



**European Committee
of the Regions**

CoR Activities in 2019

Report on the Impact of CoR Opinions

June 2020



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of the Regions**

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ITEM 12 B

REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF COR OPINIONS

Submitted by the secretary general

FOR DECISION

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Short description: This main report is the attachment to the <i>Report on the impact of the CoR: executive summary</i> document.	
The Bureau is invited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take stock of the report on the impact of CoR opinions. 	
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1 Introduction

As a consultative body to the European Institutions, the impact of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) largely depends on the ability of the Committee and its members to provide input effectively to the legislative process, providing the right advice at the right time.

To achieve this, it is important to combine the long-term political priorities of the CoR – which were defined at the beginning of the mandate – with the regular dialogue and cooperation with the other EU Institutions. In 2019, the CoR adopted 49 opinions and demonstrated its support for the European Parliament and the European Commission in its legislative work, in policy challenges as well as in cross-cutting topics. The policy work of the CoR included political debates organised in each of the six CoR commissions on key themes.

This report is presented in an unexpected context due to COVID-19 pandemic and the health and economic crisis and coincides with an unprecedented **EU roadmap for recovery and resilience**. Therefore, mid 2020 the EU Institutions gathered the efforts to deliver a transformative agenda for the years to come. The CoR political priorities for the 2020-2025 mandate will reflect the necessity to build a Europe closer to the citizens and its State of European cities and regions report will provide guidance for strategic choices to face the COVID- 19 aftermaths at all levels.

Given the multitude of challenges for local and regional authorities in the current COVID-19 crisis, the CoR as the interface and reference point between the European Union and its local and regional governments, endorsed a plan to assist, inform, engage and represent regions and cities across Europe and has set up and COVID-19 exchange platform, to foster cooperation and facilitate mutual support between cities and regions across Europe .

2 Detailed impact report presented by the Committee 5 political priorities

2.1 A fresh start for the European economy

Creating jobs and sustainable growth in cities and regions to provide a better quality of life for citizens

2.1.1. Climate change and energy transition

Main impact:

- The CoR's work on climate change during this year has led to intensive cooperation with the European Commission on the **drafting of the "Climate Pact"**;
- The European Commission welcomed the suggestion of co-organising a **"recurring forum to discuss climate and energy matters** including the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs)" in the feedback documents by the Commission to the CoR;
- The CoR's work and insistence on the importance of taking **energy poverty** into account has cemented it as a key point in the European Commission's further policy considerations;
- The CoR's presence and activities at the [UN Climate Action Summit in New York in September 2019](#), as well as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP) 25 have paved the way for **more intensive cooperation with Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) partners at future COPs**.

The opinion on [A Clean Planet for all, a European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy](#)¹ issued many proposals taken up by the Commission. The rapporteur discussed the opinion in bilateral meetings with the Director General of DG CLIMA as well as with MEP [Eleonora Evi](#) (IT/NI), rapporteur for the Resolution on the communication *A Clean Planet for all*.

The calls on the promotion of a **circular approach** in the field of construction of **new buildings** has been welcomed by the Commission that considers energy efficiency and use of renewable resources as aspects of sustainability. The CoR call on the Commission to continue the promotion of energy efficiency in buildings has been reflected in the proposal of a **Renovation Wave** Initiative in the [Communication on the Green Deal](#).

In the communication, the Commission proposes a **Climate Law to enshrine the climate neutrality target** into law and revision of the targets included in the Clean Energy Package. This proposal answers the CoR's call to increase the **32% target for renewable energy** at EU level by 2030 to 40% in order to achieve the climate neutrality target by 2050. Indeed, the Commission proposed a "revision of the relevant legislative measures to deliver on increased climate ambition" planned for June 2021. The calls for a more holistic approach are also well reflected in the Communication.

The idea to quantify savings estimated in the health sector was also welcomed by the Commission. It will assess in detail the **negative impact of pollution** and the **measures for possible gains** through

¹ ENVE-VI/037 - *A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy* - rapporteur Michele Emiliano (IT/PES)

policy action². However, there is no timeline yet. The Communication also focusses on the Clean Energy for EU Islands Initiative, which hopes to develop a long-term framework to accelerate the clean energy transition on all EU islands, following the call to recognise the role of **island communities** as potential laboratories for climate neutrality policies.

The CoR opinion on [Implementing the Clean Energy Package: the NECPs as a tool for local and territorial governance approach to climate, active and passive energy](#)³ and the CoR Resolution⁴ on [The Green Deal in partnership with local and regional authorities](#) reinforced the proposal for a "**permanent multi-level platform** for dialogue on energy". The platform would support stakeholders in the energy transition, notably by setting up a structure for "technical exchanges on implementing the Clean Energy Package at local or regional level". The Commission welcomed the suggestion of co-organizing a "**recurring forum to discuss climate and energy** matters including the NECPs" in the feedback documents by the Commission to the CoR.

In this regard, the Commission supports the idea of a **systemic public participation** in the assessment of the draft NECPs as well as **increasing synergies** between the different levels of administration. The [Communication on the Green Deal](#) gives also substantial attention to the **role of LRAs** in achieving the goals of the Green Deal, following the same idea of the article 11 of the Energy Regulation.

The rapporteur for the CoR opinion on NECPs, presented his opinion as well as the study on [The role of local and regional authorities in National Energy and Climate Plans, taking into account the recommendations by the European Commission](#) in the workshop on [Regions and cities co-creating national energy and climate plans](#)⁵ during the European Week of Regions and Cities. He insisted once again on the important **role of the LRAs**. The assessment of the final version of the NECPs by the Commission originally planned by June 2020, but delayed until after the summer, will be a good occasion for the CoR to communicate further on this topic.

Reaching the Paris objectives and meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals requires a broad **transition to a sustainable, low-emission energy system**. The role of LRAs in energy transition has been highlighted in the opinion [Implementing the Paris Agreement through innovative and sustainable energy transition at regional and local level](#)⁶. The rapporteur, who represented the CoR in the work of the [Platform for Coal and Carbon Intensive Regions in Transition](#) led by DG ENER, contributed to several meetings of the Platform and participated in its two Annual Dialogues in 2018 and 2019. In the opinion, he supported the EP call for the establishment of the Just Transition Fund, successfully included in the Green Deal at the beginning of 2020. Together with MEP Jerzy Buzek (PL/EPP), he led the European Week of Regions and Cities (EWRC) 2019 Session [on the role of cities and regions in energy transition](#). The statements of the opinion fed the CoR messages to the UNFCCC COP 24 and 25, strengthening the CoR's cooperation with several European and global associations of the Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs).

² COM(2019) 640 final on *The European Green Deal*.

³ ENVE-VI/041 - *Implementing the Clean Energy Package: the NECPs as a tool for local and territorial governance approach to climate, active and passive energy* – rapporteur Jozsef Ribanyi (HU/EPP)

⁴ COR-2019-04351 (RESOL-VI/038)

⁵ At the European Week of Regions and Cities (7-10 October 2019) in the presence of Ms Paula Pinho (European Commission).

⁶ ENVE-VI/040 - *Implementing the Paris Agreement through innovative and sustainable energy transition at regional and local level* - rapporteur Witold Stepień (PL/EPP)

Multilevel governance in the field of energy was highlighted several times through various opinions: the [opinion focusing on energy poverty](#)⁷ and the [opinion focusing on local energy ownership and local energy communities](#)⁸. Both opinions insisted on the need for multilevel governance on these topics. The Commission⁹ reacted in June to these opinions and insisted on the need for Member States to properly address energy poverty. Furthermore, the Communication confirmed the key role that the Energy Poverty Observatory (EPOV) will play in this regard; as well as the role of LRAs in creating awareness related to local energy communities and in simplifying administrative procedures for their creation.

The Climate Pact will continue to empower regional and local communities. The opinion on energy poverty was presented during the 2019 European Union Sustainable Energy Week (EUSEW)¹⁰. [The SET-Plan conference co-organised by the CoR in Bucharest](#) has highlighted – among others - the example of Greece as frontrunner in the EU regarding energy communities.

In 2020, the **Covenant of Mayors** signatories will gradually phase out and the Commission will issue a new framework contract for the 5th phase of the initiative. It is important for the CoR to ensure that the transition keeps on board LRAs and keep pace with the evolving legislative framework. This initiative has strong means to gather and incorporate technical feedback from LRAs but does not succeed to fully represent the diversity of LRAs.

[The opinion on the *Covenant of Mayors post-2020*](#)¹¹ outlines the ways to ensure that all EU LRAs can benefit from this initiative in the best way possible. This opinion focuses: the possible broadening of the scope of the initiative, the monitoring and reporting framework, the role of the coordinators and of other types of members, the link with funding opportunities, the political representativeness of the Covenant Community, the overall consistency of the Energy and Climate framework with the Covenant of Mayors and the relationship between the EU Covenant and the Global Covenant. The importance of this opinion was also recognized during a joint presentation by the CoR rapporteur and Energy Commissioner Simson on the Covenant of Mayors day at the UNFCCC COP 25.

Climate Finance is a topic of great importance and the Commission has pointed this out in its [Communication on the Green Deal](#). Acknowledging the importance of this topic, in 2019 the CoR adopted an opinion on climate finance and published a [study on climate finance](#)¹². These documents have contributed to the [Covenant of Mayors online tool for financial opportunities](#). The tool aims to improve the capacity of regions and cities to navigate between the various existing initiatives, access climate financing and obtain appropriate technical support. A further analysis of the opinion impact will be possible once the inter-institutional negotiations on the MFF conclude.

⁷ ENVE-VI/038 - *Multilevel governance and cross-sectoral cooperation to fight energy poverty* - rapporteur Kata Tüttő (HU/PES)

⁸ ENVE-VI/032 - *Models of local energy ownership and the role of local energy communities in energy transition in Europe* - rapporteur Mariana Gâju (RO/PES)

⁹ COM(2019) 285 final.

¹⁰ Moderated by Stefan Bouzarovski, Chair of EPOV (EU Energy Poverty Observatory).

¹¹ ENVE-VI/042 - *Covenant of Mayors post 2020* - rapporteur Benedetta Brighenti (IT/PES)

¹² https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/CoR_Climate_finance_p2.pdf

The impact of the other opinions adopted in October 2019¹³ cannot yet be assessed at the time of writing of this report. However, it is worth noting that the rapporteurs disseminated their key messages in the international scene; notably during the UNFCCC COP 25. Additional impact will be included in the 2020 Annual Impact Report. For information, these opinions focus on the implementation of international agreements¹⁴ by regional local authorities on various topics: [the ecological transition](#)¹⁵, [innovative and sustainable energy transition](#)¹⁶, as well as on [smart cities](#)¹⁷.

2.1.2. Environmental policy and circular economy

Main impact:

- Elements of the CoR opinion on the Environment Action Programme (EAP) have been reflected in **Council Conclusions and in the Green Deal Communication**;
- Several provisions of the new Directive on single-use plastics, of the Green Deal and of the Circular Economy Action Plan are **in line with proposals of the two CoR opinions on plastics**.

[The opinion on Sustainable Europe by 2030, follow-up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals: ecological transition and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#)¹⁸ encompasses both climate change and energy transition and environment policy and circular economy.

[The opinion - towards an 8th Environment Action Programme](#)¹⁹ were reflected in the Council conclusions on the EU's environment and climate change policies for the period 2021–2030. One of the messages considered by the Council was the lack of policy integration in the 7th EAP and the impact of pollution on health. During the Parliament hearings, Commissioner-designated for DG ENV highlighted, the importance of LRAs in the EAP and in the zero-pollution strategy. The Green Deal Communication included plans for a new EAP to complement the Green Deal including a new monitoring mechanism, and stressed the critical role of the Environmental Implementation Review, elements in line with the CoR opinion.

Full assessment of impact will be possible once the actual EAP proposal will be published in 2020.

13 [ENVE-VI/039](#) - *Sustainable Europe by 2030, follow-up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals: ecological transition and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change* – rapporteur Sirpa Hertell (FI/EPP); [ENVE-VI/040](#) - *Implementing the Paris Agreement through innovative and sustainable energy transition at regional and local level* - rapporteur Witold Stepień (PL/EPP); [ENVE-VI/044](#) - *Smart cities: new challenges for a just transition toward climate neutrality - how to implement the SDGs in real life?* - rapporteur Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA)

14 UN Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Agreement.

15 [ENVE-VI/039](#) - *Sustainable Europe by 2030, follow-up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals: ecological transition and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change* – rapporteur Sirpa Hertell (FI/EPP)

16 [ENVE-VI/040](#) - *Implementing the Paris Agreement through innovative and sustainable energy transition at regional and local level* - rapporteur Witold Stepień (PL/EPP)

17 [ENVE-VI/044](#) - *Smart cities: new challenges for a just transition toward climate neutrality - how to implement the SDGs in real life?* - rapporteur Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA)

18 [ENVE-VI/039](#) - *Sustainable Europe by 2030, follow-up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals: ecological transition and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change* – rapporteur Sirpa Hertell (FI/EPP)

19 [ENVE-VI/027](#) - *Towards an 8th Environment Action Programme* - rapporteur Cor Lamers (NL/EPP)

The Commission – in its follow-up letter to the CoR opinion - also stressed the importance of implementation, a Technical Platform for Cooperation on the Environment as a good forum for dialogue and the need for improvement of the integration of environmental and climate matters into other policy areas. The main difference is that the CoR relies on quota of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) to be dedicated to climate policy mainstreaming: 30% quota for the CoR, only 25% for the Commission. Through its Communication on the Green Deal, the Commission has stated that a new monitoring mechanism will be included in the next EAP, as it was requested by the CoR.

