



**European Committee
of the Regions**

Brussels, 23 June 2021

**205th MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE
REGIONS**

- 29 JUNE 2021 -

ITEM 9 B

REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF COR OPINIONS

Submitted by the secretary-general

FOR DECISION

SUMMARY

Bureau meeting: 205

Date: 29/06/2021

Item 9 b

Report on the impact of CoR opinions

Type:

- Document for information / debate**
- Document for decision**
- Recommendation to the Assembly**

Short description:

This main report is the attachment to the *Report on the impact of the CoR: executive summary* document.

The Bureau is invited to:

- Take stock of the report on the impact of CoR opinions.

Remarks:

N/A

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1. Introduction

As a consultative body to the European institutions the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) represents the European Union's local and regional authorities in the EU decision making process. The impact of the CoR largely rely on the ability of the Committee and its members produce impact. This impact is to be assessed in terms of achievements in the EU legislative process (impact on preparatory or final legal texts), visibility for local and regional authorities in the EU's agenda setting or concrete changes in the EU's working methods or tangibly in the day-to-day life of citizens through EU legislation or EU actions promoted or initiated by the CoR .

The CoR [political priorities for the 2020-2025](#) term of office under the leadership of President Apostolos Tzitzikostas and First Vice-President Vasco Alves Cordeiro, reflect the necessity to build a Europe closer to the citizens, managing fundamental societal transformations and putting the EU at the service of its people and their places of living. The State of European cities and regions report 2020 provides guidance for strategic choices to face the aftermath of COVID-19 at all levels and implement the **EU roadmap for recovery and resilience**. This document is shaped around the three political priorities of the CoR for the 2020-2025 term of office.

In 2020, the CoR adopted 48 opinions and 9 resolutions focused on legislative work and cross-cutting policy challenges. It held dozens of high-level debates with European leaders to put the perspective and the concerns of regions and local authorities on the map of the European institutions.

Given the multitude of challenges for local and regional authorities in the current COVID-19 crisis, the CoR, as the interface and point of reference 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 a **COVID-19 exchange platform** to foster cooperation and facilitate mutual support between cities and regions across Europe.

Despite the particularly difficult context, the CoR has also carried out an important internal review process with a view to increasing the impact of its political action. The CoR [Conference of Presidents](#) (CoP) adopted **strategic guidance** geared to bringing the various activities of the Committee together in an annual cycle of strategic planning, which includes a set of nine Flagship Initiatives¹, in order to ensure consistency and maximise its impact. This cycle is being further developed in 2021. In 2020, the CoP also appointed a CoR impact oversight coordinator, in the person of the chair of the NAT commission, Ulrika Landergren (SE/Renew Europe), who presented a report to the Conference of Presidents in December of that year.

Based on the report, the Committee is launching **new measures and further developing existing practices to enhance its impact**. These measures include: the closer scrutiny of thematic files throughout the legislative process to evaluate at the earliest possible stage the key markers and concrete objectives the CoR should pursue; strengthening the reporting to rapporteurs and other members on the

1. Recovery and resilience facility (ECON), Health related COVID –19 response (NAT), The Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (SEDEC), CoR 4 Climate Pact (ENVE), The future of cross-border cooperation (COTER), The New Pact for Migration and Integration (CIVEX), Conference on the Future of Europe (CIVEX and all commissions), Long-term vision for Rural Areas (NAT) and a Strategic CoR's Budget – ensuring a fair share of the resources for the CoR.

follow-up of opinions; greater efforts in developing contacts with MEPs, EP committees and political groups, EP Intergroups, Commissioners and European Commission services, as well as with Member State ministers and the Council, seeking to ensure the highest possible interinstitutional participation in the CoR plenary sessions and commission meetings; as well as greater coordination amongst the chairs of the commissions and liaison between the chair responsible for Impact Oversight and the Conference of Presidents.

The CoR has also embarked on a process of adapting its Rules of Procedure to recent changes (notably the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU and the COVID-19 pandemic), which could also provide an opportunity to support the implementation of some of the measures proposed.

On the administrative level the secretary-general has launched and rolled out the **Going for IMPact!** plan which aims to focus performance on increasing the impact of the CoR's political work, on enhancing its outreach and on being a model administration.

2. The CoR's Annual Strategic Planning Cycle

Based on the new approach to strategic planning agreed by the Conference of Presidents in December 2020, the CoR began to implement its Annual Strategic Planning Cycle in 2021. Through this annual process, the CoR continuously monitors the implementation of its political priorities, strengthens interinstitutional links with its external partners and refines its internal coordination. The political framework for the Annual Strategic Planning Cycle is provided by the three overarching **priorities** adopted by the CoR for its **2020-2025 term of office**. Within these priorities, the CoR seeks to influence the political and institutional agendas of the other European institutions and responds to their proposed initiatives.

This impact-focused strategy enables the CoR to react to key annual milestones of the other EU institutions, such as the **European Parliament's summary report** on the implementation of the Commission's work programme of the previous year, the **State of the Union Address** by the Commission president in September and the publication of the **European Commission Work Programme** in October.

Based on the cooperation agreement with the European Commission, the CoR each year adopts **two resolutions on the European Commission Work Programme**: one in June/July with a view to impacting the Work Programme for the following year, and another one at the end of the year, commenting on the Work Programme as published in October. These resolutions are based on the input from the **CoR's six commissions**, and on contributions from the consultation of regional parliaments and assemblies with legislative powers, in cooperation with CALRE. The CoR's annual strategic planning, under the political guidance of the **Conference of Presidents**, is also implemented through a number of flagship initiatives for each year, and since 2020 has also built on the CoR's **Local and Regional Barometer**.

In addition, the CoR's Annual Strategic Planning Cycle also has a **medium-term** dimension in connection with its five-year priorities and a **longer-term** view looking to enhance the Committee's capacity for **Strategic Foresight** (currently under development in the CoR), both within the CoR and in the context of the ongoing interinstitutional work on foresight.

3. Impact report presented by the Committee three political priorities for the 2020-2025 mandate

3.1 Bringing Europe closer to its people

3.1.1 Fit for Future

Main impact:

- The CoR has been given a more prominent role in the new Fit for Future (F4F) Platform as a result of its significant contribution to the REFIT platform and to the Task Force on Subsidiarity and Proportionality, as well as the impact of its RegHub implementation reports.
- The chairs of CIVEX, NAT and SEDEC participated in the design of the work programme of the F4F platform.

In May 2020, the European Commission (EC) established the Fit for Future (F4F) Platform in support of the EU Better Regulation Agenda. As a result of the significant contribution provided by the CoR in the last few years to the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and Doing less more efficiently, and to the REFIT Platform, as well as the impact of its RegHub implementation reports, the CoR was given a new, much more prominent role in the new F4F Platform, with three representatives in the Government Group (composed of 27 Member States and the CoR) and the RegHub as one of the Platform's four subgroups.

Furthermore, the decision establishing the F4F Platform identified the final report of the Task Force on Subsidiarity and Proportionality as one of the main sources for the selection of topics for the Platform's work programme.

On 26 November 2020, the CoR representatives in the F4F Platform – the chairs of CIVEX, NAT and SEDEC – took part in the Platform's first plenary meeting, chaired by European Commission vice-president Maroš Šefčovič. In his opening statement, Mr Šefčovič referred to the CoR as a key partner of the EC in implementing the EU Better Regulation agenda and highlighted the valuable expertise and experience of LRAs in implementing EU legislation on the ground and their potential to contribute to the objectives of the F4F Platform.

In the course of consultations with the F4F members of the Platform's Rules of Procedure and Annual work programme 2021, the CoR submitted an extended proposal to the EC for topics to be included in the F4F work programme, highlighting the main areas of interest for LRAs, such as simplification, burden reduction and digitalisation, and stressing the need for improving the quality and reducing the complexity of legislation in a number of specific areas relevant to the daily work of local and regional administrations.

In parallel with its involvement in the F4F Platform, in December 2020 the CoR pre-appointed a rapporteur for the communication on better regulation, thus meeting its commitment to contributing to the EU policy on better regulation through its analytical and consultative work.

The new role and enhanced participation of the CoR in the F4F Platform has contributed to further strengthening cooperation with the EC, increasing the CoR's outreach and building credibility for its role as effective institutional partner in the implementation of EU better regulation agenda.

3.1.2 Network of Regional Hubs for EU Policy Implementation Review (RegHub)

Main impact:

- The EC decided to give RegHub a prominent role in its new Fit for Future Platform, a high level expert group that will help the EC in evaluating and reviewing existing legislation.
- After a positive evaluation of RegHub, a successful application procedure was launched at the end of 2020, leading to an enlargement and mainstreaming of the network (RegHub 2.0), allowing for enhanced contributions to F4F, since the relevant experience of LRAs and their stakeholders can help make EU policies more future proof.

RegHub contributes to the CoR's objective to provide input into the EU's better regulation agenda in general, and "active subsidiarity" in particular. By gathering feedback from the local and regional level on the implementation of existing policies (ex post evaluation), it is a tangible measure that stems from the 2018 report of the Task Force on Subsidiarity and Doing less more efficiently.

RegHub held six consultations during its pilot phase (2019-2020) that produced comprehensive implementation reports, which were broadly disseminated. This dissemination targets CoR members and other LRAs, the EC (line DGs), the EP (including EPRS) and the Council. This dissemination benefits from close cooperation that has been built up with the EC, the EPRS and the Council.

The consultation results have been widely included in the opinions and policy work of the CoR. They have also been very well received by other institutions, such as the EC, the European Parliament (EP) and the Council. What is more, the European Commission's DGs have confirmed that they are using RegHub reports for their policy work.

