



European Committee
of the Regions

230th Bureau meeting

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Item 10 b

For decision with debate

Impact of CoR opinions : 2024 Annual Impact Report

Submitted by the Secretary-General

The Bureau is asked to;

- take stock of the impact of CoR opinions
- approve the 2024 Annual Impact Report and recommend to the Plenary Assembly to adopt it

Short description:

The Annual Impact Report 2024 provides a thematic overview of the work and main achievements of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) within the European decision-making process. This analysis is based on the major achievements on key themes identified and debated by each CoR commission.

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1. Summary

As a consultative body to the European institutions, the main role of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is to represent the European Union's local and regional authorities in the EU decision-making process. The impact of CoR Opinions is assessed in terms of:

- achievements in the EU legislative process and in general European debates (impact on preparatory or final legal texts);
- visibility for local and regional authorities in the setting of the EU's agenda;
- tangible changes in the EU's working methods, notably through alliance building and interinstitutional cooperation or in the day-to-day lives of citizens brought about through EU legislation or EU actions promoted or initiated by the CoR.

In 2024, the CoR adopted 53 opinions and 4 resolutions, which is a slightly lower figure than in previous years (68 in 2021, 63 in 2022 and 59 in 2023), but higher than in 2019, year which is comparable to 2024 from the EU inter-institutional cycle perspective.

It is also important to assess how CoR members interact with the representatives of the legislative institutions, namely the European Parliament, the Council of the EU (and its rotating Presidency), and the European Commission. Therefore, compared to previous years, more detailed figures per main EU institution were collected for 2024.

As previous years, the report describes the progress made with regards to each of the three political priorities of the CoR's 2020-25 term of office and provides examples which confirm that the CoR has maintained its crucial role as the local and regional voice at EU level.

In relation to bringing Europe closer to its people priority, the following key impact has been highlighted:

- The 10th European Summit of Regions and Cities held in March 2024 in Mons strengthened the political profile of the European Committee of the Regions ahead of the European elections and the renewal of the EU's leadership. With more than 3500 registered participants from more than 50 countries, including 1022 elected representatives of which 100 EU Councillors and BELC members, 83 YEPs, and more than 4.000 people following the live streams. Key speakers from across the European, national and local institutions joined the Summit, mobilising and engaging with citizens, with around 150.000 page views from 122.000 unique visitors to the dedicated summit website, . The Summit kicked-off the celebrations of the 30th anniversary of the CoR, recognising its three decades of bringing Europe closer to its people. The celebrations continued throughout the year, notably including the handover of the archives of the CoR at the Historical Archives of the EU in Florence and a resolution in November.
- The CoR roadmap on EU elections largely mobilised local and regional authorities and managed to influence the political debate, notably via the 10th European Summit of Regions and Cities in Mons , relevant debates in Plenary and commissions, as well as other means of engagement;
- In response to the CoR opinion on the Defence of Democracy, the European Commission recognised the need to further connect the pan-European citizen engagement activities with the local level. In line with the CoR's recommendation, the Commission committed to organising a session of the European cooperation network on elections dedicated to local and regional elections;
- The fourth edition of the Mayor Paweł Adamowicz Award continued to promote the contribution of stakeholders at local and regional level in the fight against intolerance, radicalisation, hate speech, oppression and xenophobia. For the first time the chair of the LIBE commission, M. Zarzalejos at the European Parliament was part of the jury;

- The CoR Rapporteur on *EU budget and place-based policies* presented the CoR position in the EP BUDG committee in October 2024;
- Need to take account of territorial impacts was fully addressed in the report of the High-level Group on the Future of Cohesion Policy and partly reflected in both Letta and Draghi reports;
- Eurostat agreed to integrate a chapter on regional data in the next EU SDGs monitoring report for the European Semester;
- “SDGs localisation” was recognised as a topic of key interest by the Joint Research Centre and the European Parliament through the JRC 2030 CATALYSTS project, working with up to 20 regions on SDGs implementation and monitoring;
- New cooperation agreements with the Commission and with the European Parliament signed by the CoR both include stronger references to the cooperation on better regulation and subsidiarity, potentially opening new avenues for action.
- The 11th Subsidiarity Conference, a biennial meeting of institutions and stakeholders involved in active subsidiarity and better regulation activities, took place in October 2024, a crucial moment at the outset of the new institutional term. The discussions particularly focused on the European Commission’s intentions regarding the future MFF and its possible recentralisation. Concerns were expressed about the risks associated with increased simplification, which would be a misinterpretation of active subsidiarity;
- The European Commission’s DG EMPL report on the EYS acknowledges the CoR’s significant contributions, mentioning the CoR opinions and resolutions on skills policies, while highlighting the CoR’s work on skills and the vital role of LRAs in driving the success of the European Skills Agenda;
- The CoR Network of European Regional and Local Councillors announced its merger with the European Commission’s 'Building Europe with Local Councillors' project during the European Week of Regions and Cities, representing the biggest Network of European Local Councillors across Europe. This marked an unprecedented step forward for the Committee and the first time the CoR is directly mentioned in the EC’s five-year political programme as an EC partner.
- The 2024 Young Elected Politicians (YEP) Call welcomed in June its new cohort of 150 participants representing all EU member states and five EU candidate countries. Since the programme expanded in 2023 to include participants from EU enlargement countries, in total 40 YEPs from all eight candidate countries, excluding Georgia, have joined. This brings the total number of YEP participants since its inception to nearly 1,000 (988). Furthermore, the programme’s Facebook group has grown to 565 members.