Two topics have been particularly assessed by the CoR ENVE commission: water and plastics.

The [opinion on the opinion on minimum requirements for water reuse](#)²⁰ contributed to the European Parliament report²¹. [The Regulation on minimum requirements for water reuse adopted on 13 May 2020 includes several proposals from the CoR](#) such as the responsibility of the point of compliance water quality, possibility of industrial water reuse or introduction of ISO standards for compliance and verification.

[The opinion on the Quality of water intended for human consumption](#)²² supports the European Commission's proposal for a recast of Council Directive 98/83/EC on the quality of water intended for human consumption so as to ensure high-quality drinking water for consumers in the EU Member States in line with current scientific and technical findings. The revision of the Drinking Water Directive is part of the EU Circular Economy Action Plan and responds to the first successful European Citizens' Initiative 'Right2Water'. On 28 October 2018, the European Parliament adopted its report on 1st reading, accepting literally the CoR proposal related to derogations, which means a whole new article in the Directive. The EP also accepted the CoR proposal of more categories of water suppliers and measures of flexibility for very small ones, the consideration of the specific geographic circumstances of water distribution and has been very strong in relation with the support, including financial, to local and regional authorities. The EP considers subsidiarity in aspects related to access to water and in information to the public.

The impact of [the opinion on the Quality of water intended for human consumption](#)²³ will be assessed once the inter-institutional negotiations conclude.

[Directive 2019/904](#) on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, which focuses in particular on single-use plastic, includes multiple elements coherent with the propositions made by the CoR in its opinion²⁴ which called for the adoption of such Directive. This is the case for the consumption reduction measures (*article 4*) that has to be proportionate and non-discriminatory, the multiples references to design, the extension of the definition of fishing gear and of the coverage of fishing gear (*article 3*) and the significant extension of provision on information requirement (*article 13*) is coherent with the call from the CoR for a digital reporting system for lost gear. The CoR supports voluntary action and agreements in general such as sectorial voluntary agreements for marking

20 ENVE-VI/034 - *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for water reuse* - rapporteur Oldřich Vlasák (CZ/ECR)

21 Adopted on 12 February 2019.

22 ENVE-VI/028 - *Quality of water intended for human consumption* - rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP)

23 ENVE-VI/028 - *Quality of water intended for human consumption* - rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP)

24 [ENVE-VI/033](#) - *Proposal for a single-use plastics directive* - rapporteur Sirpa Hertell (FI/EPP)

requirements (*article 7*). The encouragement to use sustainable alternatives for materials in contact with food (*article 11*) is consistent with the opinion.

However, the Commission has failed to fully involve LRAs in the implementation of this Directive. The proposal of the CoR for cooperation with LRAs for the awareness raising measures (*article 10*) was not included and the possibility for LRAs to extend the list of items (for specific reasons in limited areas to protect the most sensitive ecosystems) related to the consumption reduction measures (*article 4*) has not been included. The CoR also regrets the fact that it has not been included among the receivers of the planned evaluation of the Directive as well as the lowering of the target for separation collection of bottles for 2025 (*article 9*) from 90% to 77% (the 90% target has been postponed to 2029) and the lack of extension of the Directive to freshwater and shallow seas.

The Circular Economy Action Plan committed to the implementation of the Directive with specific proposals including rules on measuring recycled content in products, a proposal in line with the focus on recycled content of the CoR opinions.

Others proposals linked to the plastic issue was made in the [CoR opinion on the Communication on a European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy](#)²⁵. The follow-up letter by the Commission agrees that the LRAs have a key role in the implementation of the Plastics strategy and waste prevention²⁶.

The general ban of oxo-degradable plastics products proposed by the CoR was also introduced in the [new Directive](#)²⁷ on single-use plastics and the proposed ban on intentionally added microplastics is in a process restriction in the framework of REACH²⁸. Also the targets on recycled content of bottles of the new Directive go in the direction of the more general proposal of the CoR. On the other hand, the Commission does not intend to provide EU wide deposit systems for beverage packing, stating that the current Directive allows Member States to establish the systems best suited to their local needs, hence not following the CoR position calling for harmonisation or maximum coordination at EU level for deposit systems.

Several proposals made in [CoR opinion on the Communication on a European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy](#)²⁹ have been taken up in the Communication on the Green Deal and in the Circular Economy Action Plan. The Plan included several CoR proposals, such as case for measures to tackle intentionally added micro plastics and unintentional releases of plastics (for example from textiles and tyre abrasion), further scientific research, improvements in measuring methods and a regulatory framework for biodegradable and bio-based plastics as well as stronger measures for reusable and recyclable packaging. The Plan introduced a "sustainable products" policy to support the circular design

²⁵ ENVE-VI/029 - *Communication on a European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy* - rapporteur André Van De Nadort (NL/PES)

²⁶ Through limitation of the use of plastics and product design, the Commission added promotion of innovation in the business model.

²⁷ [Directive \(EU\) 2019/904, on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment](#)

²⁸ <https://echa.europa.eu/hot-topics/microplastics>

²⁹ ENVE-VI/029 - *Communication on a European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy* - rapporteur André Van De Nadort (NL/PES)

of all products that is in line with CoR opinions which were referring to eco-design multiple times. The general focus on plastics is coherent with CoR position.

The CoR adopted the opinion on "A sustainable Bioeconomy for Europe: Strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment". The [Council conclusions of 29 November 2019](#)³⁰ reflect the standpoints and requests of the opinion. The regional and local dimension is referred to and it is clearly stated that "*urban areas can play a key role in implementing the bioeconomy*", and the text is also directly addressed at regions: "*encourages the EC, MS and the regions*". The CoR's most recurrent request for synergies between different sources of financing is also mentioned by the Council; e.g. "*including the Structural Funds to further advance the deployment of regional and local bioeconomies rapidly across the whole Europe*"; besides a systemic approach with EU programmes and policies. The Council also highlights the importance of macro-regional and regional specificities and initiatives for the bioeconomy strategies. It stresses the need to "*plan bioeconomy initiatives keeping in mind the specificities of local context*". It also underlines, as the CoR did, the importance of education and awareness-raising to increase the acceptability of bio-based materials, products and services.

On 16 October 2019, a high-level conference "European Bioeconomy: Regions, Cities and Civil Society" was co-organised by the CoR, the European Commission (DG RTD), and the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). The position of the CoR as the voice of cities and regions in the transition to a circular bioeconomy was highlighted, as well as the role of the CoR in engaging local and regional authorities in the pilot actions to support local bioeconomy development.

2.1.3. Cohesion policy legislative package

Main impact:

- Both the EP and the CoR put a strong emphasis on the **principles of partnership and multilevel governance**, including the clarification that actions should be taken at the "**most appropriate territorial level**";
- Both Institutions called for a **financial allocation for the whole 2021-2027 period, higher co-financing rates**, the maintenance of the **n+3 rule**, and the introduction of a **safety net that would also apply to the regional level**. They also had similar views on **co-financing rates**, and on **increased levels of pre-financing**;
- The EP and the CoR **suggested including in the ERDF/CF regulation a new article referring to areas covered by Article 174 of the TFEU**, as well as other areas with severe and permanent natural or demographic disadvantages, and insisted that the **ERDF thematic concentration should focus on categories of regions classified according to their GDP per capita**;
- The CoR and the EP supported a significantly **higher budget for European Territorial Cooperation** than initially proposed by the Commission, demanded that the **cross-border cooperation** component keeps supporting both land and maritime cooperation, and supported the creation of **interregional innovation investments with a specific budget allocation**;

³⁰ <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-14594-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

- The views of the CoR and EP were also **globally convergent** on the European Cross Border Mechanism, in particular such as the clarification on the scope of the proposal. They also called for the **inclusion of maritime borders** and the need for proper dissemination of information and supported amendments to the text explicitly indicating that not only Member States, but also **territorial entities with legislative powers**, should be involved in the concrete application of the Mechanism.

Following the presentation of the cohesion policy legislative proposals by the European Commission, the CoR put forward in December 2018 its recommendations for legislative amendments in the opinions on the *Common Provisions Regulation*³¹, the Regulations on the *European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund*³², the *European Social Fund Plus*³³, *European Territorial Cooperation*³⁴, and the *European Cross Border Mechanism*³⁵, with the objective of securing a strong and effective cohesion policy beyond 2020.

Thanks to the close contacts between the CoR rapporteurs and their counterparts in the EP, the **immediate impact of the CoR's work was already reflected in many of the draft EP reports** that were presented to the EP REGI committee. **Considerable impact was also achieved via the amendment process**, thanks to the joint efforts of the CoR co-rapporteurs, the political groups and the COTER secretariat in promoting the CoR's position among the members of the EP. As detailed above, this resulted in a **strong convergence** between the CoR position and the position at first reading that the EP adopted in April 2019.

In contrast to the very successful approach to the EP, the **impact on the Council remained rather limited in 2019**. One reason for this situation was the **strategy of the Council** to exclude all **provisions with budgetary implications** (e.g. transfers, pre-financing, co-financing, etc.) or of a **horizontal nature** from its negotiation mandates and to discuss them only within the framework of the high-level negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (in the so called **negotiating box**). Nevertheless, there have been also some **positive developments** towards the end of the year, where the Parliament and the Council found a provisional agreement on blocks 1, 2 and 5 of the **Common Provisions Regulation**, safeguarding the **partnership principle and the partnership agreements**, which was one of the key concerns of the CoR.

The significant impact of the CoR would not have been possible without the extensive alliance building with a wide range of partners, in particular through the **#CohesionAlliance**, which was launched together with the main European territorial associations - AER, AEBR, CALRE, CEMR, CPMR, and EUROCITIES -, during the EWRC in October 2017. By the end of 2019, more than **11 600** supporters joined the Alliance, including 450 organisations and institutions (thereof 122 regions, 140 towns and counties, and 46 associations of local authorities). One of the highlights in 2019 was the #CohesionAlliance event on 10 July, where MEP Younous Omarjee joined the Alliance as his first activity as new chair of the REGI committee, only a few hours after his election. The political and

³¹ COTER-VI/045 - *Common Provisions Regulation*, co-rapporteurs: Catuscia Marini (IT/PES) and Michael Schneider (DE/EPP).

³² COTER-VI/046 - *European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund*, rapporteur: Michiel Rijsberman (NL/ALDE).

³³ COTER-VI/049 - *European Social Fund Plus*, rapporteur: Susana Díaz Pacheco (ES/PES).

³⁴ COTER-VI/047 - *European Territorial Cooperation*, rapporteur: Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA)..

³⁵ COTER-VI/048 - *European Cross Border Mechanism*, rapporteur: Bouke Arends (NL/PES).

communication efforts of the CoR and the #CohesionAlliance partners, including the intense and coordinated work on social media, contributed significantly to attracting the attention of media and decision-makers on the future of cohesion policy, contributing to a much more positive climate with regard to cohesion policy in the political debate.

2.1.4. Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027

Main impact:

- **Great convergence** of the EP position with the recommendations of the CoR.

The CoR has positioned itself on the **MFF-related legislative proposals** in a series of legislative opinions that were adopted at the Plenary Session in December 2018. In the meantime, the European Parliament had concluded its position at first reading on the various dossiers in April 2019, before the end of mandate, showing a **great convergence of the EP position with the recommendations of the CoR**.

On the other hand, the **Council** was concentrating on streamlining the **Negotiating Box** and on finding compromise between the Member States on key elements of horizontal nature, therefore **not allowing other Institutions and consultative bodies to enter into the negotiations**. The CoR, however, tried to reiterate its core messages and to adjust its recommendations in view of the ongoing negotiations on sectoral legislative files, by adopting a **Resolution on the developments in the inter-institutional negotiations on the MFF for 2021-2027**³⁶ at the 2019 October Plenary Session. The Resolution was again closely aligned with the recommendations put forward by the EP in its own Resolution adopted on 10 October 2019³⁷, in particular as regards the need for a Contingency plan, size of the MFF and opposition to cuts in Cohesion policy and the Common Agricultural Policy. On this basis, the CoR will continue to monitor closely the ongoing inter-institutional negotiations and endeavour to promote its recommendations as well as a timely agreement on the EU Budget for 2021-2027.