As a concrete result of RegHub's work, it has become one of the four subgroups of the F4F Platform, meaning it will contribute to F4F's annual work programme and carry out targeted surveys for its opinions.

After a positive evaluation of RegHub, a new application procedure was launched at the end of 2020, leading to an enlargement and mainstreaming of the network (RegHub 2.0), allowing for enhanced contributions to F4F, to the CoR's political work and to any relevant review, evaluation and/or fitness check of implemented EU policies. The relevant experience of LRAs and their stakeholders can thus help make EU policies more future proof.

3.1.3 The EU Annual Regional and Local Barometer

Main impact:

- Barometer speech of the CoR president on the state of the regions and cities in the COVID-19 crisis and their outlook.
- EC integrates a territorial dimension into future measures to mitigate the pandemic crisis.
- Particularly high media coverage and stakeholder interest in the Barometer report.

The first edition of the EU Annual Regional and Local Barometer aimed to show how important local and regional authorities are in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as in mitigating its socio-economic effects and building up a sustainable recovery in the EU.

To do this, the CoR mobilised all its services and many partner organisations, held several webinars, carried out surveys, commissioned external studies and conducted a territorial impact assessment (TIA). It teamed up with the OECD, the JRC and several other research organisations and delivered a comprehensive assessment of the state of play in EU regions, cities and villages in 2020. This report provided essential input into the Barometer speech of the CoR president on the state of the regions and cities in the COVID-19 crisis and their outlook.

The report and the speech at the plenary in October 2020 contributed to convincing the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and her services to incorporate a territorial dimension in future measures to mitigate the crisis. Media and stakeholder interest was particularly high and confirmed the need for a more granular analysis of the crisis effects and impact of the recovery measures. For instance, social media outreach was about three times higher for the Barometer report (3 000 engagements, 800 mentions) than it was for its predecessor, SOTREG. The 100-page report and its 10-page summary in all languages together scored an unprecedented 3 000 downloads. The [Barometer webpage](#) received 18 600+ views (vs 400 for the SOTREG page in 2019), also representing an almost four times higher outreach compared with the CoR's highest peak on the web with the COVID-19 Platform earlier this year. Live streaming and "video on demand" from EBS were significant, with 8 600 views for the president's presentation of the Barometer report. With its first Barometer report, the CoR has firmly positioned itself as a solid provider of regional and local evidence and has strengthened its position in the EU policy debate.

A second edition is being prepared and the European Commission has been open to including its findings in time for the drafting of the European Commission president's own State of the Union address scheduled for mid-September 2021.

3.1.4 Transport policy

Main impact:

- The final text of the European Year of Rail (EYR) Decision echoes several of the key points set out in the corresponding CoR opinion.

- The European "Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy"² highlights a number of key CoR positions put forward in its previous opinions.

In March 2020, the EC presented a legislative proposal to designate 2021 the European Year of Rail. This proposal already echoed several of the key points set out in the CoR opinion on The potential of the rail sector for delivering EU policy priorities³, which was adopted in December 2019, in particular the role of rail for social, economic and territorial cohesion and in connecting peripheral regions to the EU's main transport routes. The proposal also recognised the role of regional and local authorities in increasing the modal shift to rail and refers to the significant contribution of the sector to the EU economy, industrial competitiveness and employment and highlights the links with EU cultural heritage.

Following on from the EC's legislative proposal, the CoR put forward its recommendations in its opinion on The European Year of Rail 2021⁴. A number of the recommendations set out in this opinion were reflected in the final version of the decision that was adopted by the co-legislators in December 2020. In addition to reinforced references to the role of the local and regional level, the final text of the EYR Decision has been strengthened with regard to the link between rail connectivity and social, economic and territorial cohesion, notably for rural, peripheral and mountainous regions; it also highlights the need to modernise or reinstate regional and suburban rail lines and to supply missing links in border regions in particular. The final text refers more prominently to the objective of increasing public awareness of the potential role of rail in sustainable tourism and calls for the development of a night-train network across the Union. It refers to the important role played by the rail sector in ensuring transport continuity during the COVID-19 crisis and to the need to rebuild customer trust in the aftermath of the pandemic, especially in the passenger sector. It further highlights the cultural dimension of rail and refers specifically to the potential of railway stations as vectors of culture and civic life. All these specific elements therefore take on board the recommendations set out in the CoR opinion on the matter. The COTER commission also cooperated with DG MOVE in circulating the call for event proposals for possible inclusion in the EYR 2021 programme, with over 70 proposals received from regional stakeholders through this channel to date.

The Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, published by the EC in December 2020, will pave the way for the transformation of the European transport systems and guide the legislative work in the next years. The strategy highlights a number of key CoR positions that have been put forward in its previous opinions⁵, such as the need for "clearer guidance (...) on mobility management at local and regional level, including on better urban planning, and on connectivity with rural and suburban areas".

² https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/mobilitystrategy_en.

³ COTER-VI/054 - The potential of the rail sector in delivering EU policy priorities – rapporteur Pascal Mangin (FR/EPP) – COR-2019-01939-00-01-AC.

⁴ COTER-VII/006 – European Year of Rail 2021 – rapporteur Jarosław Piotr Stawiarski (PL/ECR) – COR-2020-02633-00-01-AC-TRA.

⁵ E.g. COTER-VII/003 – Challenges for public transport in cities and metropolitan regions – rapporteur Adam Struzik (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-02613-00-00-AC-TRA.

3.1.5 Towards a renewed implementation of the European Research Area and Horizon Europe

Main impact:

- The [Council conclusions on ERA](#), adopted on 1 December 2020, referred to the role of the regions and the CoR, with the KEP and the principle of multilevel governance being explicitly mentioned.
- Consolidation of previous initiatives and impactful projects, such as KEP and SmR.
- Enhanced cooperation with the European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya Gabriel, has led to the signature of a [Joint Action Plan](#).

Throughout 2020, the CoR and its SEDEC commission engaged actively in the field of research and innovation (R&I), focusing specifically on the final stages of the negotiations on the implementation of FP9 Horizon Europe and the European Research Area (ERA). It also built on its previous opinions, particularly in the field of smart specialisation, and a new own-initiative opinion on the Regional Innovation Scoreboard⁶ was adopted.

A landmark achievement for the CoR was a direct reference to it in the EC Communication on the European Research Area⁷, where the established interinstitutional projects with DG RTD and JRC – Knowledge Exchange Platform (KEP) and Science meets Regions (SmR) – were also referred to, with the KEP being proposed as an initiative for strategic cooperation. As a consequence, the Council conclusions on ERA, adopted on 1 December 2020, also referred to the role of the regions and the CoR, with the KEP and the principle of multilevel governance being explicitly mentioned.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, the SEDEC commission actively partnered with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the COVID Task Force, focusing on epidemiological data and the socio-economic impact at regional level.

The SEDEC chair, together with the CoR president, engaged in an active dialogue with the European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Mariya Gabriel. As a result, a Joint Action Plan was adopted at the SEDEC meeting of 25 November 2020. This plan, relating to the cooperation between the CoR and Commissioner Gabriel's services (DG RTD, DG EAC and JRC), includes four priority areas and 26 concrete actions. Through its implementation, the CoR and its members hope to strengthen the political dialogue with the European Commission and play a part in the governance and representation structures of particular R&I programmes in the near future. The KEP with DG RTD and the SmR with JRC are set to continue with a new impetus as well. The Smart Specialisation Platform and the RIS4 initiative are also set to benefit from CoR participation and input.

In spite of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic during the year, the CoR and SEDEC were also actively involved in key research and innovation events such the COVID-19 hackathons, the R&I Days and the WIRE conference.

⁶ SEDEC-VII/002 – Regional Innovation Scoreboard and its impact in regional place-based policies – rapporteur Mikel IRUJO Amezaga (ES/EA) – COR-2020-00517-00-00-AC-TRA.

⁷ COM(2020) 628 – final.

3.1.6 EU – UK relations

Main impact:

- Creation of a CoR-UK Contact Group in order to ensure continuing political cooperation with representatives of UK local government.
- The CoR organised several high-level debates at Contact Group meetings and at the CoR plenary session in December attended by Michel Barnier, chief negotiator with the UK, and MEPs.

The CoR has been committed to playing a role, throughout its political work, in supporting the negotiation process and in addressing the anticipated consequences of the United Kingdom's withdrawal for local and regional authorities. It has carried out intensive evidence-gathering and dialogue with the EU regional and local governments most concerned by the withdrawal process in order to provide the EU's negotiators with a comprehensive picture of the ongoing situation and anticipated impacts at local and regional level.

Local and regional authorities were not formally included in the negotiations with the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, in June 2020 the CoR set up CoR-UK Contact Group in order to ensure continuing political cooperation with representatives of UK local government and devolved parliaments and assemblies following the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The Contact Group examines policies and issues relating to future EU-UK relations at subnational level, from both a thematic and geographical perspective, such as cross-border and inter-regional cooperation. It will develop contacts and communication channels with representatives of UK local government and devolved parliaments and assemblies and will draft proposals and recommendations to be sent to the other EU institutions.

In the last months of 2020, the CoR held several high-level debates at Contact Group meetings and at the CoR plenary session in December. High-level speakers, such as David McAllister MEP, Kati Piri MEP and Mr Barnier, have attended meetings of the CoR-UK Contact Group.

Despite the fact that the Trade and Cooperation Agreement omits the participation of local and regional authorities in any of the codified governance bodies, the Contact Group is further exploring possible avenues and methods of cooperation between LRAs in the UK and the EU following the UK's withdrawal.

3.2 Building resilient regional and local communities

3.2.1 Environment Policy

Main impact:

- Commissioner Sinkevičius recognised the role of the LRAs and the CoR in the successful implementation of the environmental strategy and action plan.

