



Committee of the Regions

DECISION No 028/2016

on the

Organisation of conferences, exhibitions and other events at the Committee of the Regions and of local events in the Member States

CONTEXT

Article 1 Subject matter

- 1.1 As the EU assembly of regional and local representatives and advisory body to the EU institutions, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) represents Europe's regions and cities in the decision-making process of the European Union. To this end, in addition to its main activities devoted to the EU legislative framework and in line with its long-term Communication Strategy and annual Communication Plan, the CoR opens its premises to "hosted events " as conferences, exhibitions and other events, and holds "local events" in the Member States, held in partnership with CoR members, regional and local authorities, their associations and other EU institutions, matching its political objectives and priorities, which include in particular:
- informing a wider public about the CoR's agenda and increasing the political impact of its opinions;
 - establishing a dialogue by listening, giving voice and visibility, in particular through dialogues with citizens and other local events, to the interests and positions of citizens and Europe's regions and cities in EU matters;
 - offering a platform to regional and local authorities for the exchange of knowledge and good practice and the development of European networks.
- 1.2 CoR statutory meetings and own events organised on its own initiative, as well as meetings, conferences and other activities of the Political Groups within the CoR are not subject of this Decision.
- 1.3 The organisation of events as defined by this decision will be in line with internal regulations n° 003/2014, 004/2014, 005/2014 and 0002/2016.

CHAPTER I

Events held on CoR premises

Article 2 General requirements

- 2.1 Institutions or organisations holding events on the premises of the CoR are hereafter referred to as "the organiser". These events are referred to as "hosted events". The organiser must meet the conditions laid down in this Decision and has to comply with an application procedure following which the CoR decides whether or not to accept the event. Applications can be filed by:
- CoR members;
 - EU institutions and bodies as well as EU political parties;
 - national, regional or local authorities/parliaments/assemblies;
 - associations of regions and cities;
 - think tanks, research institutes, foundations, associations and networks addressing issues of regional and local concern and operating on a non-profit basis.
- 2.2 Conferences organised by political parties are eligible as hosted events provided they receive the support of one of the CoR Political Groups.
- 2.3 Hosted events should actively involve one or more members of the CoR. They should be linked to its annual political priorities and activities and be in accordance with the CoR's annual communication plan.
- 2.4 Attendance of a hosted event should reach a minimum of 50 participants. The event must have a European or regional character and must observe the principles of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.
- 2.5 Events held on the CoR premises must not undermine the dignity of the European institutions.
- 2.6 The organiser shall take account of environmental criteria during the event preparation, organisation and follow-up in accordance with the EMAS label (Eco-Management & Audit Scheme) criteria.
- 2.7 The organiser must not ask any form of entrance or registration fee for events held on CoR premises.
- 2.8 The event shall not have a commercial purpose and the organiser shall commit not to engage into any commercial activity such as sales or acceptance of orders or any comparable activities, including activities for charitable or fund raising purposes during the period it uses the CoR premises.
- 2.9 The identity of the organising body must be clearly stated in the application form.

- 2.10 The organiser shall ensure that the event does not interfere with the normal running of the CoR activities. An authorisation to hold an event may be withdrawn at any time for security reasons or to ensure that the normal running of the CoR activities is maintained. This may not in any case involve any liability to pay compensation to the organiser.
- 2.11 Failure to respect the CoR's rules applicable to event organisation (in terms of content, security, activities) may cause the event to be terminated by the CoR at any time, in part or entirely, at the organiser's expense.
- 2.12 Events held at the CoR must employ all appropriate means to highlight the CoR's role and contribution in the field concerned. This includes publishing the CoR name and logo in all official event documentation and promotional material (e.g. on the event website, programme, posters, invitations, press releases, etc.). The event shall clearly be identified as "co-organised" or "hosted" by the CoR.
- 2.13 In case the CoR does not contribute to the programme or the content of the event, the organiser has the obligation to publish a disclaimer in all documentations to clarify that the CoR is not responsible for the content of the meeting.
- 2.14 Unless specifically authorised, events may not be held outside normal working hours (8.30 a.m.-5.30 p.m.), during plenary sessions, at weekends, public holidays or when the CoR premises are closed.
- 2.15 Applications that meet the conditions and procedural requirements laid down in this Decision shall be handled in incoming order.