2.1.5. Increasing the Territorial Dimension of the European Semester

Main impact:

- The objective of **developing a territorial angle** in the analytical background of the main Semester's documents has been achieved with the 2019 Annual Growth Survey.

The CoR has been pursuing, over the last few years, the two objectives of (a) developing a territorial angle in the analytical background of the main Semester's documents (ASGS, Country Reports, National Reform Programmes, Country-Specific Recommendations (CSRs)) and (b) promoting the

³⁶ RESOL-VI/036 - [Resolution on Developments in the Interinstitutional negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027](#).

³⁷ European Parliament resolution of 10 October 2019 on the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework and own resources: time to meet citizens' expectations (2019/2833(RSP))

involvement of the LRAs in the Semester based, on the principles of partnership and multi-level governance.

The CoR pursued the above policy objectives by:

(a) addressing them in several opinions and resolution, among others: the opinions on *Improving the governance of the European Semester: a Code of Conduct for the involvement of local and regional authorities*³⁸ and on *The European Semester and Cohesion Policy: aligning structural reforms with long-term investments*³⁹;

(b) developing Inter-institutional networking by targeting both the political level (relevant Commissioners and their Cabinets; relevant EP committees and rapporteurs; EESC rapporteurs) and the administrative one (relevant EP committee secretariats and chairs of the relevant Council working groups; relevant Commission services and European Semester Officers); networking with LRAs and their representative associations, as well as with relevant think-tanks in Brussels;

(c) exploiting existing communication opportunities, and building new ones as necessary (among others, taking part in the EP's inter-parliamentary week on the European Semester as well as in ECON and REGI Committees meetings; disseminating opinions/resolutions; liaising with relevant EP rapporteurs; inviting relevant speakers to ECON meetings and to the annual workshop with the participation of European Semester Officers);

(d) developing fresh evidence of the key role of the LRAs in implementing CSRs related to investment and structural reforms (by means of studies, surveys and analyses of the Semester's main documents.

On the 2019 European Semester, the first objective of the CoR of injecting a territorial dimension in the Semester's analytical background was achieved. The 2019 AGS and 2020 ASGS and Country Reports analyse regional disparities and identify investment and reform needs accordingly. The second objective of promoting the involvement of the LRAs as full partners in the Semester, notably by adopting the code of conduct proposed in 2017 – has seen only modest results so far. The Commission, while acknowledging the importance of involving all levels of government and relevant stakeholders, refrained from actively promoting such engagement. Nor did the Council despite its concern for the lack of ownership resulting in a low rate of implementation of the CSRs. The EP expressed support in some of its reports, depending on the rapporteur and the most involved MEPs.

By intensifying its initiative – in particular, by producing fresh evidence of the role of the LRAs in the Semester and by networking with relevant actors at EU and country level – the CoR can reasonably expect that awareness of the need to involve sub-national governments in the Semester gain ground. The von der Leyen's Commission push to integrate the SDGs in the European Semester and to implement the Green Deal and the European Pillar of Social Rights, together with other new tasks being

³⁸ ECON-VI/019 - *Improving the governance of the European Semester: a Code of Conduct for the involvement of local and regional authorities*, rapporteur: Rob Jonkman (NL/ECR)

³⁹ ECON-VI/040 - *The European Semester and Cohesion Policy: aligning structural reforms with long-term investments*, rapporteur: Rob Jonkman (NL/ECR)

put on the Semester (stronger links with cohesion policy, the BICC), provide fresh arguments to the CoR to pursue the objective of a structured involvement of the LRAs in the Semester.

2.2. The territorial dimension of EU legislation matters

Working in the interest of citizens, no matter where they chose to live and work.

2.2.1. Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform

Main impact:

- There is a clear reference to **“regional managing authorities” in the European Parliament Commission for agriculture and rural development [AGRI report](#)** on the proposal establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the CAP.

The CoR pursued the above policy objectives by:

- Relationship with EP: _CoR rapporteur presenting in AGRI/ENVI public hearings on CAP (December 2019), CoR rapporteur discussing in EP conferences Joint meeting of CoR rapporteur with Commissioner Hogan and EP rapporteur on CMO (Common Market Organisation) (January 2019);
- Relation with the AGRI Council: _CoR rapporteur participate in two conferences on the CAP organised by the Council Presidency: CAP after 2020 - Next stage kick off. Common Agricultural Policy and Challenges for Young European Farmers - hosted by the Romanian Presidency (May 2019);
- Alliance-building:
 - CoR rapporteur attended various conferences on the CAP with various stakeholders (NGOs, producers' organisations, researchers, etc.) to promote the CoR opinion⁴⁰. On 28 February he rapporteur participated the France 3 TV show "dimanche en politique" in live broadcast from the SIA (Salon International de l'Agriculture) to present the CoR opinion on the CAP reform. On 14 March, he attended the Joint Conference of the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Rural Parliament "Making rural areas the engines of a sustainable Europe" to urged the EU to come up with actions in support of rural areas, in an effort to steer policy in the direction set out in the Cork 2.0 Declaration. The CoR opinion on the CAP reform was also presented during the 4th edition of the European Rural Parliament, which took place in Candás (Spain) in mid-November and during the 2019 EU Agricultural Outlook conference on 10 and 11 December 2019;
 - The CoR has worked very hard with the AGRI regions network to reaffirm the need to safeguard the central role of European Regions in the definition and implementation of agricultural and rural development policies as well as the need to increase their role in EU decision-making process

⁴⁰ NAT-VI/034 - *Reform of the CAP* - rapporteur Guillaume Cros (FR/PES)

The CoR's work based on 3 legislative opinions on the draft CAP regulation is a success with view at the results. AGRI Committee report on "[Common Market Organisation report](#)" took up many CoR positions, in particular on market regulation tools. [AGRI Committee report on CAP strategic plans](#) took up some CoR amendments, in particular on the role of regional authorities in the CAP strategic plans. [DEVE Committee report on CAP strategic plans](#) took up CoR positions on Policy Coherence for Development in the CAP reform and ensuring systematic monitoring of CAP effects on developing countries. [ENVI Committee report on CAP strategic plans](#) takes up CoR position to dedicate 30% of the First pillar to eco-schemes.

2.2.2. Implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU

Main impact:

- **Inclusion of 4 local and regional authorities** suggested by the CoR in the final list of selected members of the partnerships;
- **Recognition** of the work undertaken by the urban partnerships in the Bucharest Declaration adopted by the informal Council of Ministers in charge of urban matters on 14 June 2019;
- Guarantee the continuation of the Urban Agenda for the EU as an operational mechanism to implement the renewed Leipzig Charter;
- **Inclusion of a reference to the role of the metropolitan areas in the draft of the Leipzig Charter** to be discussed under the German Presidency of the Council over the second semester of 2020.

The **process of the Urban Agenda for the EU**, which started in 2016 with the Pact of Amsterdam, reached a **key milestone in 2019**, where the first **urban partnerships** delivered their results. Furthermore, the Council of Ministers in charge of Urban Matters adopted the **composition and the actions plans of the two new urban partnerships** on culture and cultural heritage and on security in public spaces, in Bucharest on 14 June 2019. The CoR was able to include the Voivodeship of Silesia (PL), the city of Berlin (DE) and autonomous community of Canary Islands (ES) as members of the partnership on culture and the city of Mechelen (Belgium) as a member of the partnership on security.

Following the political line established in the opinion on the *Implementation assessment of the Urban Agenda for the EU*⁴¹, the work of the urban partnerships was recognised in the Declaration adopted by the **Informal Council of Ministers in charge of Urban Matters** in Bucharest. Furthermore, the Ministers launched an unequivocal message to the upcoming German presidency to "**guarantee the continuation of the Urban Agenda for the EU** as an operational mechanism to implement the renewed Leipzig Charter", as it was requested by a joint letter signed by Presidents of the CoR, Eurocities and CEMR. The key issues raised by the CoR will be carried forward in the ongoing preparation of its opinion on the *Renewal of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities*⁴², to be adopted at the Plenary Session in autumn 2020. Furthermore, the opinion on *The challenges of metropolitan regions*

⁴¹ COTER-VI/037 - *Implementation assessment of the Urban Agenda for the EU*, rapporteur: Kieran McCarthy (IE/EA).

⁴² COTER-VII/001 - *Renewal of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities*, rapporteur: Juan Espadas Cejas (ES/PES).

and their position in the future Cohesion policy post 2020⁴³ contributed to the discussion by highlighting the specific challenges metropolitan regions face and their role in the EU Urban Agenda.

2.2.3. European maritime and Fisheries Fund

Main impact:

- The CoR's work based on two legislative opinions on the draft the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)⁴⁴ regulation is a success with view at the results. While still at present, the ordinary legislative procedure on the EMFF file is still awaiting Council 1st reading position, the recommendations of the CoR are in general convergent with the final text adopted by the European Parliament, **with some amendments taken over in the first reading report literally or in spirit. Key successes:**
 - Increase of the proposed total amount available for the EMFF for the programming period 2021-2027;
 - The report takes into account the specific situation of outermost regions;
 - The report allows for boat upgrades for health and safety improvements;
 - Provisions to use financial instruments in addition to grants;
 - EP has entirely supported CoR proposals to delete certain paragraphs from the draft.

The long term goal is to deliver input for legislative files while they are being formulated, propose amendments while they are in the legislative phase and monitor the implementation phase.

CoR's legislative work in this field has been accomplished through two CoR EMFF opinions – one own-initiative opinion⁴⁵ on the future of the EMFF and one opinion⁴⁶ based on official legislative consultations from the EP and the Council of the EU.

Via both opinions the CoR promotes the recognition of the Blue economy as an instrument for jobs and sustainable growth in coastal and maritime regions and asks for investments in different parts of the Blue Economy, strengthening of the territorial focus of the EMFF, investments in training and safety on board, and has fought against cuts in the budgetary envelope of the EMFF as a part of the MFF.

Alongside the adoption of opinions, the NAT commission organised joint high-level events with the ongoing Presidency of the Council and the EC throughout 2019. Those events provide valuable feedback and have a practical value for the participating regions by providing them with updated information on funding opportunities and the latest best practices. In 2019 those events were dedicated to "Freshwater aquaculture" (with the Romanian Presidency) and to "Innovation in Freshwater Fisheries" (with LUKE Institute and Finnish Presidency).

⁴³ COTER-VI/055 - *The challenges of metropolitan regions and their position in the future Cohesion policy post 2020*, rapporteur: Juraj Droba (SK/ECR)

⁴⁴ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council (COM(2018)0390)

⁴⁵ NAT-VI/028 - *The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) beyond 2020 – Investing in Europe's Coastal Communities*- rapporteur Alberto Nuñez Feijoo (ES/EPP)

⁴⁶ NAT-VI/035 - *The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund* - rapporteur Nathalie Sarrabezolles (FR/PES)

On 28 March 2019 CoR's NAT commission organised a high level "Conference on Sustainable Development of the Blue Economy" with the participation of Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, President of Malta, Karmenu Vella, Member of the EC responsible for Environment, Maritime affairs and Fisheries, and representatives of Member States and Regions to discuss the future of the Blue Economy in Europe. The event was hosted by the president of the region of Gozo and represents an important cornerstone of CoR's work in this area throughout the year.

Furthermore, CoR rapporteurs participated regularly in the steering groups of EU's Atlantic and WestMED Strategies, contributing directly to policy developments. In 2019, the CoR became an observer in the Aquaculture Advisory Council. Alliance building: continued work with associations (CRPM, Atlantic Cities), multiple non-governmental stakeholders, EP PECH Committee and SEARICA EP Intergroup (participation in events)

2.2.4. The Socio-economic Structural Change in Europe's Coal Regions

Main impact:

- The CoR has **developed and implemented a comprehensive campaign directed** to EU policy makers, on the need for a regional support mechanism for the transition of EU coal regions;
- The messages conveyed by the CoR opinion and the bilateral talks led the European Commission to **present a proposal for a Just Transition Fund on 14 January 2020** with explicit reference to the CoR opinion.

Following the Paris Agreement's goal to reduce CO₂ emissions, coal regions are facing enormous challenges when exiting coal. They need additional financing, which should be provided by the EU budget and be closely interlinked with structural policies. Furthermore, they need more flexible state aid rules in order to better incentivise investments in the regions.

