey

There is a need for civic education and improving information about employment opportunities.
Gdynia, Poland
02/06/2017
What people say

Sense of frustration

People are frustrated with the current project of Europe. Europe is not doing enough, or is doing too little: in any case it is not doing the right thing.

Key Messages

- Shared concerns have been voiced about migration, corruption, employment and the rule of law.
- The European Union is expected to step up its efforts in addressing challenges that go beyond the national borders.
- An innovative approach is needed to deal with issues ranging from digitisation to climate change.

The EU’s management of the refugee crisis has been inefficient, but regions and cities have played a positive role.

Manuel Pleguezuelo Alonso, Gijon, Spain
21/09/2016

We would need more and more engagement by CoR members in going locally and listening to citizens’ concerns and proposals for the future of Europe.

Markku Markkula, Cork, Ireland
19/11/2016

Transport in Prešov has been in a very poor condition for many years. We have been talking for thirty years about solutions but no solutions have been found so far.

Andrea Turčanová, Prešov, Slovakia
19/04/2018

The brain drain from Romania, mobility, unemployment and policies to boost attractiveness of the region for the youth are the main concerns.

Cluj Napoca, Romania
13/06/2017

Benefits? There are none. As a small business owner (SME) all I receive from the EU is red tape and more bureaucracy.

Copenhagen, Denmark online survey

Why does the EU not support Italy in the management of migration flows with a stronger programme?

Marcellina, Italy
11/11/2017
What people say

A strong call for more solidarity
Reducing inequalities between poorer and richer regions

Key Messages

• There is a strong call for greater solidarity across Europe.
• Responsibility and risk sharing are crucial in the face of the migration crisis, the financial crisis, and reducing inequalities between regions and countries.
• Cohesion policy can help deliver better living and working conditions for all people regardless of their place of origin.

Solidarity does not work one way!
Now we have to go further: we want sanctions against those countries who are freed from their duty of solidarity in the area of refugee crisis.
André Viola, Carcassone, France
20/04/2018

EU cohesion policy makes the EU perceptible at local level. Holding together is what the EU should be about.
Karl-Heinz Lambertz, Bremen, Germany
17/04/2018

Cross-border collaboration is one of the most significant signs of European Union integration.
Pavel Branda, Liberec, Czech Republic
02/11/2017

We need cooperation and solidarity among all European countries regarding the refugee crisis.
Breitenwang, Austria
08/05/2017

We need to harmonise the high costs of cross-border travel and the right to be treated equally in Germany as in Belgium in hospitals.
Saint-Vith, Belgium
15/11/2017

A way forward to better solidarity: reducing inequalities between poorer and richer regions.
Online survey
What people say

Europe making a difference
The perception of benefits and of the European added value

Key Messages

- Freedom, mobility, investment, infrastructure and educational exchange are considered to be the main benefits stemming from the European Union’s membership.
- Perceptions of the European added value vary across countries.
- People ask for a more active Europe in the area of education, environment, security and tourism.

It is virtually impossible to find a place in Tuscany that has not benefitted from EU Cohesion Policy.
Enrico Rossi, Florence, Italy
11/05/2018

Irish people see Europe in a positive light due to the transformation Ireland has experienced after it joined the EU (from an agriculture-based to an export-driven economy).
Michael Murphy, Löbau, Germany
18/04/2018

Thanks to citizens’ dialogues, people can debate local and EU affairs, and learn more about the benefits brought by the EU.
Jelena Drenjanin, Huddinge, Sweden
16/10/2017

The European Union can provide opportunities for smart specialisation. These will lead to new skills and knowledge, innovation, employment and, ultimately, a better quality of life.
Heraclion, Greece
04/11/2016

For me personally, the EU has benefited my education as my school’s lab was built with EU funding.
Szolnok, Hungary
online survey

The EU benefits can be observed in a wide range of policy areas including environment, education, food and agriculture, mobility, freedom of movement, and media.
Berlin, Germany
social media
What people say

The way forward

Some food for thought

Key Messages

• Opening up regional and local channels of dialogue is the key to bridging the gap between the European Union and its citizens.

• Every European citizen should be given an opportunity to co-create Europe’s future.

• All politics is local - and this is the direction for the European Union to become stronger and more inclusive.

A new innovative approach to politics is needed that engages citizens and improves the quality of life in every city, region, town and village – this is the only way for the EU to emerge stronger and more inclusive.

President Karl-Heinz Lambertz and First Vice President Markku Markkula
Members in action
– rebuilding trust in the EU

Karl-Heinz Lambertz - Bremen, Germany, 17.04.2018
Andres Jaadla - Rakvere, Estonia, 24.05.2018
Christophe Rouillon - Coulaines, France, 28.05.2018
Tanya Hristova - Gabrovo, Bulgaria, 3.10.2016

André Viola - Carcassonne, France, 20.04.2018
Babette Winter, Kata Tüttő - Erfurt, Germany, 17.06.2017
Heinz Lehmann - Leipzig, Germany, 20.04.2018
Markku Markkula - Thessaloniki, Greece, 20.06.2017
Here is a snapshot of some of the CoR Members who organised local events since March 2016. Find out more about the 176 Members in action by visiting our interactive map on the Web page www.cor.europa.eu/future.eu

Georgios Kaminis - Athens, Greece, 19.06.2017

Marco Dus - Vittorio Veneto, Italy, 09.05.2018

Enrico Rossi - Florence, Italy, 11.05.2018

Sirpa Hertell - Pori, Finland, 17.07.2018

Dimitrios Kalogeropoulos - Athens, Greece, 01.03.2018

Mikel Irujo Amezaga, Kieran McCarthy - Pamplona, Spain, 09.05.2017

Juan Espadas Cejas - Seville, Spain, 13.09.2017

Herwig van Staa - Innsbruck, Austria, 09.05.2017
Local debates
– citizens sharing their views
What people say

Share your thoughts, concerns and ideas about the future of the European Union and make your voice heard! Take our "Future of Europe" survey - the European Committee of the Regions is listening to you:

www.cor.europa.eu/debate.go

eulocal@cor.europa.eu #EUlocal #FutureofEurope

www.cor.europa.eu/future.eu

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