- CoR members' active involvement in the environmental process on raising the visibility of LRAs in the EU.

The preservation of Europe's natural capital and biodiversity, as well as the transition to a circular economy, were the two major environmental components in the 2020 timeline of the Green Deal, with the publication of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the Circular Economy Action Plan.

The successful implementation of such a strategy and action plan needs the involvement of local and regional authorities and the CoR, a role recognised by Commissioner Sinkevičius during his debate with the CoR president and ENVE members at the remote ENVE commission meeting on 8 June 2020⁸. During the [debate](#), members discussed the opinion on the new Circular Economy Action Plan and the opinion on bio-diverse cities and regions beyond 2020 at the UN CBD COP 15 and in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030⁹. Members also discussed the draft opinion on the Water Framework Directive and the Floods Directive¹⁰ and the draft outlook opinion on the Future of EU Clean Air policy in connection with the zero-pollution ambition¹¹.

In 2020, the work of ENVE members also focused on raising the visibility of LRAs in the EU and global agenda setting. For example, on the post-2020 global biodiversity policy framework, an ENVE rapporteur¹² represented the CoR who had been one of the partners of the Edinburgh Declaration¹³. He has also been representing the EU subnational governments in the preparatory process towards the UN CBD COP15.

ENVE members took part in the meetings of the Technical Platform for Cooperation on the Environment¹⁴, the CoR session of Green Week 2020 and of the EU Regions Week, and the European Week of Waste Reduction, among other events. ENVE members also worked with other EU institutions and organisations in promoting environment policy implementation involving and including LRAs.

8 <https://unfccc.int/event/presidency-s-open-dialogue-between-representatives-of-observers-and-parties>.

9 ENVE-VII/002 – Bio-diverse cities and regions beyond 2020 at the UN CBD COP 15 and in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – rapporteur Roby Biwer (LU/PES) – COR-2020-00539-00-01-AC-TRA.
<https://cor.europa.eu/EN/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-539-2020>.

10 ENVE-VII/001 – Fitness check of the Water Framework Directive, Groundwater Directive, Environmental Quality Standards Directive and Floods Directive – rapporteur Piotr Całbecki (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-00541-00-00-AC-TRA.

11 ENVE-VII/003 – The future of EU Clean Air Policy in the framework of the zero-pollution ambition – rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP) – COR-2020-00540-00-00-AC-TRA.

12 ENVE-VII/002 – Bio-diverse cities and regions beyond 2020 at the UN CBD COP 15 and in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – rapporteur Roby Biwer (LU/PES) – COR-2020-00539-00-01-AC-TRA.
<https://cor.europa.eu/EN/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-539-2020>.

13 <https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/The-European-Green-Deal-is-the-roadmap-to-our-economic-and-social-recovery.aspx>;
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/edinburgh-declaration-on-post-2020-biodiversity-framework/?opId=CDR-3120-2020>.

14 https://ec.europa.eu/environment/legal/platform_en.htm.

3.2.2 Climate Change

Main impact:

- The CoR opinion of the same title plays an important role in the European Climate Pact.
- The rapporteur of the opinion became a member of the European Covenant of Mayors Board.
- The CoR opinion on European Climate Law laid the foundations for the CoR approach to the Green Deal;
The European Commission' hydrogen strategy refers to the CoR opinion.

In 2020, the ENVE commission achieved a major impact in the EU legislative process on climate change. The CoR plays an important role in the European Climate Pact thanks to its opinion¹⁵ of the same title. Its rapporteur is now a member of the [European Covenant of Mayors Board](#). Executive Vice-President Timmermans, in charge of the European Green Deal, took part in the CoR October plenary that adopted this opinion and called on local and regional governments to take ownership of and shape the Green Deal in areas falling under their remit, notably the renovation wave, sustainable mobility and transport, and urban greening.

CoR members welcomed the enhanced cooperation with the European Commission, backing the Green Deal as the EU's main means to ensure a green and inclusive economic recovery in all regions, cities and villages, as witnessed by the first 200 [CoR best practices on the Green Deal](#). This was a message also shared via the CoR's [Green Deal Going Local](#) working group¹⁶ that in its first year focused its work on raising the climate ambition for a green and digital recovery post COVID-19.

Just a week before the launch of the Climate Pact, the European Union committed itself to reducing emissions by at least 55% by 2030. The opinion on the European Climate Law¹⁷ laid the foundations for the CoR approach to the Green Deal, outlining the institutional position on the 2030 and 2050 climate targets. This was relayed to Jytte Guteland, MEP and Pascal Canfin, ENVI Chair who were leading on what later became the agreement on the Climate Law calling for a 60 % emission reduction by 2030.

Furthermore, the CoR opinion on clean hydrogen¹⁸ was referred to in the Hydrogen Strategy released by the European Commission in July 2020. The rapporteur joined the European Clean Hydrogen Alliance and Lower Saxony and became a member of the I3 Hydrogen Valleys Partnership.

In support of these major achievements in the climate ambition and climate action, the CoR adopted two opinions requested by the German presidency of the Council under the remit of the ENVE commission: one was the opinion on the impact of climate change on regions: an assessment of the

¹⁵ ENVE-VII/007 – The European Climate Pact – rapporteur Rafał Kazimierz Trzaskowski (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-01360-00-00:

¹⁶ <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/Pages/green-deal.aspx>.

¹⁷ ENVE-VII/005 – European Climate Law: establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality – rapporteur Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla (ES/EPP) – COR-2020-01361-00-01-AC-TRA.

¹⁸ ENVE-VII/004 – Towards a Roadmap for Clean Hydrogen – the contribution of local and regional authorities to a climate-neutral Europe – rapporteur Birgit Honé (DE/PES) – COR-2020-00549-00-00-AC-TRA

European Green Deal¹⁹ and the other that on Opportunities and synergies of a precautionary adaptation to climate change to promote sustainability and quality of life in regions and municipalities²⁰.

The dissemination at a global level of the EU cities' and regions' ambition for climate action started with a rapporteur²¹ taking the floor at the presidency's Open Dialogue between representatives of Observers and Parties²² on behalf of the CoR, as part of the LGMA Constituency.

3.2.3 Industry, SME, Investment and Resilience

Main impact:

- The EP's position and the final text of the InvestEU Regulation agreed with the Council reflected the following key demands of the CoR: strengthening the reference to cohesion and including the presence on the InvestEU advisory board of an expert appointed by the CoR; the exemption from InvestEU Advisory Hub fees for public project promoters, local and regional authorities or related entities.
- The Competitiveness Council of 16 November 2020 acknowledged "the importance of policy coherence and coordination with a multilevel approach that covers the EU, national and regional levels and respects subsidiarity across all relevant policy areas to support and empower industry in the best possible way".
- A strong alliance set up with the Commission and EU business organisations around the European Entrepreneurial Region (EER) scheme was instrumental in strengthening the territorial dimension of the EU SME policies.
- The special European Council of 1-2 October 2020 endorsed the Council conclusions of 21 September 2020, which clearly echoed the CoR's calls for strictly implementing and enforcing the single market rules and removing unjustified barriers, particularly in the area of services;
- In 2021, the CoR, represented by the rapporteur on the New Industrial Strategy, was invited as observer to the Industrial Forum set up by the European Commission, which aims to support the Commission in its systematic analysis of ecosystems and in assessing the risks and needs of industry.
- The Regulation on the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) requires the national recovery and resilience plans to set out the consultation process with local and regional authorities.

In investment-related policy fields, the CoR has for the past few years been a vocal advocate of local and regional authorities and sought to ensure that related legislation reflects the importance of the roles and remits of cities and regions.

¹⁹ ENVE-VII/009 – The impact of climate change on regions: an assessment of the European Green Deal – rapporteur Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA) – COR-2020-03120-00-00-AC-TRA.

²⁰ ENVE-VII/010 – Opportunities and synergies of a precautionary adaptation to climate change to promote sustainability and quality of life in regions and municipalities – which framework conditions are required for this? – rapporteur Markku Markkula (FI/EPP) – COR-2020-03121-00-01-AC-TRA:
<https://cor.europa.eu/EN/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-3121-2020>.

²¹ ENVE-VII/013 – Stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition towards COP26 – rapporteur Vincent Chauvet (FR/RE):

²² <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/Pages/green-deal.aspx>.

In the EU as a whole, local and regional authorities are responsible for more than half of public investment and invest twice as much as national governments in relation to their budgets. In practice, the CoR has achieved significant impact in this field, notably with regard to the flagship investment programme for the next MFF period – InvestEU. First the European Parliament's position and then the final text of the regulation agreed with the Council in late 2020 reflected key demands of the CoR, such as strengthening the reference to cohesion and including the presence on the InvestEU advisory board of an expert appointed by the CoR. Another CoR demand that was met was the exemption from InvestEU Advisory Hub fees for public project promoters, which will be of benefit to a large number of local and regional authorities or related entities.

With regard to the post-COVID-19 recovery, the keystone instrument is the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF): a EUR 672.5 billion programme to promote investment across the EU. Here again, the CoR sought to strengthen the importance of support for cohesion and to ensure involvement of LRAs in decision-making. Following exchange with key MEPs, the CoR's message²³ has been heard by the EP, whose position reflects the CoR's concerns, for instance by introducing a requirement to establish a multilevel dialogue with LRAs in the preparation of the recovery plans (Article 15 of the regulation), or by including LRAs in the definition of "national authority" (Article 2). Article 18 of the final RRF regulation 2021/241 stipulates: in that "4. The recovery and resilience plan shall be duly reasoned and substantiated. It shall in particular set out the following elements: (...) (q) for the preparation and, where available, for the implementation of the recovery and resilience plan, a summary of the consultation process, conducted in accordance with the national legal framework, of local and regional authorities, social partners, civil society organisations, youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders, and how the input of the stakeholders is reflected in the recovery and resilience plan."