The CoR has developed and implemented a comprehensive campaign directed to EU policy makers, on the need for a regional support mechanism for the transition of EU coal regions. This included thorough analytical work and the adoption of an opinion on the *Socioeconomic structural change in Europe's coal regions*⁴⁷, describing the challenges of coal transition, and putting forward policy proposals.

The CoR organised workshops and a *High-Level Conference on Coal Regions*, attended by the former Commissioner for budget, Mr Oettinger, several Ministers and State secretaries from Member States with coal regions, MEPs, and high-ranking representatives from coal regions; they debated this issue and came to the agreement that coal regions needed more fresh money and more flexible state aid rules. The successful outreach done by the CoR and the rapporteur led to a number of meetings, such as with former Commissioner for regional policy, Ms Cretu, with high-ranking civil servants from the EC, MEPs, and colleagues from coal regions Member States and coal regions. To supplement its work on coal transition, the CoR has also commissioned a study on [*Assessing the need for a modification of the state aid rules for the phasing-out of coal*](#)⁴⁸.

⁴⁷ ECON-VI/041 - *Socioeconomic structural change in Europe's coal regions* - rapporteur Mark Speich (DE/EPP)

⁴⁸ <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/state-aid-rules-phasing-out-coal/Coal-regions-state-aid.pdf>

Until the CoR opinion on coal was adopted at plenary in October 2019, the EC was not inclined to propose additional budget for the coal transition; only the EP, which called for a Just Energy Transition Fund, had acknowledged this need. But the messages conveyed by the opinion and the bilateral talks led the EC to present a proposal for a Just Transition Fund on 14 January 2020. In fact, in the motivation for its proposal for a regulation establishing the Just Transition Fund⁴⁹, the EC referred explicitly to the CoR opinion.

In the inter-institutional debate on coal transition, the CoR is perceived as an eye level partner and its work is valued by stakeholders from coal regions and Member States. MEP and REGI Chair Younous Omarjee invited the CoR rapporteur to present his opinion at the EP REGI committee meeting of 5 December 2019, where a very lively debate with the MEPs took place.

The CoR will continue to collect evidence on whether coal regions need more flexibility regarding state aid. The CoR will also continue to cooperate closely with the EC, to ensure that its recommendations will be considered in the revision of the EC's state aid guidelines.

2.2.5. The recognition of the role and importance of LRAs in Implementing the SDGs

Main impact:

- The CoR became a leading member of the EU stakeholders' platform on SDGs and was one of the co-drafters of its recommendations to the European Commission.
- The CoR became a leading member of the EU stakeholders' platform on SDGs and was one of the co-drafters of its recommendations to the European Commission.
- Through its role in the EU multi-stakeholder platform in the SDGs and other fora, the CoR built several strong partnerships at the European and global level.
- The Council explicitly mentioned LRAs, the role of the CoR in the localisation of the SDGs, and the CoR opinion itself in its 10 December 2019 conclusions, calling on Member States to better support LRAs.
- The European Parliament report on SDGs also featured several amendments suggested by the CoR and overall corresponds to the position advocated by the CoR.
- The new Commission took on board the key CoR request of integrating SDGs in the European Semester.

The European Union and all its Member States are committed to reaching the SDGs) The CoR has been advocating for this through the development of an overarching EU strategy built on the SDGs, their inclusion within the European Semester, and for the recognition of the key role of cities and regions in reaching these goals.

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<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1579099555315&uri=COM:2020:22:FIN>

In 2019, the CoR adopted an opinion on *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): a basis for a long-term EU strategy for a sustainable Europe by 2030*⁵⁰, which was adopted unanimously in plenary in June. The CoR organised several events on the SDGs and their localisation, and took part in many more. Several analytical and data-gathering exercises were also undertaken in order to build up institutional expertise and present a real added value in the inter-Institutional debate in particular. Through the CoR's active role in the EU multi-stakeholder platform in the SDGs and other fora, several strong partnerships were built at the European and global level (with local and regional organisations as well as SDGs stakeholders such as business, social and environment associations). The CoR also carried communication activities – notably an infographic which was published on the EC website and endorsed by all members of the platform. These activities were key in helping the CoR build and disseminate its messages. The CoR also became a leading member of the EU stakeholders' platform on SDGs and was one of the co-drafters of its recommendations to the EC.

This work led to a strong recognition of the role of the CoR as a key stakeholder on the SDGs. All EU Institutions endorsed its work. Most notably, an incremental approach to relations with the Council built on providing evidence-based policy recommendations truly paid off. The Council explicitly mentioned LRAs, the role of the CoR in the localisation of the SDGs, and the CoR opinion itself in its 10 December 2019 conclusions, calling on Member States to better support LRAs. Furthermore, the joint CoR-OECD survey was highly successful and strongly featured in the OECD's own major report (*A territorial approach to the SDGs*). The EP report on SDGs also featured several amendments suggested by the CoR and overall corresponds to the position advocated by the CoR. First Vice-President of the EP, Frans Timmermans, publicly acknowledged the work and added-value of the CoR on SDGs. The EC Reflection Paper on SDGs included an executive summary of the recommendations co-drafters by the CoR, as well as many elements of the recommendations themselves. While the new Commission did not follow with a European strategy on SDGs, the Green Deal narrative borrows to the Reflection Paper on SDGs and the new Commission did take on board the key CoR request of integrating SDGs in the European Semester.

Building on its previous expertise of monitoring the Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Semester, the CoR will assess, as from 2020, the implementation of the SDGs through the Semester.

2.2.6. Regional Dimension of the Social Scoreboard

Main impact:

- The CoR was the first Institution that attempted to **provide a regional aspect on the Social Scoreboard that accompanies the European Pillar of Social Rights**.
- The success of the endeavour prompted other Institutions to attempt to provide a **regional dimension in their versions of the scoreboard** (DG-EMPL, JRC);
- The new Joint Employment Report from DG-EMPL included for the first time a regional dimension of the scoreboard, examining 10 headline indicators (an improvement from the CoR's 7 headline indicators);
- DG-EMPL and the CoR have agreed to continue working on the development of the regional scoreboard, with the CoR pursuing the incorporation of more headline indicators, while the

⁵⁰ ECON-VI/044 - *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): a basis for a long-term EU strategy for a sustainable Europe by 2030*, rapporteur: Arnoldas Abramavičius (LT/EPP)

CoR using its political influence to **make more of these indicators available** from the Member States.

The European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) was announced in November 2017 during the Gothenburg Social Summit.

In its first releases, the Social Scoreboard only included national averages, and therefore could not accurately present the vast regional differences that exist not only in the EU as a whole, but also in regions of the same country. The CoR highlighted during the conference *Delivering on the European Social Pillar: a territorial perspective* (CoR, 26 November 2018) the need to develop a regional social scoreboard that would reflect regional disparities and help the monitoring process and the formulation of policies. This imperative was discussed and agreed upon with DG/EMPL (the creators of the Social Scoreboard) during the conference.

The CoR underlined that the release of a Regional Social Scoreboard was feasible even with the resources currently at its disposal, thus achieving maximum results with the capacities at hand. The CoR reached out to Eurostat and received confirmation that several indicators were available at regional (NUTS 2) level already.

With the data retrieved from Eurostat's latest indicators (May 2019), the CoR, through its SEDEC commission, created a report analysing the data, creating a new "output indicator" to measure overall performance of the various NUTS 2 regions, and created visualisations with a new Eurostat-developed tool. Finally, in September 2019, the European Regional Social Scoreboard was released. With the release, there was an extensive communication campaign, with press releases and communication with the EC and the EP. The CoR President pointed out that, despite the progress, the publication "highlights that the EU must put tackling social inequalities and promoting territorial cohesion at the heart of its agenda"⁵¹.

The release of the European Regional Social Scoreboard prompted all relevant stakeholders to increase their efforts to create regional scoreboards too. The JRC has developed a visual tool to reflect regional performances (autumn 2019). Most importantly, the DG EMPL included a regional dimension of the social scoreboard in the latest release (17 December 2019) of the Joint Employment Report (JER), where regional (NUTS 2) data is displayed and examined.

The publication of the European Regional Social Scoreboard has fuelled the debate for the release of more data from the Member States both in terms of quality and accuracy – the JER's scoreboard examined 10 headline indicators compared to the CoR's 7, already a marked improvement. There is still a lot of work to be done to have accurate regional data released for all 14 headline indicators of the Social Scoreboard, but it is beyond doubt that the first steps towards that goal have been taken.

In future, a European Regional Social Scoreboard can take the form of a seasonal release (perhaps annual) from the CoR. Its added value resides in providing strong arguments on the implementation of

⁵¹ "Regional Social Scoreboard: New research shows over 80% of EU regions making progress but regional inequalities persist" CoR Press Release 11/09/2019

cohesion policies and its findings can be used within the context of the European Semester and for the funding negotiations of the EU funds.

2.2.7. Forests

Main impact:

- The **EC refers to CoR opinion** in the introduction to the Mid-term review published in December 2018;
- The **Council conclusions** from 15 April 2019 call for further improving coordination, communication and the sharing of best practices, in line **with recommendations expressed by the CoR**;
- The rapporteur raised the profile of the CoR in the sector, presenting the CoR position at numerous events and high-level meetings.

The CoR adopted two opinions on the EU Forest strategy in the last three years: *Mid-term review of the EU Forest Strategy*⁵² and the *Implementation of the EU Forest Strategy*⁵³.

The CoR was one of the first stakeholders to firmly call for a new, upgraded EU Forest Strategy after 2020. The CoR was also pleading to closely involve local and regional authorities in the design and implementation of forest sector measures led and funded by the EU as they are implementing them on the ground. Municipalities and regional governments have a key part to play in strengthening the sustainable use of forests. The sector is also key for rural communities, hence the importance of EU funding.

The rapporteur had been very successful in building alliances in the EP and with relevant stakeholders, regularly organising meetings with relevant MEPs and stakeholders, such as the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF), European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR), European Forest Institute (EFI) while co-operating with EU presidencies. The rapporteur spoke at numerous events, pleading for a better role for local and regional authorities.

Among events organised by the NAT commission, the high-level conference on Regional Forest innovation on 13 November 2019 encountered a lot of success with speakers calling for better communication and enhanced regional cooperation in the field.

On 21 January 2020, the rapporteur spoke at the conference on Multi-functional role of EU forests in the EP, hosted by the MEP Petri Sarvamaa. Highlighting the need for a reinforced guiding role of the EU Forest strategy and an EU-level coordination on all forestry-related matters, the rapporteur pleaded for including local and regional authorities in the drafting and the implementation of the new strategy and more broadly, in the Green Deal.

⁵² NAT-VI/027 - *Mid-term review of the EU Forest Strategy* - rapporteur Ossi Martikainen (FI/ALDE)

⁵³ NAT-VI/041 - *Implementation of the EU Forest Strategy* - rapporteur Ossi Martikainen (FI/renew E.)

The role of forestry is gaining momentum, importantly contributing to the objectives of the Green Deal. The CoR will continue to advocate for the inclusion of local and regional authorities in the policymaking. It will also have a close look at new EU Forest Strategy, expected at the beginning of 2021.

2.2.8. Mobility and the future of transport

Main impact:

- Streamlining TEN-T implementation: The Council would like the **legislative proposal to cover only transport projects that are part of pre-identified cross-border links and missing links** of the TEN-T core network. This was one of the **key suggestions of the CoR opinions**;
- The final Directive the Clean Vehicles requires the EC to set up a **"Union platform for cross-border and joint procurement of clean vehicles"** which was also a **key point in the CoR opinion**.

The CoR opinion *Streamlining TEN-T implementation*⁵⁴ addressed the sensitive issue of building permits for projects implemented on the TEN-T to be transferred to the national level, which is sensitive in Member States where such competencies are exercised on regional and local level. Many concerns raised by the rapporteur have been taken up by the co-legislators. The EP would like to introduce the possibility for a Member State to delegate the competence (of a single competent authority) to a more appropriate level, as long as the principle of 'single point of contact' is observed. The Council would like to change the legal nature of the proposal from a regulation to a directive, to give Member States more flexibility.

The CoR opinion *Delivering on low-emission mobility*⁵⁵ stressed that **joint procurement platforms**, also across borders should be used for clean public transport vehicles. The final legislative act was adopted and stipulates that *"the Commission would be required to set up a Union platform for cross-border and joint procurement of clean vehicles, to present an action plan on charging and refuelling infrastructure for heavy-duty vehicles and to propose a methodology for counting the life-cycle CO2 emissions and well-to-wheel CO2 emissions of vehicles."* Those are also key points in the CoR opinion.