Article 3 Specific rules for co-organised and hosted events

- 3.1 Co-organised events are jointly prepared and documented by the organiser and the CoR. Subject to the availability of resources and official approval, the CoR may contribute to the costs of co-organised conferences.
- 3.2 Hosted events are prepared and documented by the organiser. Unless specifically authorised by the Secretary-General, the CoR does not contribute to costs of hosted events. The organiser of a hosted event may be required to pay fees for using the CoR premises.

Article 4 Application

- 4.1 All applications to hold events at the CoR must be addressed to the CoR unit in charge of events.
- 4.2 The application must include the name of at least one CoR member supporting the event. This obligation shall not apply to other European institutions.
- 4.3 The application to hold an event must be submitted at least twelve weeks before the intended date, using an online form on which all technical information must be supplied.

- 4.4 Together with the application, the organiser must submit a draft programme including the names and organisational affiliation of speakers expected to lecture during the event. Where appropriate, the CoR should be represented by speakers primarily selected among the members. Any change to the programme or the timing of the event or conference must be submitted at the earliest by the organiser to the CoR responsible unit.
- 4.5 The organiser must declare that it will respect a minimum (50) and a maximum number of participants in relation to the possible rooms and space allocated to hold the event.
- 4.6 Hosted events held in the CoR should be open to the public. However, in case the organiser requires restricted access to its event, it shall provide the CoR with a detailed reasoning of the envisaged invitation policy.
- 4.7 The organiser must declare that it shall make staff available in the CoR building to welcome, register and guide the participants to its event for the entire duration of the event.
- 4.8 Applications to hold artistic and cultural events must furthermore include a complete description and photos of the artistic works (size, weight etc.) or the planned event, and the texts which are planned to be published and/or exhibited on CoR premises.
- 4.9 Derogations from the obligations set out in this article require a decision by the Secretary-General.

Article 5 Approval procedure

5. Applications for hosted events shall be considered by an internal committee of the CoR (Events Committee)
- 5.1 The Events Committee examines the compliance of the proposed event with the requirements and issues an opinion, taking into account the relevance of the event in view of the CoR priorities and activities.
- 5.2 The Secretary-General of the CoR shall make the decision on holding co-organised or hosted conferences. Whenever required, the decision is made following consultation of the Political Groups Secretariats and of the President's Cabinet.
- 5.3 Applications for exhibitions shall be considered by an internal committee of the CoR (Regi-Art Committee) which issues an opinion, followed by a decision of the Secretary-General of the CoR.

Article 6 Delivery of the event

- 6.1 Access to the CoR by external people (organisers; speakers; participants) shall be subject to the CoR's security regulations; it shall, moreover, be restricted to the area made available for the event.

- 6.2 Three working days before the event the organiser must submit the full list of registered participants to the event. The organiser shall inform the CoR of any VIP guests expected to attend the event.
- 6.3 Before the official opening of an exhibition on the CoR premises, a final check of the exhibition will be carried out by a representative of the CoR together with the organiser.

Article 7 Conditions for the use of CoR premises, material and services

- 7.1 The CoR can grant a maximum of three venues for a maximum of two days for a hosted event.
- 7.2 The CoR may provide the organiser with services, technical equipment and facilities, subject to availability and prior approval. Request for such services must be made at least 10 working days prior to the event.
- 7.3 The CoR reserves the right to change the allocation of venues and equipment and/or services provided to the organiser according to its own last-minute needs.
- 7.4 Subject to availability of resources and prior authorisation, the CoR might offer certain services to the organiser, such as interpretation (maximum of 3 languages, active/passive arrangements) and/or the delivery of beverages (coffee, tea, water).
- 7.5 Catering services linked to hosted and co-organised events can be requested from the in-house caterer or from an external caterer. The organiser of a hosted event shall make all arrangements (orders, payments) directly with the caterer and inform the CoR.
- 7.6 The CoR may decide to terminate the event/exhibition if the conditions under which it was applied for by the organiser and subsequently accepted by the CoR are not respected.

Article 8 Liability

- 8.1 The organiser shall take full responsibility and exonerate the CoR from any liability in the following areas:
- delivery, preparation and consumption of food and beverages to be served during the organiser's event on the CoR premises and for waste disposal;
 - food poisoning or any other damage caused by food and beverages served during the organiser's event on the CoR premises.
- 8.2 The organiser shall undertake to comply with customs and sanitary formalities and with all other legal obligations arising from the import and export of the objects to be exhibited and/or products to be consumed.