In 2020, the CoR continued its analytical and political work aimed at influencing an ambitious EU industrial, single market and SME strategy that recognises the importance of territorial ecosystems.

With the adoption of the CoR opinion on A New Industrial Strategy for Europe²⁴, the rapporteur had the opportunity to reiterate the plea for a more "place-based" industrial policy to European institutions and to underline the role regions play in helping industry cope with the ramifications of COVID-19 and the green and digital transformation. The rapporteur was also able to address Member States at the Council Working Party on Competitiveness and Growth (Industry). Thanks to the good cooperation with the German Presidency, the conclusions of the Competitiveness Council of 16 November 2020 acknowledged "the importance of policy coherence and coordination with a multilevel approach that covers the EU, national and regional levels and respects subsidiarity across all relevant policy areas to support and empower industry in the best possible way". The CoR was also invited to the Industrial Forum set up by the EC.

With the adoption of the opinion on the SME Strategy²⁵, the CoR passed an important milestone in its work on strengthening the territorial dimension of the EU's SME policies. A strong alliance set up with

²³ ECON-VII/009 – Recovery plan for Europe in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: Recovery and Resilience Facility and Technical Support Instrument – rapporteur Christophe Rouillon (FR/PES) – COR-2020-03381-00-00-AC-TRA.

²⁴ ECON-VII/007 – A New Industrial strategy for Europe – rapporteur Jeannette Baljeu (NL/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-01374-00-00-AC-TRA.

²⁵ ECON-VII/008 – SME Strategy – rapporteur Eddy Van Hijum (NL/EPP) – COR-2020-01373-00-00-AC-TRA.

the Commission and EU business organisations around the EER scheme was instrumental in this. The CoR has argued that effective SME policies need to be developed locally and that SMEs prosper better when entire entrepreneurial ecosystems thrive. The EC has fully recognised this ecosystem-thinking approach, launching a collaborative project in 2018 on analysing, mapping and interconnecting the ecosystems of 18 EER regions. Participating regions collaborate in smaller clusters and develop joint action plans on issues such as network support and financing schemes for start-ups, scale-ups, the digital transition, the circular economy and other more specific areas. The project aims to set up lasting relationships and cooperation channels between the regions, providing a bridge to the funding programmes available in the new MFF.

Following up on its previous political work on the single market, the CoR adopted two opinions in 2020 dealing with this cornerstone of the EU. One focused on the service directive²⁶ and the other was the CoR's response to the EC's barriers report and enforcement action plan²⁷. It is worth noting that the special European Council of 1-2 October 2020 endorsed the Council conclusions of 21 September 2020, which clearly echoed the CoR's calls for strictly implementing and enforcing the single market rules and removing unjustified barriers, particularly in the area of services. Also worth mentioning is that an EP IMCO committee study (November 2020) on the Legal obstacles in Member States to Single Market rules contained a proposal to establish national, regional or local bodies to help the EC enforce the Services Directive, which is a decentralised approach that has also been advocated by the CoR.

3.2.4 Just Transition Fund

Main impact:

- Final legislative text includes key CoR recommendations, such as: clear commitments to the 2030 and 2050 energy and climate goals, a proper application of the partnership principle in programming and implementation of the Just Transition Fund, simplified procedures for the use of the JTF and the application of the polluter pays principle.
- The CoR is co-organising alongside DG REGIO a Multi-level Dialogue on Just Transition as part of the Just Transition Platform meetings.

The initial proposal for a Regulation on the Just Transition Fund put forward by the EC in January 2020 already took the key recommendations of the CoR on board, namely that the new fund should be based on the cohesion policy provisions and that it should fall under shared management²⁸. The proposal was followed, after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, by an amended proposal aiming to increase the initial allocation and to create the necessary conditions for the EU's long-term growth, as well to strengthen the resilience of its economy to future shocks.

²⁶ ECON-VI/003 – The services package: An updated view from Europe's local and regional authorities – Jean-Luc Vanraes (BE/Renew E.) – COR-2020-00150-00-00-AC-TRA (EN).

²⁷ ECON-VII/006 – Single Market Barriers Report and Single Market Enforcement Action Plan – Tadeusz Truskolaski (PL/EA) – COR-2020-02355-00-00-AC-TRA (EN).

²⁸ These recommendations had been put forward in the CoR opinion ECON-VI/041 – Socioeconomic structural change in Europe's coal regions – rapporteur Mark Speich (DE/EPP) - COR-2018-6337-00-00-AC.

In view of the new proposals and because of the outbreak of the pandemic, the CoR postponed the adoption of its opinion²⁹, initially scheduled for the March plenary, to July 2020, which allowed for increased political pressure to include the key CoR recommendations in the final legislative text, such as: clear commitments to the 2030 and 2050 energy and climate goals, a proper application of the partnership principle in programming and implementation of the Just Transition Fund, simplified procedures for the use of the JTF and the application of the polluter pays principle. In addition, as a direct outcome of the CoR's call for an Annual Forum of Just Transition Regions, the CoR is co-organising alongside DG REGIO a Multi-level Dialogue on Just Transition as part of the Just Transition Platform meetings. Concrete proposals for this cooperation will be put forward in Spring 2021.

3.2.5 Investing in people and culture for an educated, inclusive and resilient Europe

Main impact:

- Elements of the CoR opinion on the Brain drain in the EU: addressing the challenge at all levels³⁰ have been included in the presidency discussion paper for the dedicated EYCS (Education) Council policy debate. The challenge posed by the brain drain was explicitly mentioned by the European Commission president and Commissioner Schmit.
- Several concrete amendments proposed in the CoR opinion on Creative Europe have been taken on board by the EP, and the request for a budgetary target of over EUR 2 billion was granted (the agreed budget for Creative Europe is now EUR 2.2 billion).
- Elements of the CoR opinion on Strengthening STE(A)M education in the EU³¹ have been included in the new Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027.
- Adoption of a Joint Action Plan with several DGs, including DG EAC.

The conviction that investment in education and training represents an investment in our future continued to guide the activities of the CoR in these policy fields. In 2020, the CoR contributed to the EC's call to work in close cooperation with regional and national authorities on making the European Education Area a reality.

Education, youth and culture are integral parts of the Joint Action Plan with Commissioner Gabriel's services, as underlined by the Commissioner in her debate with SEDEC members in November 2020. The CoR will be involved in the implementation of the European Education Area, where local and regional authorities will have an important role in delivery, in the "Education for Climate" Coalition and in the new European Digital Education Hubs, linking national and regional digital education initiatives and strategies. The collaboration under the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 will be developed and the CoR will continue to contribute to the European Capitals of Culture and the European Heritage Label initiatives. The new European Bauhaus is another promising opportunity for cooperation with the JRC in order to bring aspects of cultural heritage, including those which have been neglected

²⁹ COTER-VII/002 – Just Transition Fund – rapporteur Vojko Obersnel (HR/PES) – COR-2020-00418-00-02-AC-TRA.

³⁰ SEDEC-VI/052 – Brain Drain in the EU: addressing the challenge at all levels – rapporteur Emil Boc (RO/EPP) – COR-2019-04645-00-00-AC-TRA.

³¹ SEDEC-VI-049 – Strengthening STE(A)M education in the EU – rapporteur Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP) – COR-2018-06435-00-00-AC-TRA.

or abandoned, into use, as requested in the [CoR own-initiative opinion on Culture in a Union that strives for more: the role of regions and cities](#)³².

3.2.6 Civil protection

Main impact:

- Support and promoting measures to strengthen the emergency response and crisis management capacities of the EU with direct involvement of local and regional emergency response structures.
- CoR rapporteurs continue the strategic partnership and intensified contacts with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the EC.
- High level participants in CoR events on related topics.

The key policy objective pursued in civil protection was achieved through the CoR's support and promoting measures to strengthen the emergency response and crisis management capacities of the EU with direct involvement of local and regional emergency response mechanisms. In 2020, the CoR adopted an opinion on A Reinforced Union Civil Protection Mechanism. While the negotiations carried on well into 2021 and the impact can be assessed in more detail then, the Council Presidency and the European Parliament reached a provisional agreement at the beginning of 2021, which largely corresponds to what the CoR supported in the opinion, such as the European Commission being able to provide support in transport and logistics and directly procure certain additional rescEU capacities (financed from the EU budget), a substantially increased budget for UCPM for 2021-2027 and more visibility for EU action when rescEU resources are used for national purposes.

The NAT rapporteurs continue the strategic partnership and intensified contacts with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and the European Commission (DG ECHO). Opinions were adopted on Reinforced UCPM and a Health Emergency Mechanism. UNDRR and the CoR NAT commission held a joint session during the 2020 EWRC on local level resilience and the pandemic risk, with CoR members on the panel.

Highlights include the address by Commissioner Lenarčič at the debate on COVID-19 crisis management and the recovery plan in July, and the participation of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, Mami Mizutori, in the debate on the opinion on A Reinforced Union Civil Protection Mechanism in October.

³² SEDEC-VI/054 – Culture in a Union that strives for more: the role of regions and cities – rapporteur Vincenzo Bianco (IT/PES) – COR-2019-04646-00-01-AC-TRA.