It should also be noted that the opinion on *The potential of the rail sector in delivering EU policy priorities*⁵⁶, adopted by the CoR plenary in December 2019, was followed by the tabling of a proposal by the EC in March 2020 designating 2021 as the European Year of Rail. Many of the points raised in the CoR opinion are reflected in the EC's proposal, including the important role of LRAs in accelerating modal shift to rail. The COTER commission will liaise closely with the EC in preparation for the European Year of Rail and will further consolidate its messages on the perspective of LRAs in a dedicated opinion in response to the EC's proposal.

⁵⁴ COTER-VI/044 - *Streamlining TEN-T implementation*, rapporteur Michiel Scheffer (NL/RE)

⁵⁵ COTER-VI/039 - *Delivering on low-emission mobility*, rapporteur Michiel Scheffer (NL/RE)

⁵⁶ COTER-VI/054 - *The potential of the rail sector in delivering EU policy priorities*, rapporteur: Pascal Mangin (FR/EPP)

2.3. A simpler, more connected Europe

Reconnecting citizens and businesses at local and regional level.

2.3.1. Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA)

Main Impact:

- The CoR has cooperated with REGIO in **promoting the revision of the Better Regulation Guidelines and Toolbox**, updating the methodological information and defending the introduction of a tool for checking the territorial nature of legislative files. The toolbox for TIA, currently under revision, and the CoR has provided comments reflecting the work developed in 2019 in this field.

The general goals of the CoR regarding Territorial Impact Assessments are:

- i. Taking into account of potential (asymmetric) territorial impacts of EU legislative and policy proposals;
- ii. Promoting the systematic use of TIA in the EU legislative process.
- iii. Allowing CoR rapporteurs to have access to specific, evidence-based, analysis to improve the territorial dimension of our Opinions.
- iv. Strengthening territorial impact assessment (and the CoR) in the context of the Better Regulation Agenda.

For 2019 the specific goals were:

- the reinforcement of methodological know-how and capacity building,
- the reinforcement of our partnerships and Inter-institutional cooperation.

In 2019, the CoR held four TIA workshops connected to own Initiative opinions, namely a:

- Place-based Industrial Strategy (ex-ante, March),
- Climate Neutrality (ex-ante, April),
- Bioeconomy (ex-ante, April), and
- Energy Poverty (ex-ante, May).

Furthermore, during the EWRC, together with DG REGIO, the CoR promoted the use of TIA by showing our work on the field in a panel debate with the regulatory Scrutiny Board and JRC, and with ESPON and OIR in a video interview.

The CoR has also published a [study on the methodological state of the art of the field of territorial impact assessments⁵⁷](#), with the goal of giving a concise introduction to the topic to police officers involved in Impact Assessments and Evaluations, as well as decision makers in general. Finally, in December the CoR organised a roundtable with practitioners from the DG REGIO, JRC, EPRS) as well as ESPON and OIR, allowing for a debate on the development of TIA and the revision of the Better Regulation Guidelines and Toolbox.

⁵⁷ Study can be consulted on the CoR webpage: <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/TIA-State-of-Play.pdf>

2.3.2. Subsidiarity

Main impact:

- **Launching of a pilot project**, in cooperation with the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE), aiming to influence the European Commission Annual Work Programme by enabling regional parliaments with legislative powers to have their say on its preparation.
- CoR continued its efforts to ensure that the **Task Force's recommendations take root** within the EU framework and that Active Subsidiarity becomes a reality.

Towards the end of 2017 the Juncker Commission recognised subsidiarity as one of the key aspects in the debate on the Future of Europe and announced the formation of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and "Doing Less More Efficiently". The results of the Task Forces work, summed up in 9 broad recommendations and 36 concrete actions⁵⁸.

Throughout 2019 the CoR maintained its efforts to ensure that the Task Force's recommendations take root within the EU framework and that Active Subsidiarity becomes a reality. *During the 8th European Summit of Regions and Cities that took place on 14-15 March 2019 in Bucharest, a high-level discussion on Active Subsidiarity was organized.* This discussion was not only notable in keeping up the high political momentum from 2018, but it also served as the launching point for the CoR pilot project of regional hubs on the review of EU policy implementation. On 15 April 2019, the EC published its Communication on *Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment*. The CoR has decided to draw up an opinion⁵⁹ on the Communication. This milestone opinion, adopted on the 8 October 2019 plenary session, condensed the CoR's views on the EC better regulation agenda and the role of active subsidiarity in EU policymaking. The rapporteur participated as speaker in a large scale conference on better regulation, organised by the EC, in preparation of the opinion and, in follow-up of the opinion, represented the CoR's institutional views on opening up the EU framework for local and regional inputs during the 9th Subsidiarity Conference of the CoR, held on 22 November 2019 in Rome. The 9th Subsidiarity Conference, co-organised by the Italian Conference of the Presidents of Regional Parliaments, brought in actors from all levels of government into the discussion on Active Subsidiarity and resulted in a diversified debate on how to reach Active Subsidiarity on a Europe-wide scale and how to use this approach to reconnect the EU to its citizens.

A new pilot project on **input from political debates in regional Parliaments was launched during the conference in cooperation with the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies.** The project will aim to influence, and possibly steer, the EC Annual Work Programme through enabling regional parliaments with legislative powers to have their say on its preparation.

58 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/files/report-task-force-subsidiarity-proportionality-and-doing-less-more-efficiently_en

59 CIVEX-VI/041 - *Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment* - rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP)

2.3.3. Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) transport and missing links call 2019

Main impact:

- The CoR organised a conference on missing railway links across borders (together with EGTC "Pamina"), which was **prominently featured in the leading German transport magazine "Deutsche Verkehrs-Zeitung"**.
- Several positions and legislative amendments of the corresponding CoR opinion were reflected in the agreed **legislative proposal for the next Connecting Europe Facility (2021-2027)**

The CoR continued its effort on the **missing transport links initiative** on the topic of financing of critical missing transport links, particularly in cross-border areas, which it launched together with the European Parliament's TRAN Committee in 2016⁶⁰. In 2019 the EC published a **call for proposals** for transport projects to be co-financed under the CEF. Despite being relatively small in overall budget (EUR 65 million), this CEF call was dedicated to projects on the **secondary ("comprehensive") network of the TEN-T**. Together with the EC, the CoR organised an info day on this CEF call. In total, projects worth EUR 227 million of CEF co-financing were submitted and the EC recommended 31 for co-financing.

Also in the context of the missing links initiative and following the publication of a comprehensive study by the EC on the subject, in April 2019 the CoR organised a conference on missing railway links across borders (together with EGTC "Pamina"), which was prominently featured in the leading German transport magazine "Deutsche Verkehrs-Zeitung"⁶¹.

Missing cross-border transport links were also given prominence within the framework of the opening of the European Mobility Week 2019, in which one CoR member⁶² took part alongside the Commissioner for Transport and the Finnish Presidency.

The Interinstitutional negotiations on the **legislative proposal for the next CEF (2021-2027)** resulted in an agreement on a partial general approach on all but budgetary issues in 2019. Several positions and legislative amendments of the corresponding CoR opinion were reflected in the agreed text, most importantly the **reintroduction of "territorial, social and economic cohesion"** as the general objective of the CEF and the **removal of the suggestion to make 30% of the amounts transferred from the Cohesion Fund immediately available to all Member States**.

2.3.4. Developing the Local and Regional Digital Indicators' framework (LORDI)

Main impact:

⁶⁰ COTER-VI/016 - *Missing transport links in border regions*, rapporteur: Michiel Scheffer (NL/ALDE).

⁶¹ Deutsche Verkehrs-Zeitung (DVZ) No 17, 23 April 2019, pages 2 and 11.

⁶² M. Pavel Branda (CZ/ECR)

- A strategy paper by the CoR President and vice-President was discussed with DG CNECT at the Broadband Platform meeting in April 2019 and then **presented at the EU Digital Assembly in June 2019**;
- The EU Digital Assembly in June 2019 **supported the CoR's idea of developing a LORDI framework** (initially, local DESI index), and a joint concept note by the CoR and European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON) was endorsed by DG CNECT in September 2019.

Up until now, progress in digitalisation in the EU has been measured annually only at the national level. But progress should be properly monitored and reported also at the local/regional level in order to help define investment priorities. So realising a Local and Regional Digital Indicators' framework (LORDI) becomes key in this respect.

The strategic context of the development of a local LORDI framework was shaped by the debate on the concept of "digital cohesion" launched by the CoR opinion on *Digital Europe for All*⁶³ considering that digitalisation should help economic, territorial and social cohesion. Therefore, the future EU Digital Europe programme should be inclusive and facilitate local and regional investment to support three main areas jointly identified by DG CNECT in the strategy paper: local economy, public services and e-government-/e-democracy.

In order to develop the local DESI index, the CoR initiated cooperation with DG CNECT, ESPON and with other stakeholders. The aim was to measure progress and digitalisation needs at the local level in a way which allows comparison, informs local decision-makers and builds on the existing national-level DESI methodology.

The EU Digital Assembly in June 2019 supported the CoR's idea of developing a LORDI, and a joint concept note by the CoR and ESPON was endorsed by DG CNECT in September 2019, setting out three steps in the process: 1) methodology work, 2) a test run with surveys, and 3) reporting to the 2020 EU Digital Assembly, with the expected result that the EU should collect data annually on progress in digitalisation at the local/regional level.

This development was possible due to cooperation with DG CNECT, including an early CoR contribution to the future Digital Europe Programme. Firstly, a strategy paper by the CoR President and first vice-President was discussed with DG CNECT at the Broadband Platform meeting in April 2019 and then presented at the EU Digital Assembly in June 2019. Secondly, the issues of the strategy paper were carried forward and developed within the CoR opinion on *Digital Europe for All*⁶⁴ adopted in October 2019.

The fruitful cooperation with partners will continue so that the COR initiative becomes reality and the LORDI framework becomes operational already this year. The next stages include:

⁶³ SEDEC-VI/053 - *Digital Europe for All*, rapporteur: Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES).

⁶⁴ SEDEC-VI/053 - *Digital Europe for All*, rapporteur: Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES)

- *Short term:* Workshop at the CoR on 21 January 2020 aiming to better understand the existing methodology approaches for data gathering;
- *Medium term:* the joint methodology could be published as a joint paper of DG CNECT, ESPON and the CoR in the second semester of 2020 and the LORDI report is to be presented;
- *Long term:* an advisory group including DG CNECT, ESPON, the CoR, the OECD, the OASC network and Eurocities should be established to ensure consistency and quality in the index preparation in the years to come.

2.3.5. SMEs and the industrial strategy in Europe

Main impact:

- The CoR, through its rapporteur **contributed to the work of the high-level group on the future of European industry**, and addressed Member States at the Informal Competitiveness Council;
- The **CoR raised its Institutional profile** in the area of entrepreneurship and SME policies;
- The CoR has **influenced the debate and policy proposals** towards a recognition of place-based, territorial approaches to industrial policy;
- The CoR's excellent cooperation with the EC has led to the kick-off of a new, European Entrepreneurial Region (EER)-inspired interregional cooperation project.

The development of a strong and coherent industrial policy is crucial for building a resilient, innovative and competitive Europe. Policies at different levels should follow a place-based approach, focused on supporting SMEs, and on strengthening and connecting regional ecosystems, to drive innovation and new business, and job opportunities linked to a carbon-neutral and circular economy.

In 2019, the CoR continued its analytical and political work aimed at influencing an ambitious EU industrial strategy that recognises the centrality of places and supports territorial ecosystems. With the adoption of the CoR Opinion on *A place-based approach to EU industrial policy*⁶⁵, the rapporteur had the opportunity to advocate for a more "place-based" industrial policy to European Institutions, to contribute to the work of the high-level group on the future of European industry, and to address member states at the Informal Competitiveness Council.

The CoR raised its institutional profile in the area of entrepreneurship and SME policies, notably with its opinion on the *Contribution from cities and regions towards a new EU policy framework for SMEs*⁶⁶, and through the implementation of its EER scheme.

The EER contributed to the recognition of the regional "ecosystem" approach to European policy making for SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups, as demonstrated in different policy communications and conferences; in regional ecosystems, local and regional authorities are identified as key actors delivering SME-friendly policies and measures on the ground. The CoR's excellent cooperation with the EC has

⁶⁵ ECON-VI/042 - *A place-based approach to EU industrial policy*, rapporteur: Jeannette Baljeu (NL/ALDE)

⁶⁶ ECON-VI/046 - *Contribution from cities and regions towards a new EU policy framework for SMEs*, rapporteur: Tadeusz Truskolaski (PL/EA)

led to the kick-off of a new, EER-inspired interregional cooperation project and the organisation of a CoR seminar during the EC's annual SME Assembly in Helsinki in November 2019.

The CoR has influenced the debate and policy proposals towards a recognition of place-based, territorial approaches to industrial policy. The fact that industries have to be made resilient in the context of globalisation and foreign competition and that regional smart specialisation plays a role, is recognised at EU level. The CoR has become a respected partner in the inter-institutional policy debate on an Industrial Strategy.