- 8.3 The organiser shall undertake to use CoR areas in a responsible and cautious manner and make sure that the areas at its disposal are left in perfect condition after the event.
- 8.4 The organiser is liable for any damage to CoR facilities during the preparation, the course and the clean-up of the event and/or caused by one or several event delegates. Any moving of materials within CoR buildings must be done using the appropriate equipment (trolleys etc.) belonging to the organiser or made available by the CoR.
- 8.5 The CoR shall be exonerated from all liability for any damage, loss or theft of exhibition material occurring on the premises or during transport to and from its premises.
- 8.6 The organiser must be fully insured to cover civil liability with respect to:
- all injuries to persons
 - services provided or objects exhibited;
 - any risk of damage, loss or theft of materials used or of works exhibited or loaned to the CoR;
 - any external persons (e.g. catering firms, external suppliers, etc.) against any risk arising from work on CoR premises.
- 8.7 The CoR reserves the right, in the event of an accident or for security reasons, to take all necessary steps to safeguard its own interests as well as those of any persons or goods found on its premises.

Article 9 Costs to be borne by the organiser

- 9.1 Unless otherwise agreed in writing, all costs arising from the event or the provision of catering services shall be borne by the organisers.
- 9.2 The organiser shall undertake to pay all material and administrative costs relating to the conference, exhibition or event, including:
- transport or removal costs;
 - any insurance cost in respect of the persons involved and the objects exhibited;
 - costs relating to catering services (conference coffee and water service, cocktail party, reception, exhibition opening, presentation or tasting of products, lunch or dinner on the institution's premises, etc.);
 - interpreting services;
 - cleaning and security costs, as appropriate;
 - invitation costs;
 - costs due to damage caused to the institution's assets or third-party interests, as appropriate
 - all costs arising from cancellation of the event by the organiser or by the CoR.

- 9.3 The organiser shall bear the costs of setting up and dismantling all exhibition material and/or catering material in the area allocated for this purpose by the CoR and shall comply with any CoR instructions regarding the practical and technical aspects of the event.
- 9.4 All conference materials shall be removed from the CoR premises by the organiser immediately after the conference and at their expenses.

CHAPTER II

CoR support for local events in the Member States

Article 10 CoR support for co-organised local events in the Member States

10.1. In order to better communicate with citizens and local stakeholders on its role and political priorities, the CoR can support local events in the Member States, upon the initiative of one or more CoR members, EU regional and local authority (authorities), their national associations and held preferably in partnership with EU institutions and their national offices, namely the European Parliament (EPIOs), the Representations of the European Commission (REPs) and the EU official information networks (e.g. EDICs). To this end, local CoR events aim at:

- engaging citizens, in particular young generations, on EU agenda and supporting participatory events at local level, giving voice to the interests and expectations of EU territories (including citizens' dialogues, as organised by the European Commission);
- directly contributing to the CoR's consultative work including the preparation of CoR opinions through local debates with stakeholders on EU legislation in the pipeline and its potential impact on EU regions and cities (including stakeholder dialogues, as organised by the European Parliament);
- encouraging the exchange of knowledge and good practices among EU cities and regions on issues related to EU affairs and their regional impact (e.g. in the form of a conference or seminar, jointly held with European or national associations of regions and cities);
- placing the CoR on the EU's political agenda and strengthening inter-institutional cooperation with the EU institutions, in particular the European Commission and the European Parliament.

10.2. In order to create synergies and increase the impact of the CoR activities at local level, in accordance with the thematic priorities and the target audience, the dates of local events and external meetings of the CoR Bureau and Commissions should be held back-to-back whenever possible.

10.3. Local CoR events must have a European character and a clear link to the CoR's annual political priorities including the thematic priorities of the CoR Commissions and the CoR communication plan. They can be organised as part of a broader national event or EU annual information campaign or a series of events held in cooperation with other EU Institutions. Exceptionally these events can also take place outside the EU.

Article 11 General requirements for co-organised local events

11.1 The CoR can be "co-organiser" of a local event proposed by

- one or more CoR member(s) and their local or regional authority;
- one or more regional or local authority (authorities);
- national associations, representing regional and local interests.