3.3 Cohesion as a fundamental value

3.3.1 Cohesion policy legislative package

Main impact:

- A strong partnership principle and the reference to the European Code of Conduct on partnership have been maintained in the Common Provisions Regulation, and the drafting of the Partnership Agreements remained mandatory for all Member States.
- The co-financing rates have been increased in comparison with the initial EC proposal, although in some cases not as high as suggested by the CoR.
- Clarification that Member States must prepare and implement the programmes at the appropriate territorial level, in accordance with their institutional, legal and financial framework.
- For the first time ever the ERDF Regulation will consider and define territories that suffer from demographic decline, and not only the demographic density, at the level of NUTS 3.
- The ERDF resources for sustainable urban development will be increased from 6 to at least 8%.
- In the new European Urban Initiative, all urban areas will be covered, including functional urban areas, and the final ERDF text followed the CoR's recommendation to exclude the specific financial allocations assigned to the Outermost Regions from the thematic concentration requirements.
- The REACT-EU Regulation extends a flexible support to counter the negative impacts of the pandemic to border regions through the European Territorial Cooperation goal.
- Continued extensive alliance building with a wide range of partners, in particular through the #CohesionAlliance.

In December 2020, the co-legislators finally agreed on most parts of the cohesion policy legislative proposals for the years 2021-2027, which had been presented by the EC almost two and a half years earlier, in May 2018, and on which the CoR had put forward its recommendations for legislative amendments in the opinions on the Common Provisions Regulation³³, the Regulations on the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund³⁴, the European Social Fund Plus³⁵, European Territorial Cooperation³⁶, and the European Cross Border Mechanism³⁷ in December 2018, with the objective of securing a strong and effective cohesion policy beyond 2020.

Thanks to its continuous efforts with regard to promoting its legislative recommendations for the new cohesion policy post-2020, the co-legislators took on board many of the key recommendations of the CoR, resulting in a significant impact on the final texts of the documents.

³³ COTER-VI/045 – Common Provisions Regulation – co-rapporteurs: Catuscia Marini (IT/PES) and Michael Schneider (DE/EPP) – COR-2018-03593-00-00-AC.

³⁴ COTER-VI/046 – European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund – rapporteur: Michiel Rijsberman (NL/ALDE) – COR-2018-03594-00-00-AC.

³⁵ COTER-VI/049 – European Social Fund Plus – rapporteur: Susana Díaz Pacheco (ES/PES) – COR-2018-03597-00-00-AC.

³⁶ COTER-VI/047 – European Territorial Cooperation – rapporteur: Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA) – COR-2018-03595-00-00-AC.

³⁷ COTER-VI/048 – Cross-border mechanism – rapporteur: Bouke Arends (NL/PES) – COR-2018-03596-00-00-AC.

One particularly important aspect for the CoR is that a strong partnership principle and the reference to the European Code of Conduct on partnership have been maintained in the Common Provisions Regulation, and that the drafting of the Partnership Agreements remained mandatory for all Member States. This is a crucial prerequisite to ensure that the funds actually address the needs on the ground. Another very important aspect is that the co-financing rates have been increased in comparison with the initial Commission proposal, although in some cases not as high as suggested by the CoR. In addition, many other important CoR recommendations have been taken on board in the final text of the Common Provisions Regulation as well, such as the maintenance of the n+3 rule, the possibility to include an integrated approach to address demographic challenges in the partnership agreements and operational programmes, and the clarification that Member States must prepare and implement the programmes at the appropriate territorial level, in accordance with their institutional, legal and financial framework.

Concerning the impact of the opinion on the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund³⁸, many of the CoR's proposals were also taken on board in the final regulation. For instance, for the first time ever the ERDF regulation will consider and define territories that suffer from demographic decline (reduction of at least 1% of population between 2007-2017), and not only the demographic density, at the level of NUTS 3. The ERDF resources for sustainable urban development will be increased from 6 to at least 8%. All urban areas will be covered in the new European Urban Initiative, including functional urban areas, and the co-legislators included the CoR proposal to support the "Erasmus for local representatives" under the Urban Agenda for the EU. Finally, the CoR also succeeded in having included the possibility of financing capacity building actions at local level to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

As regards thematic concentration, the CoR position coincided with co-legislators on the importance of dedicating at least 30% of the ERDF budget to green investments in all categories of regions and Member States, given the importance of meeting the obligations resulting from the Paris Agreement objectives. The final text followed the CoR's recommendation to exclude the specific financial allocations assigned to the Outermost Regions from the thematic concentration requirements, as well as the possibility of supporting productive investments in big companies in those regions. Regarding the thematic aspects of the ERDF/CF Regulation, the co-legislators took on board some proposals put forward in the CoR opinion, such as the inclusion of energy poverty, the promotion of resilience to prevent natural disasters, the promotion of sustainable multimodal urban mobility, as part of the transition to a carbon-neutral economy. Last but not least, the possibility of investments in culture and tourism were retained, as well as the support for the localisation of the SDGs.

Based on the proposals put forward in the opinions on European Territorial Cooperation³⁹ and People-to-people and small-scale projects in cross-border cooperation programmes⁴⁰ and the good communication with the EP rapporteur on the matter, the CoR has successfully lobbied for a stronger

³⁸ COTER-VI/046 – European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund – rapporteur: Michiel Rijsberman (NL/ALDE) – COR-2018-03594-00-00-AC.

³⁹ COTER-VI/047 – European Territorial Cooperation – rapporteur: Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA) – COR-2018-03595-00-00-AC.

⁴⁰ COTER-VI/023 – People-to-people and small-scale projects in cross-border cooperation programmes – rapporteur: Pavel Branda (CZ/ECR) – COR-2017-01527-00-00-AC.

Interreg programme than was initially proposed by the EC, ensuring the continuation of the Interreg Europe and Urbact programmes, and several points mentioned in the opinions were taken up in the final legislative text. In addition, the REACT-EU Regulation, adopted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, extends flexible support to counter the negative impacts of the pandemic to border regions through the European Territorial Cooperation goal – a key request raised in the CoR opinion⁴¹ on the matter.

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 European Week of Regions and Cities in October 2017, and which has brought together more than 450 institutional partners and more than 11 000 individual supporters. The continuous political and communication activities carried out by the Cohesion Alliance throughout the legislative process very much helped the CoR to successfully convey its key recommendations to the co-legislators.

3.3.2 Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027

Main impact:

- Cuts for cohesion policy were avoided, the cohesion policy envelope (including Next Generation EU) is 1.2% higher in 2018 prices than in the current funding period (EU 27), showcasing the key importance of Cohesion policy for the recovery and resilience.
- Final beneficiaries will be protected against any cuts in the event that a Member State is in breach of the Rule of Law.
- 30% of all the MFF and NGE expenditure will be used to reach the climate reduction commitments of the EU.

An extraordinary meeting of the European Council on 10-11 December 2020 marked the end of the official interinstitutional negotiations on the MFF Regulation for 2021-2027 and the accompanying legislative texts. The CoR has succeeded, over the course of 2019 and 2020, in actively influencing the negotiations through the political contacts of relevant rapporteurs on individual files in the EP and through its legislative work – such as the CoR Resolution on Revised Multiannual Financial Framework and European Sustainable Investment Plan⁴², adopted at the June/July Plenary session. Specifically, the CoR's calls for an increase in allocations for key EU programmes, a mid-term review at the initiative of the Commission in 2024, and a concrete roadmap for the introduction of new EU own resources found their way into the final agreement. However, given the specific intergovernmental nature of the MFF negotiations, the CoR's impact on Member States remained rather limited.

⁴¹ COTER-VII/008 – The REACT-EU package – rapporteur Mieczysław Struk (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-03318-00-01-AC-TRA.

⁴² RESOL-VII/006 – Revised Multiannual Financial Framework and European Sustainable Investment Plan – COR-2020-02639-00-00-RES.

3.3.3 Urban policy and territorial cohesion

Main impact:

- The CoR's role was recognised and expressly mentioned in the implementation document on the Urban Agenda for the EU and in the Council Conclusions which endorsed the New Leipzig Charter.
- The renewed Leipzig charter recognises the validity of the three pillars (Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge) of the Urban Agenda for the EU identified by the Pact of Amsterdam.
- It also acknowledges that the surrounding rural areas offer important benefits for cities in general and expressly recognises the importance of promoting "digital cohesion" in Europe, both for its citizens and for its territories.
- The adoption of the Territorial Agenda 2030 follows active CoR participation in the drafting of the final text and the German Presidency conclusions.
- The Council Conclusions on urban and territorial development explicitly welcomed the opinions of the CoR on the New Leipzig Charter, on Equivalent standards of living, and on the renewed Territorial Agenda, and invited the CoR to provide input and support.

On 30 November 2020, the informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Urban Development adopted the [*New Leipzig Charter: The transformative power of cities for the common good*](#) under the intergovernmental cooperation process between the Member States. As requested in the CoR's opinion on this matter⁴³, the CoR's role was recognised and expressly mentioned in the implementation document on the Urban Agenda for the EU and in the Council Conclusions which endorsed the new charter.

The renewed version of the Leipzig Charter follows the CoR recommendation on the importance of considering the impact of health pandemics on cities and towns and the subsequent potential increase in territorial disparities. As suggested by the CoR opinion, it also acknowledges that the surrounding rural areas offer important benefits for cities in general and expressly recognises the importance of promoting "digital cohesion" in Europe, both for its citizens and for its territories. The renewed Leipzig charter also recognises the validity of the three pillars (Better Regulation, Better Funding and Better Knowledge) of the Urban Agenda for the EU identified by the Pact of Amsterdam, which was also strongly called for by the CoR. Finally, the New Leipzig Charter will also be more connected to the new European Commission policy missions, for example the new EU Green Deal.