The CoR will take stock of its key messages on industry and SMEs to support the implementation of the upcoming EU proposals on the new Industrial and SME Strategy, which will form the EC's agenda for the times of transformation. The CoR should further capitalise on the EER scheme and its work on place-based industrial policy to bring interregional cooperation a level up, seeking the EC's support for establishing more structured forms of cooperation; this could for instance take the form of networks and platforms gathering stakeholders from the regions, to address common challenges in accessing the finance, digital transformation, and transition to sustainable, circular economic models.

2.4. Stability and cooperation within and outside of the European Union

Supporting our neighbours on their path towards European values.

2.4.1. UK withdrawal from the EU

Main impact:

- The CoR report⁶⁷ **received considerable media attention** and drew attention to the fact every region needs to carefully consider how it will be effected by Brexit.
- When speaking at the summit of cities and regions in March 2019 Mr. Barnier **echoed the messages of the CoR** and urged the cities of the EU to step up their preparations for any outcome from the talks on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom.

Over the past few years the CoR has analysed and debated the likely asymmetrical impact that the UK leaving the EU would have on the EU27 regions and cities, aiming to raise awareness among regions and cities and to convey the views of regional and local authorities to the Commission.

The CoR conducted comprehensive analytical and political work on the possible economic impact of the UK's withdrawal on the EU27 regions and cities: a study, a survey and TIA were conducted as well as debates in the CoR ECON commission. A [report](#) was published and debated with a large audience on 20 March 2019.

The overall results of the analytical work and political debates provided sound input for two CoR Resolutions (in March 2017 and May 2019). These identified measures to mitigate the expected impact of the withdrawal and called for the EU to ensure that local and regional authorities are not "left to deal on their own" with the challenges ahead. Both resolutions were notably sent to chief Commission negotiator Mr. Barnier, who intervened at the CoR's plenary sessions in 2017 and 2019. Mr. Barnier

⁶⁷ <https://cor.europa.eu/Documents/Migrated/news/Final-Report-on-the-UK-withdrawal.pdf>

acknowledged the CoR's and regions' work on the local and regional impact of the UK's withdrawal from the EU and reiterated his commitment to do the utmost for cushioning this impact and for putting the conditions in place to maintain cooperation among local and regional governments in the EU27 and the UK after the UK leaves the EU.

The EC's Communication on preparing for the withdrawal of the UK from the EU (July and November 2019) echoes key conclusions of the CoR work. Amendments⁶⁸ tabled by the EP to the draft Common Provisions Regulation propose the creation of specific support measures for EU regions affected by the UK's withdrawal and thereby reflect the CoR May 2019 Resolution that had called on the EC to assess the possible need for a stabilisation fund for regions most adversely affected by the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The CoR's work also had a significant media impact: more than 500 newspapers/agencies across Europe reported on the CoR analytical work; the CoR was invited to numerous interviews/radio shows on the Brexit impact on LRAs.

Since the future EU27-UK relationship will involve negotiations on key policy areas (trade, financial services, agriculture and fisheries, etc.), which will impact certain regions and cities in the EU27, the CoR will closely monitor those negotiations to bring the views and concerns of regions and cities to the process.

2.4.2. Forum "Cities and Regions for Development Cooperation"

Main impact:

- The results of the Forum helped **shape the content of the European Commission's 2020 Call for Proposals of the Partnership for sustainable cities**. In particular, the call included two horizontal lots for cities in fragile countries and for smaller towns, in line with the recommendations of the Forum;
- The Forum **showcased the CoR's Nicosia Initiative** of support to Libyan municipalities as a successful example of a mutually beneficial peer-to-peer partnership contributing to stability and fostering local development in a conflict environment.
- The Forum raised awareness about development cooperation from a regional and local angle and facilitated the exchange of good practices and the creation of new partnerships.

On 4 - 5 February 2019, the CoR organised the sixth edition of the Forum "Cities and Regions for Development Cooperation" together with the European Commission. Organised every two years since 2009, the Forum is the main international event focusing specifically on development cooperation from a regional and local angle and provides a unique space for dialogue between EU regional and local authorities, their counterparts from partner countries in the Global South, and EU institutions.

The 2019 edition addressed the theme of promoting sustainable urban development through development cooperation partnerships at regional and local level within the context of the "5 Ps" of

⁶⁸ P8_TA(2019)0310, (point 66a)

sustainable development: people, prosperity, peace, partnership and planet. The Forum brought together over 500 participants from 80 countries, who actively contributed to the discussion through an interactive Open Space format, formulating concrete recommendations that were presented to the European institutions and fed into the European Commission's call for proposals of the Partnership for sustainable cities.

More broadly, the Forum fostered the creation of new development cooperation partnership and the exchange of good practices, presenting notably the CoR's Nicosia Initiative, which supports Libyan cities from all parts of the country and across conflict lines, as an important success story.

The results of the Forum also provided an evidence base for the CoR opinion "Regions and cities contributing to the development of Africa"⁶⁹.

2.4.3. Sustainable economic development in the Mediterranean

Main impact:

- ARLEM for the **first time showcased good cooperation** between young entrepreneurs and their local/ regional authorities for the sake of local economic development through the ARLEM award: Young local entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean.

In 2019 the ARLEM award was remarkably successful through three aspects:

- i. Alliance-building: Through prior consultation and participation in the evaluation committee, the CoR partnered up with the Union for the Mediterranean secretariat, the European Training Foundation, the Joint Research Centre, the Inter-mediterranean Commission of CPMR, Medcities and an NGO active in the field. Beyond the awarded Najwa and Ali Shukri who founded the fashion label "Zimni Jdeed" and the supporting Mayor of Tripoli (Libya), the Secretary General of the UfM participated in the award ceremony at the 10th ARLEM plenary in Seville.
- ii. Communication: Several of those partners also participated in communication activities around the award. The ARLEM rapporteur and winning enterprise had interviews with radio and print media. The UfM took up the winning entrepreneur, in Tripoli, in their communication around International Women's Day.
- iii. Reach out: Through contacting partners and CoR social media, the new award spontaneously reached 24 applications from 8 countries. Thanks also to a good cooperation with the preparing EC DG EMPL, the rapporteur and winning enterprise could present the award to all UfM member states at the ministerial policy conference on employment and labour in April 2019 in Cascais.

The creation of this award followed the recommendations of the ARLEM report on youth entrepreneurship in the Mediterranean⁷⁰ and had the threefold objective: 1) to inspire other potential; 2) to demonstrate by this example the positive impact that local and regional authorities in

⁶⁹ CIVEX-VI/043 - *Regions' and Cities' contribution to the development of Africa* - rapporteur Robert Zeman (CZ/EPP)

⁷⁰ [COR-2018-04123-01-03-TCD](#)

Mediterranean partner countries can have on the entrepreneurial ecosystem, thus encouraging others as well to actively promote, and 3) support and sustain young entrepreneurship; and to make evident how young entrepreneurs in Mediterranean partner countries actively take the future in their hands and create jobs and local economic development, thus establishing a positive narrative.

2.4.4. Shaping the future of the Eastern Partnership (EaP)

Main impact:

- The proposal of the Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP) regarding **the establishment of an EaP School of Public Administration** was taken up in the joint communication of the European Commission and the EEAS on the Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: "Reinforcing Resilience - an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all".
- The joint communication puts emphasis on **strategic communication** and, within this context refers to local authorities as key multipliers and opinion leaders.

During 2019, which marked the tenth anniversary of the EaP policy, the EC and the EEAS launched a structured consultation on the future of the Eastern Partnership. The findings of the consultation, as well as an overall evaluation of the policy achievements in the past ten years, are captured in a political joint communication for the EaP Summit.

CORLEAP contributed to the structured consultation process on the future of the Eastern Partnership with suggestions on how to further develop and increase the visibility of the involvement of local and regional authorities across the Partnership priorities, drawing on CORLEAP reports and position papers adopted during 2018-2019. Among these suggestions, CORLEAP advocated for the creation of a platform for online training and/or the establishment of an **EaP Academy for Public Administration** serving the local/regional governments, with headquarters to be located in one of the partner countries and tailored to the specific needs of public administration at sub-national level.

Persistent efforts during 2018 and 2019 led to the uptake of the proposal in the joint communication:

- i. CORLEAP non-paper on capacity building for local and regional public administrations in EaP countries – presented in February 2019,
- ii. CORLEAP report on the same topic adopted in September 2019, based on a study commissioned in support of this report, which analysed the current state of capacity building programmes and ad-hoc projects available for EaP LRAs in multilateral and bilateral frameworks, the existing gaps and bottlenecks in the field, and suggested solutions through which the EU could provide efficient and sustainable expert support and training for local and regional public authorities in the EaP region;
- iii. promotion via the CoR opinion on *Local and regional authorities shaping the future Eastern Partnership*⁷¹ adopted in December 2019.

⁷¹ CIVEX-VI/046 - *Local and regional authorities shaping the future Eastern Partnership* -rapporteur Tadeuš Andžejevski (LT/ECR)

The joint communication puts emphasis on strategic communication and on increasing engagement at local level, to improve the understanding of EU values, political priorities and actions. Accordingly, outreach will **focus on key multipliers and opinion leaders, including local authorities, to make the EU message heard in the regions**. This resonates with the declaration of the last EaP summit, which refers to CORLEAP as an effective instrument for local and regional authorities to advance the objectives of the EaP at the level of governance closest to citizens, and also resonates with the messages reiterated by the CoR and CORLEAP, that subnational authorities have an essential role in promoting the Eastern Partnership beyond the capitals.

2.4.5. Integration of migrants

Main impact:

- In April 2019 the CoR **launched a platform in support of the integration of migrants** and refugees in EU regions and cities, in partnership with four European territorial associations and with the support of DG HOME;
- **Raising awareness of the role of smaller municipalities and mid-size cities** (as well as regions) in the migration management and integration policies system in Europe, by organising several events focused on small territories.

Considering that the integration of migrants happens at local level, the involvement of the political authorities closest to citizens in its facilitation is key. In 2019, the CoR created the [Cities and Regions for Integration](#) initiative, a network of cities and regions of different sizes, competences and socio-economic backgrounds and the main CoR tool to achieve policy objectives in this area in the coming years. This initiative intends to help local and regional leaders through a political platform to share good practices and to create a strong and positive narrative on integration. DG HOME has been supporting this initiative from the beginning and 4 EU associations of regions and cities are active partners (Eurocities, AER, CEMR and CPMR). Over 130 municipalities, districts and regions joined the Initiative before the end of the year.

In cooperation with its partner territorial associations, as well as the OECD, the Council of Europe Development Bank and the International Catholic Migration Commission , the CoR managed – by organising several events focused on small territories – to start raising the awareness of the role of smaller municipalities and mid-size cities (as well regions) in the migration management and integration policies system in Europe.

The conference GoLocal, co-organised by the CoR and DG HOME on December 3, 2019, gathered more than 400 participants mostly from local and regional administrations, but also NGOs and civil society representatives. It was a major event in the field of integration management in Europe, covering funding for integration, as well as a number of thematic policies, and confirming the pivotal role of the local and regional level in facilitating newcomers' integration in Europe.

Making migrants voices heard in the public discussion and alliance building has been a priority in the last years, with the CoR becoming a formal member of the Urban Agenda Partnership for Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees and systematically ensuring the participation of representatives of the European

Migrant Advisory Board (as part of the Urban Partnership) in the CoR-organised debates about migration.

The CoR has been demanding an easier access to migration- and integration management related EU funds for LRAs and an increase of the volume of financial resources for integration, which is likely to be reflected in the final version of the future MFF regulations.

2.4.6. Countering disinformation

Main impact:

- In its opinions⁷², **listing practical examples**, the CoR demonstrated that disinformation is a phenomenon frequently occurring at local or regional level, so the responses to it, to be effective, have also to take into account local and regional aspect, including more support for local and regional authorities;
- CoR members' and **youth awareness of problems at stake was raised through an interactive workshop and a conference with real-life examples**. They were shown how disinformation could be tackled effectively by "inoculation" approach, successfully used in a number of instances around Europe. Participants got a practical set of tools to use.

The CoR active engagement in the area of countering disinformation dates back in 2018. The first event organised was an interactive workshop for youth from the six Eastern Partnership countries on 23-24 September 2018 accompanying the 8th annual meeting of CORLEAP. Similar workshop was organised for CoR members on 1 April 2019. In 2019, the CoR adopted two opinions on disinformation first discussed and adopted at CIVEX Commission. First was *Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach*⁷³ (adopted in CIVEX on 29/11/2018 and at the CoR plenary on 06/02/2019). The second opinion was on the *Action Plan against Disinformation*⁷⁴ (adopted in CIVEX on 25/06/2019 and at the CoR plenary session on 05/12/2019). European Commission followed it up in 2020 and accepted most of CoR recommendations. Countering disinformation was also the main topic of a study visit to Świnoujście, Poland, on 06/12/2019, named "How to combat hate speech and disinformation – case studies". Finally, staff-to-staff contacts in this field have been established with the European Commission (in particular DG Communication, which is leading agency for the Network against Disinformation) and other EU bodies and institutions.