11.2 Local events shall involve, at least one the following bodies, as " event partner(s)" to the event:

- EU institutions and bodies such as: the EC, EP and their national offices (EPIOs and the REPs);
- one or more EU official information centres (e.g. EDICs);
- European, national or regional networks and associations of local and regional authorities;
- Think tanks, research institutes, foundations, associations and networks addressing issues of regional and local concern and operating on a non-profit basis.

11.3 Two or more CoR members from different countries can present joint proposals, also for cross-border or inter-regional local events.

11.4 One or more CoR members must be speakers at the local event, which will respect the need for geographical and political balance..

11.5 The proposed event must aim to attract a minimum of 50 participants, namely citizens, representatives of local administrations, regional and local stakeholders, associations and networks addressing issues of regional and local concern.

11.6 The CoR will support a limited number of events, subject to the availability of financial resources on an annual basis.

11.7 Objectives, concept, targets, a financial plan and programme of the event have to be agreed upon between the co-organisers and the CoR.

11.8 Local events cannot be organised within the three months prior to national or regional elections.

11.9 The organiser may not ask any form of entrance or registration fee for events co-organised at local level with the CoR.

11.10 In addition, the event shall not have a commercial purpose and the co-organisers shall commit not to engage in any commercial activity such as sales or acceptance of orders or any comparable activities, including activities for charitable or fund raising purposes.

11.11 Full assurances must be provided concerning the identity of the body proposing to hold the event, and of the expected participants.

11.12 If the relevant CoR services observe that the CoR's rules applicable to local event organisation (content, security, activities) are not being observed or if the event does not correspond to the

technical specifications in the application, they may at any time, decide to terminate the event or to remove a part of or the entire programme at the organiser's expense.

11.13 Local events supported by the CoR must employ all appropriate means to highlight the CoR's role and contribution in the field concerned, including the use of the CoR's name and logo in all official documentation or promotional material for the event (on the website for the event, in the programme, posters, invitations and press releases, etc.).

Article 12 Application and approval procedure for co-organised local events

12.1. Expressions of interest in holding a local event shall be submitted three months before the date of the event, using an online form and shall provide all technical information requested, including a draft programme of the event the budget outline and providing with all the other information specified in this decision.

12.2. The CoR Events Committee, set up within the secretariat-general of the Committee of the Regions, will examine all the incoming expressions of interest. The evaluation includes an appraisal of the level of formality, feasibility and quality criteria of the proposed events, including its relevance to the CoR political priorities and activities. CoR political groups are associated at the evaluation process.

12.3. The Secretary-General will present the draft list of local events to be supported by the CoR to the Commission for Financial and Administrative Affairs (CFAA) for decision, as well as an annual report of the past events, their outcome and budgetary impact. The approved events will be added to the annual planning of the CoR Commissions.

12.4. Derogations from the obligations set out in this article require a new decision by the Secretary-General.

Article 13 Support for co-organised local events

13.1. In order to contribute to the costs of local events, the CoR may offer certain services to the co-organisers, according to internal Regulations n° 003/2014, 004/2014, 005/2014 and 0002/2016, such as:

- interpreting (maximum of 3 languages, active/passive arrangements);
- reimbursement of travel expenses/meeting and travel allowances of CoR members;
- reimbursement of expenses for journalists travelling to the event and accompanying CoR members;
- moderators' and guest speakers costs;
- communication support via a media partnership, the CoR website and CoR publications
- provision of CoR information material during the event;
- dissemination of the event results.

The provision of these services will be specified in an exchange of letters between co-organisers and the secretariat-general of the Committee of the Regions which will establish the theme, format, tasks and cost sharing of the event

Article 14 CoR members participating in local events organised by EU Institutions and partners in the Member States

14.1. In accordance with Article 3 of Regulation n° 0002/2016, the CoR will continue to facilitate the participation of members as speakers in events organised by other EU institutions, namely the European Parliament, the European Commission, their Information offices and Representations in the Member States as well as in events of the Europe Direct Information Centres or by other partners of the CoR. Approval and formal invitation to members will follow the art. 3 of Regulation n° 0002/2016.

14.2. Support to members requires a clear commitment by the organiser (in the event programme) and by the member to ensure visibility of the CoR, its legislative works and political priorities.

Article 15 Final provision

This decision replaces Decision No 0070 of 16 April 2012 and shall take effect on the date of its signature.

Signed in Brussels, 22 February 2016

Jiří Buriánek
The Secretary-General