At the informal Meeting of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning and Territorial Development and/or Territorial Cohesion on 1 December 2020, the ministers agreed on the [*Territorial Agenda 2030*](#) as a renewed action-oriented policy framework to promote territorial cohesion in Europe as established in the Treaty of the European Union. The adoption of the Territorial Agenda 2030 follows an active CoR participation in the drafting of the final text and the German Presidency conclusions from the

⁴³ COTER-VII/001– The renewal of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities – rapporteur Juan Espadas Cejas (ES/PES) – COR-2019-04829-00-01-AC-TRA.

Informal Ministerial Meetings refer to the CoR opinions that contributed to this process⁴⁴. In addition, the CoR has been invited to initiate a dialogue on how the coordination of EU policies and initiatives with a territorial dimension can be improved.

Further to the two informal ministerial meetings and for the first time ever, the Council of the European Union adopted on 14 December 2020 specific Council Conclusions on urban and territorial development. These Council Conclusions explicitly welcomed the opinions of the CoR on the New Leipzig Charter, on Equivalent standards of living, as well as on the renewed Territorial Agenda, and invited the CoR to provide input and support, within its remit, to the further development and implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU in line with the strategic principles set out in the New Leipzig Charter, and to contribute to the implementation of the Territorial Agenda.

3.3.4 Anchoring the European Pillar of Social Rights at local and regional level

Main impact:

- Political dialogue with Commissioner Nicolas Schmit and enhanced cooperation with DG EMPL.
- DG EMPL and CoR are working together on a future initiative called European Local Job Fairs.

In 2020, the EC prepared the ground for the drawing-up of the Action Plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Porto Social Summit in 2021. In January 2020, the EC published the Communication on A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions, to which the CoR contributed with an opinion drawn up by the SEDEC chair⁴⁵.

Following on from Commissioner Schmit's contribution to the SEDEC meeting of 9 July 2020 and close contacts between the private offices of the Commissioner and the CoR president, SEDEC members adopted a memo on 2 November on enhanced cooperation between DG EMPL and the CoR. One of the expected key outcomes was the CoR's stronger involvement in the drafting of the Action Plan on the EPSR and its participation in the 2021 Porto Social Summit.

Finally, the concept of the European Local Job Fairs, which will be regular local events to support the local labour markets, is still at the planning stage, with a pilot online event planned for the second half of 2021.

⁴⁴ COTER-VI/056 – The CoR's contribution to the renewed Territorial Agenda, with special emphasis on community-led local development – rapporteur Radim Sršeň (CS/EPP) – COR-2019-01897-00-00-AC, and COTER-VII/004 – Equivalent standards of living as a joint challenge for all levels of government in Europe - rapporteur Bernd Lange (DE/EPP) – COR-2020-02612-00-00-AC.

⁴⁵ SEDEC-VII/004 – A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions – rapporteur Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES) – COR-2020-02167-00-00-AC-TRA.

3.3.5 Health and COVID-19 resilience

Main impact:

- The CoR's EU4Health opinion called for a robust budget for health in the next MFF, supporting the EP's position. This demand was partly taken on board in the European Council Agreement in December 2020.
- The key opinions adopted in 2020 – an EU Health Emergency Mechanism, EU4Health and cross-border healthcare systems – put forward the views of local and regional authorities as actors in health and the fight against COVID-19.
- A fruitful meeting took place between President Tzitzikostas and WHO Europe Director Kluge at the start of the new CoR term and the launch of the new WHO Programme for Work for the European Region.

NAT secretariat is actively working with DG SANTE, WHO Europe and the CoR Interregional Group on Health and Well-being and publishing relevant studies and impact assessments in relation to the recommendations of key opinions adopted in 2020 – an EU Health Emergency Mechanism, EU4Health and cross-border healthcare cooperation –, which put forward the views of local and regional authorities as actors in health and in the fight against COVID-19.

The EU HEM opinion's call for a broader and stronger mandate for the ECDC has led to a legislative proposal reviewing the scope of competencies and activities for the Centre. Likewise, its concerns regarding the shortages of essential products and medicines, including antibiotics and anaesthetics, exacerbated by the pandemic resulted in the Commission's review of the supply chains for active pharmaceutical ingredients, presented in the annex to the Renewed Industrial Strategy.

The EU4Health opinion called for a robust budget for health in the next MFF, supporting the European Parliament's position. This demand was partly taken on board in the European Council Agreement in December 2020. The size of the final envelope, although lower than hoped for, still exceeds three times what the Council initially proposed.

A fruitful meeting took place between President Tzitzikostas and WHO Europe Director Kluge at the start of the new CoR term and the launch of the new WHO Programme for Work for the European Region. The second action plan between the two parties was signed and will guide future cooperation. A RegHub consultation on the implementation of the cross-border health care directive in Europe's regions was carried out, highlighting barriers to cross-border health care cooperation published in summer 2020, as well as the NAT study focused on regional health policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis. The health chapter of the CoR regional and local Barometer revealed large disparities in health and provided recommendations for better management of the health crisis in Europe.

3.3.6 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

Main impact:

- The rapporteur⁴⁶ worked in close cooperation with the coalition of the AGRI regions to get the support of the European Parliament to modify the CAP strategic plans regulation.
- The CoR amendments on Articles 94, 107 and 110 of the CAP strategic plans regulation supported by the rapporteur and the coalition of the AGRI regions were adopted by the Parliament on 23 October.

The CoR maintained and strengthened the key role played by Europe's regions in managing and implementing the CAP, especially for the second pillar, so as to bring policy options into line with specific territorial and sectoral characteristics.

Following the adoption of the [CoR opinion on the reform of the CAP](#), the rapporteur worked in close cooperation with the coalition of the AGRI regions to get the support of the European Parliament to modify the CAP strategic plans regulation. The amendments on Articles 94, 107 and 110 of the CAP strategic plans regulation supported by the rapporteur and the coalition of the AGRI regions were adopted by the Parliament on 23 October.

Following the debate on the CAP with Mr Burtscher, Director-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, at the November NAT commission meeting, a meeting was held on 14 December between the rapporteur, the coalition of the Agri regions and DG AGRI to get the support of the European Commission. This first meeting was followed by two others in 2021, resulting in the drafting by the European Commission of compromise amendments by the European Commission to include the role of the regions in the drafting, implementation and monitoring of the CAP Strategic Plan ahead of the CAP trilogies in May 2021.

3.3.7 Rural development

Main impact:

- The opinion on EU strategy for rural revival⁴⁷ is the CoR contribution to the EC consultation on a new long-term vision for rural areas.

The key policy objective was reached through achieving the territorial cohesion objective enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty and narrowing the urban-rural divide.

In its 2016 opinion on innovation and modernisation of rural areas, the CoR called for an EU Rural Agenda to serve as the starting point for a post-2020 development policy for rural areas. The NAT commission organised various events to promote the rural agenda among the EU institutions:

- September 2016: CoR contribution to the Cork declaration on rural development.

⁴⁶ NAT-VI/034 – Reform of the CAP – rapporteur Guillaume Cros (FR/The Greens) – COR-2018-03637-00-02-AC.

⁴⁷ NAT-VII/006 – EU Strategy for Rural Revival – rapporteur Enda Stenson (IE/EA) – COR-2020-01066-00-00-AC.

- November 2016: Joint meeting with the AGRI committee of the European Parliament on the rural strategy.
- November 2016: Joint EESC-CoR Conference: Cork+20: leaving rural areas behind is no longer an option.
- July 2018: Signature of the #Cohesionalliance with European Rural Development Association.
- September 2018: Informal meeting of the AGRI Council on rural development.
- 6 joint meetings with the European Parliament's RUMRA Intergroup between 2016 and 2020.

On 3 October 2018, the European Parliament adopted a resolution addressing the specific needs of rural, mountainous and remote areas, in which it called on the European Commission to include provisions in future legislative proposals addressing the specificities of these areas and to provide adequate funding for cohesion policy post-2020, especially from the European Structural and Investment Funds. In 2020, the new Commission has been asked to develop a new long-term vision for rural areas, working to ensure that the needs of rural areas are specifically catered for in national strategic plans under the new Common Agricultural Policy.

The opinion on the EU strategy for rural revival is the CoR contribution to the European Commission consultation on a new long-term vision for rural areas scheduled for adoption in Q2 2021. Several events are planned to promote our opinion:

- Following the 2020 consultation of the CoR Regional Hubs on the strategic evaluations on the impact of the CAP towards the general objective "balanced territorial development", the CoR will contribute to the EC consultation on the impact of the PAC on territorial cohesion.
- Organising a joint meeting with the EP Com AGRI on the new long-term vision for rural areas.
- Active participation in the work of the ENRD Thematic Group on "the Long Term Rural Vision, #rural2040".
- Active participation in the work of the OECD Working Party on Rural Policy.
- The CoR will support the UNESCO initiative on heritage and the EU aimed at using world heritage as a tool to enhance the economic and social sustainability of rural areas in Europe.
- The CoR will work closely with the RUMRA & Smart Villages Intergroup of the EP.
- The CoR will work closely with the European Rural Parliament, with networks such as AGRI regions and with the National Rural Parliaments.

3.3.8 Nicosia initiative

Main impact:

- The CoR mobilised partnerships between European LRA and Libyan municipalities to exchange expertise on a number of concrete topics.

The Nicosia Initiative is the CoR's platform aimed at strengthening Libyan local authorities. In the absence of a unified government at national level, Libyan municipalities play a key role in providing basic services to citizens in a context of instability, economic crisis and state fragility. The key objective is to create mutually beneficial and sustainable partnerships that improve the living conditions of Libyan

citizens by strengthening administrative capacity, improving public services delivery and fostering local economic development.