2.5. Europe of the citizens is Europe of the future

Enhancing forward-looking partnerships between European Union and its people.

2.5.1. European values and citizenship, Dialogue with the citizens

⁷² CIVEX-VI/037 - *Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach* - rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP), CIVEX-VI/040 - *Action Plan against Disinformation* - rapporteur Randel Länts (EE/PES)

⁷³ CIVEX-VI/037 - *Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach* - rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP)

⁷⁴ CIVEX-VI/040 - *Action Plan against Disinformation* - rapporteur Randel Länts (EE/PES)

Main Impact:

- The **key messages of the opinion on "Reflecting on Europe" were endorsed in the Declaration "Building the EU from the ground up with our regions and cities"**, adopted at the 8th Summit of Cities and Regions in Bucharest in March 2019;
- The **Young Elected Politicians scheme** was developed as a reputation-enhancing activity which directly involves the Members and Political Groups. The pilot phase included introducing YEPs to EU regional policy during the EWRC as well as their involvement in content with the YEPs4Climate declaration adopted in the December Plenary with Executive Vice-President Timmermans. The scheme was developed for the Bucharest Summit in March 2019. Within one year, the first YEP had already graduated to join the CoR as an Alternate Member;
- The **importance of a constant engagement with citizens was acknowledged in the European Commission's contribution**⁷⁵ to the informal EU27 meeting in Sibiu on 9 May. In particular, Part II.2 of the Communication is dedicated to "A permanent dialogue with citizens" (one of the key proposals of the CoR opinion) and highlights that "engaging with citizens on a constant basis is essential to strengthen European identity and democracy and ensure greater ownership of the European project";
- The **EC proposal of a Conference on the Future of Europe acknowledges** the fact that the EU should give citizens a stronger role in decision- making.

One of the key messages of the opinion on "Reflecting on Europe: the voice of local and regional authorities to rebuild trust in the European Union", adopted in October 2018 is that facilitating citizens' participation in EU policies and co-creating a permanent dialogue with citizens is crucial for increasing the democratic legitimacy of the EU and for bringing it closer to its citizens.

The EC's contribution⁷⁶ to the informal EU27 meeting in Sibiu on 9 May acknowledged that proper communication and engagement with citizens on a constant basis is essential to strengthen European identity and democracy.

A series of lunchtime seminars on citizens' consultations were organised by the CoR in April and May with experts and practitioners from different levels of government (local, regional, national, European), aiming at collecting insights on citizen engagement and concrete results of successful initiatives. The outcome of these seminars fed into a compendium compiling the views of regional politicians, practitioners and academics.

In June 2019, the CoR Plenary adopted a Resolution on the proposals of the CoR for the new EU legislative mandate that, inter alia, calls on the other EU institutions "for a joint effort for the creation of a structured and permanent system of citizens' consultations based on a longer-term strategy, including appropriate feedback mechanisms and involving local and regional authorities and organised civil society".

In July 2019, the EC President-elect Ursula von der Leyen presented to the EP the Political Guidelines for the EC mandate 2019 – 2024, including a priority on "A new push for European democracy". In this

⁷⁵ COM (2019) 218 of 30 April 2019

⁷⁶ COM (2019) 218 of 30 April 2019

framework, the President-elect proposed to hold a Conference on the Future of Europe, that will start in 2020 and run for two years. EC Vice-President designate for Democracy and Demography Dubravka Šuica will be leading the EC's work on the Conference, working in close coordination with VP designates Maroš Šefčovič and Věra Jourová. The CoR President and co-rapporteur Mr Lambertz met VP Šuica on 6 November 2019, highlighting the importance of involving LRAs in the Conference and presenting the work already done by the CoR on enhancing and structuring citizens' participation.

In June 2019, the CIVEX commission appointed a rapporteur for the opinion on *Local and regional authorities in the permanent dialogue with citizens*⁷⁷, based on EC's communication⁷⁸ mentioned above. The opinion, to be adopted in 2020, will also contribute to CoR positioning in the Conference on the Future of Europe. In the framework of the preparation of the opinion, the rapporteur met, on 9 December 2019, MEP Daniel Freund, coordinator of the Greens Group in the AFCD Committee of the EP and member of the EP Working Group on the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Citizens dialogues: our programme of citizens' dialogues was suspended from 23 February 2019, 3 months ahead of the EP elections. Follow-up activities including a compendium of best practice on citizens' participation have helped maintain the momentum for our inclusion in documents of the EP, the European Council and the EC.

2.5.2. Action Plan addressing Demographic Change

Main impact:

- Demographic change **has become one of the key topics in the European Agenda** and its territorial dimension has gained relevance in the agenda setting of the EC and the EP as well as the Strategic Agenda of the Council.;
- The CoR is in the process of **contributing to the EC's roadmap** regarding Demographic Change and to the EU Presidency agenda **following the Croatian Presidency referral** on “demographic change: proposals on measuring and tackling its negative effects in the EU regions”;

The European Union is faced with an unprecedented set of challenges that derive from recent changes in demography. Ageing, brain drain, migration and loss of human capital all pose considerable obstacles to the effectiveness of cohesion policies, and the negative impact they have on the most severely affected regions have spillover effects in those regions that are seemingly unaffected by changes in demography. It is an issue at the heart of the EU political agenda, as demographic change creates a number of major challenges and affects everybody in the EU.

The CoR has a sustained track-record of working on this key policy objective (addressing demographic change) and it has adopted several opinions (starting already in 2007) related to demographic

⁷⁷ CIVEX-VII/001 - *Local and Regional Authorities in the permanent dialogue with citizens* - rapporteur Declan McDonnell (IE/EA)

⁷⁸ COM (2019) 218 of 30 April 2019

challenges⁷⁹. The CoR has called for a European strategy on demographic change, which will ensure that all policies are more in tune with this issue and have a firm basis in common EU values, equal treatment and human rights⁸⁰. In 2018 during the external meeting in Logrono, the CoR once again underlined the demographic change as one of the most fundamental issues for the EU and called for action. The appointment of a Vice-President in the new Commission tasked specifically with dealing with demographic challenges (Commissioner Dubravka Šuica) is a decisive step in the right direction.

An own-initiative opinion on *Demographic change: proposals on measuring and tackling its negative effects in the EU regions*⁸¹ is currently underway and is due for adoption in autumn 2020. The starting point is that demographic change creates population imbalances that can severely affect a plethora of policy areas (employment, social security, etc.) and undermine cohesion in the EU.

The new draft opinion is the follow-up to the 2016 own-initiative opinion on *The EU response to the demographic challenge*, which stresses the urgent need to consider demographic trends at the level of regions, cities and municipalities. In accordance with Article 174 TFEU, it calls in particular for a stronger post-2020 cohesion policy whose scope, approach and implementation mechanisms focus on demographic matters. The topic of demographic transition, especially at the local and regional level was also explored by a SEDEC study in 2016 entitled *The impact of demographic change on European regions* which emphasises the importance of wider approaches to address demographic change at the level of LRAs.

In 2020, the SEDEC commission will continue to follow the EC's forthcoming proposals on demographic matters, that is the "Report on Demographic Change"⁸², the "Green Paper on Active Ageing" (Q/4), as well as the "Long Term Vision for the rural areas" scheduled for 2021, and to contribute to the debate on the demographic transition.^{83 84}

79 ECOS-IV/011 - *The demographic future of Europe*, rapporteur Dr Gerd Harms (DE/PES); EDUC-IV/012 - *Ageing well in the information society*, rapporteur Risto Koivisto (FI/PES); ECOS-V/004 - *The Impact of an ageing population*, rapporteur Rob Bats (NL/ALDE); ECOS-V/026 - *Active ageing: innovation - smart health – better lives*, rapporteur Arnoldas Abramavičius (LT/EPP); NAT-VI/005 - *Age-friendly tourism*, rapporteur Annemiek Jetten (NL/PES); SEDEC-VI/008 - *EU response to the demographic challenge*, rapporteur Juan Vicente Herrera Campo (ES/EPP); COTER-VI/024 - *Territorial classification and typologies*, rapporteur Mieczysław Struk (PL/EPP); SEDEC-VI/028 - *Work-life balance for parents and carers*, rapporteur Nathalie Sarrabezolles (FR/PES); NAT-VI/037 - *Active and healthy ageing*, rapporteur Birgitta Sacrédeus (SE/EPP)

80 SEDEC-VI/008 - *The EU response to the demographic challenge*, rapporteur Juan Vicente Herrera Campo (ES/EPP), rapporteur Juan Vicente Herrera Campo (ES/EPP)

81 SEDEC-VI/055 - *Demographic change: proposals on measuring and tackling its negative effects in the EU regions*⁸¹ rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP)

82 The report was initially scheduled for the end of March, but it has been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

83 The EP prepares a similar report on demography (rapporteur D. Buda).
The Council's Recommendations on demography were initially expected to be adopted by the Croatian Presidency in the EPSCO meeting on the 11 of June 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic the meeting has been postponed.

84 During the online Bureau meeting on the 19 of May 2020 the Croatian Minister referred to SEDEC's Letter on demographic challenges.

3. Conclusions – Outlook

2019 as a transition year was dedicated to the key strategic priorities of the European Union as well as new developments in local and regional governance in the view of the renewal of the policy cycle. In that respect, the CoR was the first EU institution to cooperate with the European Parliament's campaigns ahead of the European elections in May 2019. As key output, the Bucharest Summit in March 2019 set a political road map in view of the incoming strategic Agenda for the EU 2019- 2024.

The record-breaking edition of the EWRC in October 2019 brought together the new leadership of the European Parliament and newly elected MEPs, coinciding with the hearings of the European Commissioners-designate. The final Plenary Session of the year coincided with the new College taking up office and offered the opportunity to debate with incoming commissioners.

Year 2019 was also a key milestone in marking the 25th anniversary of the CoR with a series of top-level political events spread over the year from the Bucharest Summit to the final Plenary Session of the mandate in December 2019. The anniversary was marked by a joint celebration with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on 27 June.

This report is presented in an unexpected context due to COVID-19 pandemic and the health and economic crisis and coincides with an unprecedented **EU roadmap for recovery and resilience**. Therefore, mid 2020 the EU Institutions gathered the efforts to deliver a transformative agenda for the years to come. The CoR political priorities for the 2020-2025 mandate will reflect the necessity to build a Europe closer to the citizens and its State of European cities and regions report will provide guidance for strategic choices to face the COVID- 19 aftermaths at all levels.