This is being achieved by giving concrete proof of the added value of decentralised cooperation through peer-to-peer partnerships between Libyan and EU cities and regions. In the match-making strand, the CoR mobilised partnerships between European LRA and Libyan municipalities to exchange expertise on a number of concrete topics such as water management (Murcia, Spain), waste management (Antwerp City, Belgium), health services (Vila Real, Portugal), fisheries (Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy, and Galicia, Spain). Complementing this, the CoR developed the continuous learning strand, which seeks to deliver tailor-made training to core municipality staff. Between May 2017 and October 2018, a series of capacity-building workshops on pressing issues for Libyan LRAs was carried out in cooperation with CIEDEL (Lyon) and CCI (Trento), in order to help Libyan universities develop and deliver needs-based curricula for municipality staff. Workshops covered a total of eight modules (strategic planning, crisis management, public services delivery, project management, financial management, human resources management, curriculum development and training-the-trainers) and local implementation of training actions started in January and February 2019 at the universities of Tripoli, Benghazi, Sabha and Zawiya.

The success can be measured by the various activities that have taken place since 2018. From 2016 to date, a total of 35 field trips, meetings and training events has benefited over 500 Libyan participants from all areas of the country. Beyond the workshops on core municipal tasks such as water and waste management as well as the continuous learning activities mentioned above, activities included peace training for 200 young Libyans (with 11 follow-up community projects funded) and a three month vocational training programme for 100 young fisherpeople to foster local economic development.

New substantial funding for the Nicosia Initiative of cooperation with Libyan municipalities was confirmed with the signature of the REBUILD Action in December 2020, aimed at improving the living conditions of the Libyan population through the promotion of integrated, sustainable and inclusive urban development. This will make it possible to continue the strand of continuous learning for Libyan municipalities, as well as fishery activities. In addition, the TAMSALL project, funded by the EUD Libya/DG NEAR explicitly aims, among other objectives, to support the Nicosia Initiative. A contract was signed in December 2020 with the selected consortium (Informest Friuli Venezia Giulia, Emilia Romagna, and EURADA). Transparency International Belgium has applied for a second phase of the Local Integrity System project to the government of Flanders, and in October 2020 the Flemish government confirmed EUR 100 000 for a second phase (cooperation between the Belgian and the Palestinian chapter, the Ana Yaqidh Association from Tunisia and Libyan actors).

4. Conclusions – Outlook

The work of the CoR in 2020 faced challenges from the unexpected circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and the health and economic crisis. However, our institution adapted quickly to not only continue its work but also to actively participate and to influence EU legislation while assisting, informing, engaging and representing regions and cities across Europe. Since mid-2020, the EU institutions, including the CoR, has combined its efforts to deliver a transformative agenda for the years to come, duly integrating strategic choices for facing the aftermath of COVID-19 at all levels.

A stronger link between the strategic oversight of the Conference of President and the thematic planning of the CoR commissions was established and a number of flagship initiatives were identified.

Throughout all the missions of the CoR the most important challenge is to reach and influence our counterparts, especially within **the European decision-making process**. Having an impact and evaluating that impact are therefore essential. To this end, the CoR administration and members are working together to implement recommendations laid down in the recent CoR impact oversight coordinator's report. The following steps are suggested for implementing the proposals:

- **On the follow up to opinions:** a proposal to implement it will be presented to the Bureau later in 2021.
- The CoR administration to set up a new *follow-up to opinion* and *impact* processes to enable a better evaluation of the impact of opinions, **including assessment of past opinions**. These processes should also give every CoR member an up-to-date overview of the follow-up to our opinions and to the impact we achieve.
- **Meetings between the CoR administration, the political group secretariats and the rapporteur/experts** will be held to identify "**early markers**" for key opinions, to assess the impact and to intensify joint efforts by different services in this regard.
- The future Annual Impact Report will also include a list of **additional CoR products** that were prepared for the legislative works:
 - **declarations and resolutions** addressed to the EU institutions,
 - **letters addressed to the EU institutions** linked to legislative proposals,
 - **exchanges with high level representatives of other EU institutions** at the CoR plenary and Commission meetings,
 - **CoR consultations and policy assessments** that were shared with other EU institutions, such as TIA and RegHub reports, and
 - **input gathered and processed from local dialogues and conferences.**
- The CoR will continue to work and to promote **genuine CoR products**, such as the Annual Barometer report, the TIA reports and the RegHub implementation reports, to provide first hand feedback from the local and regional level.

- In 2022, the CoR will carry out a **CoR consultative works survey** to gain first hand quantitative and qualitative feedback from the EU institutions about our performance.
- The CoR will also work on **amending the current Rules of Procedure** to enable a quicker political response to EU decision making processes and to **"raise the bar" for own-initiative opinions**.
- By the end of 2021, the CoR will develop a **suitable system of Key Performance Indicators** via an inclusive process with the CoR administration, the political groups and the members. To do this, an interservice **working group will be established to develop a set of indicators** and to assess the efforts to raise and update them. **Some KPIs are, however, already in place** and presented in Appendix 3 of this document. They relate to the numbers of opinions and resolutions, numbers of interinstitutional meetings involving CoR rapporteurs per category, numbers of networks and their contributions to the opinions.

As part of the secretary-general's *Going for impact!* plan this process will be accompanied by a comprehensive **training policy to enable all CoR staff** in the administration and the political groups to improve their ability to make an impact. It will also go hand in hand with **reinforcing the consultative work services**, particularly with regard to a better and more comprehensive service for our members to help them achieve a better impact.

5. Appendix

5.1 Appendix 1: List of opinions included in this report

COTER

- COTER-VI/023 – People-to-people and small-scale projects in cross-border cooperation programmes – rapporteur: Pavel Branda (CZ/ECR) – COR-2017-01527-00-00-AC
- COTER-VI/045 – Common Provisions Regulation – co-rapporteurs Catuscia Marini (IT/PES) and Michael Schneider (DE/EPP) – COR-2018-03593-00-00-AC
- COTER-VI/046 – European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund – rapporteur Michiel Rijsberman (NL/ALDE) – COR-2018-03594-00-00-AC
- COTER-VI/047 – European Territorial Cooperation – rapporteur Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA) - COR-2018-03595-00-00-AC
- COTER-VI/048 – Cross-border mechanism – rapporteur Bouke Arends (NL/PES) – COR-2018-03596-00-00-AC
- COTER-VI/049 – European Social Fund Plus – rapporteur Susana Díaz Pacheco (ES/PES) – COR-2018-03597-00-00-AC
- COTER-VI/054 - The potential of the rail sector in delivering EU policy priorities - rapporteur Pascal Mangin (FR/EPP) - COR-2019-01939-00-01-AC
- COTER-VI/056 – The CoR's contribution to the renewed Territorial Agenda, with special emphasis on community-led local development – rapporteur Radim Sršeň (CS/EPP) – COR-2019-01897-00-00-AC,
- COTER-VII/001 – The renewal of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities – rapporteur Juan Espadas Cejas (ES/PES) – COR-2019-04829-00-01-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/002 – Just Transition Fund – rapporteur Vojko Obersnel (HR/PES) – COR-2020-00418-00-02-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/003 - Challenges for public transport in cities and metropolitan regions – rapporteur Adam Struzik (PL/EPP) - COR-2020-02613-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/004 – Equivalent standards of living as a joint challenge for all levels of government in Europe – rapporteur Bernd Lange (DE/EPP) – COR-2020-02612-00-00-AC
- COTER-VII/006 – European Year of Rail 2021 – rapporteur Jarosław Piotr Stawiarski (PL/ECR) – COR-2020-02633-00-01-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/008 – The REACT-EU package – rapporteur Mieczysław Struk (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-03318-00-01-AC-TRA
- RESOL-VII/006 – Revised Multiannual Financial Framework and European Sustainable Investment Plan – COR-2020-02639-00-00-RES

ECON

- ECON-VI/041 – Socioeconomic structural change in Europe's coal regions – rapporteur Mark Speich (DE/EPP) – COR-2018-6337-00-00-AC
- ECON-VII/007 – A new Industrial strategy for Europe – rapporteur Jeannette Baljeu (NL/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-01374-00-00-AC-TRA

- ECON-VII/008 – SME Strategy – rapporteur Eddy Van Hijum (NL/EPP) – COR-2020-01373-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/009 – Recovery plan for Europe in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: Recovery and Resilience Facility and Technical Support Instrument – rapporteur Christophe Rouillon (FR/PES) – COR-2020-03381-00-00-AC-TRA

ENVE

- ENVE-VII/001 – Fitness check of the Water Framework Directive, Groundwater Directive, Environmental Quality Standards Directive and Floods Directive – rapporteur Piotr Całbecki (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-00541-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/002 – Bio-diverse cities and regions beyond 2020 at the UN CBD COP 15 and in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – rapporteur Roby Biwer (LU/PES) – COR-2020-00539-00-01-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/003 – The future of EU Clean Air Policy in the framework of the zero-pollution ambition – rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP) – COR-2020-00540-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/004 – Towards a Roadmap for Clean Hydrogen – the contribution of local and regional authorities to a climate-neutral Europe – rapporteur Birgit Honé (DE/PES) – COR-2020-00549-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/005 – European Climate Law: establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality – rapporteur Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla (ES/EPP) – COR-2020-01361-00-01-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/007 – The European Climate Pact – rapporteur Rafał Kazimierz Trzaskowski (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-01360-00-00
- ENVE-VII/009 – The impact of climate change on regions: an assessment of the European Green Deal – rapporteur Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA) – COR-2020-03120-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/010 – Opportunities and synergies of a precautionary adaptation to climate change to promote sustainability and quality of life in regions and municipalities – which framework conditions are required for this? – rapporteur Markku Markkula (FI/EPP) – COR-2020-03121-00-01-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/013 – Stepping up Europe’s 2030 climate ambition towards COP26 – rapporteur Vincent Chauvet (FR/RE)

NAT

- NAT-VI/034 – Reform of the CAP – rapporteur Guillaume Cros (FR/GREENS) – COR-2018-03637-00-02-AC
- NAT-VII/006 – EU Strategy for Rural Revival – rapporteur Enda Stenson (IE/EA) – COR-2020-01066-00-00-AC

SEDEC

- SEDEC-VI-049 – Strengthening STE(A)M education in the EU – rapporteur Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP) – COR-2018-06435-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VI/052 – Brain Drain in the EU: addressing the challenge at all levels – rapporteur Emil Boc (RO/EPP) – COR-2019-04645-00-00-AC-TRA

- SEDEC-VI/054 – Culture in a Union that strives for more: the role of regions and cities – rapporteur Vincenzo Bianco (IT/PES) – COR-2019-04646-00-01-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/002 – Regional Innovation Scoreboard and its impact in regional place-based policies – rapporteur Mikel IRUJO Amezaga (ES/EA) – COR-2020-00517-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/004 – A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions – rapporteur Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES) – COR-2020-02167-00-00-AC-TRA

5.2 Appendix 2: List of opinions adopted in 2020

CIVEX

- CIVEX-VI/042 – Enlargement package 2019 – rapporteur Jaroslav Hlinka (SK/PES) – COR-2019-02727-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VI/043 – Regions' and Cities' contribution to the development of Africa – rapporteur Robert Zeman (CZ/EPP) – COR-2019-03729-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VI/044 – Strengthening the rule of law within the Union A blueprint for action – rapporteur Franco Iacop (IT/PES) – COR-2019-03730-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/001 – Local and Regional Authorities in the permanent dialogue with citizens – rapporteur Declan McDonnell (IE/EA) – COR-2019-04989-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/002 – Strengthening local governance and representative democracy via new digital technology instruments – rapporteur Rait Pihelgas (EE/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-00830-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/003 – Local Democracy Challenges in the Western Balkans – rapporteur Nikola Dobroslavić (HR/EPP) – COR-2020-00840-00-00-AC-TRA

COTER

- COTER-VII/001 – The renewal of the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities – rapporteur Juan Espadas Cejas (ES/PES) – COR-2019-04829-00-01-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/002 – Just Transition Fund – rapporteur Vojko Obersnel (HR/PES) – COR-2020-00418-00-02-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/003 – Challenges for public transport in cities and metropolitan regions – rapporteur Adam Struzik (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-02613-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/004 – Equivalent standards of living as a joint challenge for all levels of government in Europe – rapporteur Bernd Lange (DE/EPP) – COR-2020-02612-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/006 – European Year of Rail 2021 – rapporteur Jarosław Piotr Stawiarski (PL/ECR) – COR-2020-02633-00-01-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/007 – European Commission report on the implementation the renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions – rapporteur Ángel Víctor Torres Pérez (ES/PES) – COR-2020-03319-00-02-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/008 – The REACT-EU package – rapporteur Mieczysław Struk (PL/EPP) – COR-2020-03318-00-01-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/009 – The role of the EU's cohesion policy with respect to intelligent and innovative economic change in the regions against the backdrop of the coronavirus crisis – rapporteur Michiel Rijsberman (NL/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-03320-00-00-AC-TRA

ECON

- ECON-VII/001 – Implementation of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs): the regional and local perspective – rapporteur Michael Murphy (IE/EPP) – COR-2019-04764-00-00-AC-TRA

- ECON-VII/003 – The services package: An updated view from Europe's local and regional authorities – rapporteur Jean-Luc Vanraes (BE/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-00150-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/004 – A Strategy for Europe's Digital future and A Strategy for Data – rapporteur Mark Weinmeister (DE/EPP) – COR-2020-02354-00-01-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/005 – Economic governance review – rapporteur Elio Di Rupo (BE/PES) – COR-2020-01370-00-01-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/006 – Single Market Barriers Report and Single Market Enforcement Action Plan – rapporteur Tadeusz Truskolaski (PL/EA) – COR-2020-02355-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/007 – A new Industrial strategy for Europe – rapporteur Jeannette Baljeu (NL/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-01374-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/008 – SME Strategy – rapporteur Eddy Van Hijum (NL/EPP) – COR-2020-01373-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/009 – Recovery plan for Europe in response to the COVID-19 pandemic: Recovery and Resilience Facility and Technical Support Instrument – rapporteur Christophe Rouillon (FR/PES) – COR-2020-03381-00-00-AC-TRA

ENVE

- ENVE-VI/043 – Towards sustainable neighbourhoods and small communities – Environment policy below municipal level – rapporteur Gaetano Armao (IT/EPP) – COR-2019-03195-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/001 – Fitness check of the Water Framework Directive, Groundwater Directive, Environmental Quality Standards Directive and Floods Directive – rapporteur Piotr Calbecki (PL/EPP) - COR-2020-00541-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/002 – Bio-diverse cities and regions beyond 2020 at the UN CBD COP 15 and in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – rapporteur Roby Biwer (LU/PES) – COR-2020-00539-00-01-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/003 – The future of EU Clean Air Policy in the framework of the zero-pollution ambition – rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP) – COR-2020-00540-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/004 – Towards a Roadmap for Clean Hydrogen – the contribution of local and regional authorities to a climate-neutral Europe – rapporteur Birgit Honé (DE/PES) – COR-2020-00549-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/005 – European Climate Law: establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality – rapporteur Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla (ES/EPP) – COR-2020-01361-00-01-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/006 – New circular economy Action Plan – rapporteur Tjisse Stelpstra (NL/ECR) – COR-2020-01265-00-02-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/007 – The European Climate Pact – rapporteur Rafał Kazimierz Trzaskowski (PL/EPP)
- ENVE-VII/009 – The impact of climate change on regions: an assessment of the European Green Deal – rapporteur Andries Gryffroy (BE/EA) – COR-2020-03120-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/010 – Opportunities and synergies of a precautionary adaptation to climate change to promote sustainability and quality of life in regions and municipalities – which framework

conditions are required for this? – rapporteur Markku Markkula (FI/EPP) – COR-2020-03121-00-01-AC-TRA

NAT

- NAT-VII/001– Cross-border health care – rapporteur Karsten Uno Petersen (DK/PES) – COR-2019-04597-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/002 – Stepping up EU action to protect and restore the world's forests – rapporteur Roby Biwer (LU/PES) – COR-2019-04601-00-01-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/003 – Towards more sustainable tourism for EU cities and regions – rapporteur Manuel Alejandro Cardenete Flores (ES/RENEW E.) – COR-2020-00303-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/004 – Towards sustainable use of Natural Resources within the Mediterranean insular context – rapporteur Manuel Francina Armengol I Socias (ES/PES) – COR-2020-00344-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/005 – From Farm to Fork – the local and regional dimension – rapporteur Guido Milana (IT/PES) – COR-2020-00594-00-01-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/006 – EU Strategy for Rural Revival – rapporteur Enda Stenson (IE/EA) – COR-2020-01066-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/007 – EU Health Emergency Mechanism – rapporteur Birgitta Sacrédeus (SE/EPP) – COR-2020-02142-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/008 – EU4Health Programme – rapporteur Nathalie Sarrabezolles (FR/PES) – COR-2020-02917-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/009 – A Reinforced Union Civil Protection Mechanism – rapporteur Alberto Cirio (IT/EPP) – COR-2020-03164-00-00-AC-TRA

SEDEC

- SEDEC-VI/052 – Brain Drain in the EU: addressing the challenge at all levels – rapporteur Emil Boc (RO/EPP) – COR-2019-04645-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VI/054 – Culture in a Union that strives for more: the role of regions and cities – rapporteur Vincenzo Bianco (IT/PES) – COR-2019-04646-00-01-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/001 – Demographic change: proposals on measuring and tackling its negative effects in the EU regions – rapporteur János Ádám Karácsony (HU/EPP) – COR-2019-04647-00-02-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/002 – Regional Innovation Scoreboard and its impact in regional place-based policies – rapporteur Mikel IRUJO Amezaga (ES/EA) – COR-2020-00517-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/003 – Artificial Intelligence – A European approach to excellence and trust – rapporteur Guido Rink (NL/PES) – COR-2020-02014-00-01-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/004 – A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions – rapporteur Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES) – COR-2020-02167-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/005 – A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 – rapporteur Concepción ANDREU Rodríguez (ES/PES) – COR-2020-02016-00-01-AC-TRA

5.3 Appendix 3: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2020

KPIs	2020
Number of Commissions meetings	30
Number of opinions (in total)	48
Number of opinions on legislative proposals	8
Number of resolutions	9
Number of MEPs in commission meetings	39
Number of CoR rapporteurs participating in EP committee meetings	8
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR and EP rapporteurs	17
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and EC	44
Number of bilateral meetings between CoR rapporteurs and Permanent Representations on legislative dossiers	11
Participation of the CoR in events of the EU Presidency	15
Number of TIA	4
Number of Studies published	27
Number of RegHub consultations	3
Number of opinions with proposals from TIA	2
Number of inputs from RegHub reports	3
Number of Green Deal best practices	More than 200 best practices
CoR Opinion/Resolutions with a specific reference to subsidiarity	18

5.4 Appendix 4: References for the six Committee Commissions' contributions to the Impact Report 2020

Commission	Presentation of the document (meeting date)	Reference number of the document
CIVEX	16 February 2021	COR-2021-00419-00-01
COTER	26 February 2021	COR-2021-00487-00-00
ECON	22 January 2021	COR-2020-05785-00-00
ENVE	1 February 2021	COR-2020-05946-00-00
NAT	29 January 2021	COR-2020-05497-00-01
SEDEC	17 February 2021	COR-2020-05938-00-00