4. Annexes

4.1. Annex 1: List of opinions included in this report

CIVEX

- CIVEX-VI/037 - *Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach* - rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/040 - *Action Plan against Disinformation* - rapporteur Randel Länts (EE/PES)
- CIVEX-VI/041 - *Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment* - rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/046 - *Local and regional authorities shaping the future Eastern Partnership* - rapporteur Tadeuš Andžejevski (LT/ECR)
- CIVEX-VII/001 - *Local and Regional Authorities in the permanent dialogue with citizens* - rapporteur Declan McDonnell (IE/EA)

COTER

- COTER-VI/016 - *Missing transport links in border regions*, rapporteur Michiel Scheffer (NL/ALDE)
- COTER-VI/024 - *Territorial classification and typologies*, rapporteur Mieczysław Struk (PL/EPP)
- COTER-VI/037 - *Implementation assessment of the Urban Agenda for the EU*, rapporteur: Kieran McCarthy (IE/EA)
- COTER-VI/039 - *Delivering on low-emission mobility*, rapporteur Michiel Scheffer (NL/RE)
- COTER-VI/044 - *Streamlining TEN-T implementation*, rapporteur Michiel Scheffer (NL/RE)
- COTER-VI/045 - *Common Provisions Regulation*, co-rapporteurs Catuscia Marini (IT/PES) and Michael Schneider (DE/EPP)
- COTER-VI/046 - *European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund*, rapporteur Michiel Rijsberman (NL/ALDE)
- COTER-VI/047 - *European Territorial Cooperation*, rapporteur Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA)
- COTER-VI/048 - *European Cross Border Mechanism*, rapporteur Bouke Arends (NL/PES)
- COTER-VI/049 - *European Social Fund Plus*, rapporteur Susana Díaz Pacheco (ES/PES)
- COTER-VI/054 - *The potential of the rail sector in delivering EU policy priorities*, rapporteur Pascal Mangin (FR/EPP)
- COTER-VI/055 - *The challenges of metropolitan regions and their position in the future Cohesion policy post 2020*, rapporteur Juraj Droba (SK/ECR)
- COTER-VII/001 - *Renewal of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities*, rapporteur Juan Espadas Cejas (ES/PES)
- RESOL-VI/036 - [Resolution on Developments in the Interinstitutional negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027](#)

ECON

- ECON-VI/019 - *Improving the governance of the European Semester: a Code of Conduct for the involvement of local and regional authorities*, rapporteur Rob Jonkman (NL/ECR)
- ECON-VI/040 - *The European Semester and Cohesion Policy: aligning structural reforms with long-term investments*, rapporteur Rob Jonkman (NL/ECR)
- ECON-VI/041 - *Socioeconomic structural change in Europe's coal regions* - rapporteur Mark Speich (DE/EPP)
- ECON-VI/042 - *A place-based approach to EU industrial policy*, rapporteur Jeannette Baljeu (NL/ALDE)
- ECON-VI/044 - *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): a basis for a long-term EU strategy for a sustainable Europe by 2030*, rapporteur Arnoldas Abramavičius (LT/EPP)
- ECON-VI/046 - *Contribution from cities and regions towards a new EU policy framework for SMEs*, rapporteur Tadeusz Truskolaski (PL/EA)

ENVE

- ENVE-VI/027 - *Towards an 8th Environment Action Programme* - rapporteur Cor Lamers (NL/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/028 - *Quality of water intended for human consumption* - rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/029 - *Communication on a European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy* - rapporteur André Van De Nadort (NL/PES)
- ENVE-VI/033 - *Proposal for a single-use plastics directive* - rapporteur Sirpa Hertell (FI/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/034 - *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum requirements for water reuse* - rapporteur Oldřich Vlasák (CZ/ECR)
- ENVE-VI/036 - *The space programme of the Union and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme* - rapporteur Andres Jaadla (EE/ALDE)
- ENVE-VI/037 - *A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy* - rapporteur Michele Emiliano (IT/PES)
- ENVE-VI/038 - *Multilevel governance and cross-sectoral cooperation to fight energy poverty* - rapporteur Kata Tüttő (HU/PES)
- ENVE-VI/039 - *Sustainable Europe by 2030, follow-up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals: ecological transition and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change* – rapporteur Sirpa Hertell (FI/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/040 - *Implementing the Paris Agreement through innovative and sustainable energy transition at regional and local level* - rapporteur Witold Stepień (PL/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/041 - *Implementing the Clean Energy Package: the NECPs as a tool for local and territorial governance approach to climate, active and passive energy* – rapporteur Jozsef Ribanyi (HU/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/042 - *Covenant of Mayors post 2020* - rapporteur Benedetta Brighenti (IT/PES)
- ENVE-VI/044 - *Smart cities: new challenges for a just transition toward climate neutrality - how to implement the SDGs in real life?* - rapporteur Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA)

NAT

- NAT-VI/005 - *Age-friendly tourism*, rapporteur Annemiek Jetten (NL/PES)
- NAT-VI/027 - *Mid-term review of the EU Forest Strategy* - rapporteur Ossi Martikainen (FI/ALDE)

- NAT-VI/028 - *The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) beyond 2020 – Investing in Europe's Coastal Communities*- rapporteur Alberto Nuñez Feijoo (ES/EPP)
- NAT-VI/034 - *Reform of the CAP* - rapporteur Guillaume Cros (FR/PES)
- NAT-VI/035 - *The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund* - rapporteur Nathalie Sarrabezolles (FR/PES)
- NAT-VI/036 - *Cross-border dimension in disaster risk reduction (DRR)* - rapporteur Roberto Ciambetti (IT/ECR)
- NAT-VI/037 - *Active and healthy ageing*, rapporteur Birgitta Sacrédeus (SE/EPP)
- NAT-VI/041 - *Implementation of the EU Forest Strategy* - rapporteur Ossi Martikainen (FI/renew E.)

SEDEC

- ECOS-IV/011 - *The demographic future of Europe*, rapporteur Dr Gerd Harms (DE/PES)
- EDUC-IV/012 - *Ageing well in the information society*, rapporteur Risto Koivisto (FI/PES)
- ECOS-V/004 - *The Impact of an ageing population*, rapporteur Rob Bats (NL/ALDE)
- ECOS-V/026 - *Active ageing: innovation - smart health – better lives*, rapporteur Arnoldas Abramavičius (LT/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/008 - *EU response to the demographic challenge*, rapporteur Juan Vicente Herrera Campo (ES/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/028 - *Work-life balance for parents and carers*, rapporteur Nathalie Sarrabezolles (FR/PES)
- SEDEC-VI/055 - *Demographic change: proposals on measuring and tackling its negative effects in the EU regions*, rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP) (to be adopted on 2020 as SEDEC-VII-001)
- SEDEC-VI/053 - *Digital Europe for All*, rapporteur Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES)

4.2. Annex 2: List of opinions adopted in 2019

CIVEX

- CIVEX-VI/037 - *Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach* - rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/039 - *Proposal for a Regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard* - rapporteur Anna Magyar (HU/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/040 - *Action Plan against Disinformation* - rapporteur Randel Länts (EE/PES)
- CIVEX-VI/041 - *Better regulation: taking stock and sustaining our commitment* - rapporteur Olgierd Geblewicz (PL/EPP)
- CIVEX-VI/046 - *Local and regional authorities shaping the future Eastern Partnership* - rapporteur Tadeuš Andžejevski (LT/ECR)

COTER

- COTER-VI/043 - *Road safety and automated mobility* - rapporteur Jozsef Ribanyi (HU/EPP)
- COTER-VI/044 - *Streamlining TEN-T implementation* - rapporteur Michiel Scheffer (NL/ALDE)
- COTER-VI/051 - *Macro-regional strategies, such as the Danube: a framework for promoting transnational clusters* – rapporteur Dainis Turlais (LV/renew E.)
- COTER-VI/052 - *Recommendations for the successful design of regional development strategies beyond 2020* - rapporteur Adam Struzik (PL/EPP)
- COTER-VI/053 - *Better Communication for Cohesion Policy* - rapporteur Adrian Ovidiu Teban (RO/EPP)
- COTER-VI/054 - *The potential of the rail sector in delivering EU policy priorities* – rapporteur Pascal Mangin (FR/EPP)
- COTER-VI/055 - *The challenges of metropolitan regions and their position in the future cohesion policy post 2020* - rapporteur Juraj Droba (SK/ECR)
- COTER-VI/056 - *The CoR's contribution to the renewed Territorial Agenda with special emphasis on Community Led Local Development* - rapporteur Radim Sršeň (CZ/EPP)
- COTER-VI/057 - *Macro-regional strategy for the Carpathian region* - rapporteur Wladyslaw Ortyl (PL/ECR)

ECON

- ECON-VI/40 - *The result oriented approach for the cohesion policy in the 2021-2027 programming period, focusing on the need for a balanced approach between regional development strategies and the Country Specific Recommendations in programming* – rapporteur Rob Jonkman (NL/ECR)
- ECON-VI/041 - *Socioeconomic structural change in Europe's coal regions* - rapporteur Mark Speich (DE/EPP)
- ECON-VI/042 - *A place-based approach to the EU industrial policy strategy* - rapporteur Jeannette Baljeu (NL/renew E.)

- ECON-VI/043 - *Implementation report on public procurement* - rapporteur Thomas Habermann (DE/EPP)
- ECON-VI/044 - *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): a basis for a long-term EU strategy for a sustainable Europe by 2030* - rapporteur Arnoldas Abramavicius (LT/EPP)
- ECON-VI/045 - *Towards a more efficient and democratic decision making in EU tax policy* - rapporteur Christophe Rouillon (FR/PES)
- ECON-VI/046 - *Contribution from regions and cities towards a new EU policy framework for SMEs* - rapporteur Tadeusz Truskolaski (PL/EA)
- ECON-VI/047 - *Improving administrative capacity of local and regional authorities to strengthen investments and structural reforms in 2021-2027* – rapporteur Manuela Bora (IT/PES)
- ECON-VI/048 - *A European framework for regulatory responses to the collaborative economy* - rapporteur Peter Florianschütz (AT/PES)
- ECON-VI/049 - *Annual competition policy report 2018* - rapporteur Dominique Leveque (FR/PES)

ENVE

- ENVE-VI/027 - *Towards an 8th Environment Action Programme* - rapporteur Cor Lamers (NL/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/037 - *A Clean Planet for all A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy* - rapporteur Michele Emiliano (IT/PES)
- ENVE-VI/038 - *Multilevel governance and cross-sectoral cooperation to fight energy poverty* - rapporteur Kata Tüttö (HU/PES)
- ENVE-VI/039 - *Sustainable Europe by 2030, follow-up to the UN Sustainable Development Goals: ecological transition and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change* – rapporteur Sirpa Hertell (FI/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/040 - *Implementing the Paris Agreement through innovative and sustainable energy transition at regional and local level* - rapporteur Witold Stepień (PL/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/041 - *Implementing the Clean Energy Package: the NECPs as a tool for local and territorial governance approach to climate, active and passive energy* – rapporteur Jozsef Ribanyi (HU/EPP)
- ENVE-VI/042 - *Covenant of Mayors post 2020* - rapporteur Benedetta Brighenti (IT/PES)
- ENVE-VI/044 - *Smart cities: new challenges for a just transition toward climate neutrality - how to implement the SDGs in real life?* - rapporteur Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA)

NAT

- NAT-VI/033 - *Digitalisation in the Health Sector* - rapporteur Fernando López Miras (ES/EPP)
- NAT-VI/036 - *Cross-border dimension in disaster risk reduction (DRR)* - rapporteur Roberto Ciambetti (IT/ECR)
- NAT-VI/037 - *Active and Healthy Ageing* - rapporteur Birgitta Sacrédeus (SE/EPP)
- NAT-VI/038 - *A new European agenda to speed up the development of maritime industries* - rapporteur Christophe Clergeau (FR/PES)
- NAT-VI/039 - *Pastoralism* - rapporteur Jacques Blanc (FR/EPP)

- NAT-VI/040 - *Towards a comprehensive EU framework on endocrine disruptors* - rapporteur Uno Silberg (EE/EA)
- NAT-VI/041 - *Implementation of the EU Forest Strategy* - rapporteur Ossi Martikainen (FI/renew E.)
- NAT-VI/042 - *African swine fever and the EU pork market* - rapporteur Slawomir Sosnowski (PL/EPP)

SEDEC

- SEDEC-VI/040 - *Creative Europe and a New European Agenda for Culture* - rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/043 - *Erasmus programme for education, training, youth and sport* - rapporteur Ulrike Hiller (DE/PES)
- SEDEC-VI/046 - *Artificial Intelligence for Europe* - rapporteur Jan Trei (EE/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/047 - *A renewed European Agenda for Research and Innovation* - rapporteur Birgitta Sacrédeus (SE/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/048 - *A sustainable Bioeconomy for Europe: Strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment* - rapporteur Jacint Horvath (HU/PES)
- SEDEC-VI/049 - *Strengthening STE(A)M education in the EU* - rapporteur Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP)
- SEDEC-VI/050 - *Research Infrastructures – the Future of the European Research Area (ERA) from a Regional and Cross-border Perspective* - rapporteur Eamon Dooley (IE/renew E.)
- SEDEC-VI/051 - *Platform work – local and regional regulatory challenges* - rapporteur Dimitrios Birmpas (GR/PES)
- SEDEC-VI/053 - *Digital Europe for All: delivering smart and inclusive solutions on the ground* - rapporteur Anne Katjalainen (FI/PES)

4.3. Annex 3: Meetings in 2019 in figures

Meeting	2019
Number of MEPs in commission meetings	62
Number of CoR rapporteurs participating in EP committee meetings	13
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR and EP rapporteurs	37
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and EC	105
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and Permanent Representations on legislative dossiers	6
Participation of the CoR in events of the EU Presidency	22

4.4. Annex 4: References of the 6 Committee Commissions' contributions to the Impact Report 2019

Commission	Presentation of the document (meeting date)	Reference number of the document
CIVEX	26 February	COR-2020-00248-00-01-TCD-TRA
COTER	3 March 2020	COR-2020-00411-00-01-TCD-TRA
ECON	2 March 2020	COR-2020-00144-00-00-TCD-TRA
ENVE	27 February 2020	COR-2020-00049-00-00-TCD-TRA
NAT	5 March 2020	COR-2020-00057-00-00-TCD-TRA
SEDEC	24 February 2020	COR-2020-00351-00-00-TCD-TRA



European Committee of the Regions

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

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

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

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