In relation to the building resilient local and regional communities priority, the key impact included the following:

- Strong presence at climate international negotiations (UNFCCC COP 29): Council conclusions for COP29 incorporated key CoR proposals ahead of the negotiations, European Parliament resolution for COP29 was aligned with CoR positions, with CoR amendments included in the text, and CoR has taken the lead within the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) constituency in drafting a joint position for COP29, which unites LRAs worldwide;
- Green Deal 2.0 report influenced Council conclusions, aligning with CoR’s call for policy synergies, just transition, regional perspectives, and increased investment for local authorities. Elements of its 29 recommendations are reflected in the political guidelines of the new European Commission President and the mission letters;

- CoR opinion *Towards a Global Green Deal: harmonizing global frameworks for climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development* had solid impact on the Council conclusions, especially on mainstreaming biodiversity within and across all levels of government and society, and across all policies and sectors. Thanks to its engagement at the biodiversity COP16, the CoR is now part of the coordinating committee of the Global Partnership on Subnational and Local Governments for Biodiversity;
- Reference, in the Draghi report on '*The future of European competitiveness*', to the CoR study on automotive regions, and recognition of the key importance of the transport sector for future EU industrial policy;
- Key elements of the CoR opinion on *Greening Freight Transport*¹ package were included into the draft EP reports on the package²;
- Thanks to the excellent CoR cooperation with the services of European Commissioners the pilot calls for the Regional Innovation Valleys (RIV) were launched on 17 May 2023. As a result, in 2024, a substantial number of CoR member regions, many of which had participated in the Partnerships for Regional Innovation pilot, were selected among these 149 RIV regions and will receive European funding in the months and years to come.
- In line with CoR's advocacy in 2024, the portfolio of the designated Commissioner for Energy and Housing stresses the need for multi-level and multi-actor dialogues and puts forward for the first time ever a European Affordable Housing Plan addressing energy poverty and sustainable housing;
- CoR opinion *Towards a resilient water management to fight climate crisis within an EU Blue Deal* advocated for the appointment of a dedicated Commissioner for Water. In line with CoR's advocacy, President von der Leyen appointed a Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience, and a Competitive Circular Economy;
- EU Nature Restoration Law adopted in June 2024 incorporated key points from the CoR opinion: the importance of considering regional and local characteristics in National Restoration Plans, with special attention to the Union's outermost regions, and the involvement of local, regional and managing authorities in the preparation of the Plans;
- CoR Rapporteur on Biodiversity protection and coexistence with large carnivores in Europe was invited for the debate to the Working Party of the EU Council;
- Following the CoR long-standing demand, the revised Stability and Growth Pact excludes co-financing of EU programmes from the calculations of expenditure under the fiscal rules. The fact that the exclusion is uncapped (whereas the EP report initially included a cap of 0.25% of GDP), and the very broad wording used in the definition also open the possible use of this provision in the next MFF, with regards to any future new EU programme or instrument based on co-financing;
- The rapporteur of the opinion on European Health Data Space drew on her regional experience with electronic health records and translated this policy knowledge into recommendations that found resonance with the EP: several points in the final compromise text directly reflect the amendments proposed by the CoR;
- The European Commission includes LORDIMAS as a key tool to measure digital transformation by cities.

¹ COTER-VII/033 – Greening Freight Transport – rapporteur: José Ribau Esteves (PT/EPP) - COR-2023-04958-00-00-AC-TRA.

² [Use of railway infrastructure capacity](#) and [Revision of the Weights and Dimensions Directive](#).

In relation to promoting cohesion as a fundamental value of the EU priority, key impact included the following:

- Commitment of the European Commission President towards a strengthened cohesion policy with regions is at the centre in the political guidelines of the European Commission for 2024-2029, following on from the early positioning and intensive work of the Committee of the Regions on the future of cohesion policy, including with the Cohesion Alliance
- Several key documents of the European Commission and of the Council recognised the need for a reinforced and improved cohesion policy, the importance of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) and of Just Transition;
- EC Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms Raffaele Fitto participated in the joint meeting of the CoR COTER commission and EP Committee on Regional Development (REGI) at the CoR in December 2024;
- CoR participated in the informal Council GAC meeting on cohesion and demography in September 2024 and in the EP REGI committee in December 2024;
- The CoR opinion on *How to exploit the full potential of cohesion policy to tackle demographic change* requested by the Hungarian Council Presidency was presented at the Council Working Party on Structural Measures and Outermost Regions on 24 September 2024 and many of its recommendations were taken up by the Council conclusions on the matter adopted at the General Affairs Council (Cohesion) on 28 November 2024;
- The revised proposal for a *Regulation on a Mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context* largely takes on board the recommendations put forward in the CoR opinion on *European Cross-Border Mechanism 2.0*
- Several CoR proposals, as expressed in the opinion on the Ukraine Facility adopted in October 2023, found their way into the final regulation adopted by the Parliament and the Council;
- Following up on the CoR's proposal contained in the opinion on *Zero long-term unemployment: the local and regional perspective*³, the European Commission decided to launch a pilot project committing EUR 23 million from ESF+ to cofinance regions' and/or cities' projects to reintegrate long term unemployed to the labor market;
- In January 2024, the EPOCH practice programme – derived, among others, from the proposals contained in the CoR opinion on homelessness – was launched⁴;
- The opinion on *Addressing territorial inequalities by improving access to social services*⁵ fed into and was mentioned in the EPSCO Council Conclusions of 2 December 2024;
- Synergies between the CoR opinion *The Common Fisheries Policy on the ground: towards sustainable and resilient coastal communities in the EU* and the EP resolution on *the Implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and future perspectives*: both institutions plead in favour of a stronger role of local and regional authorities;

³ SEDEC-VII/037: *Zero long-term unemployment: the local and regional perspective* – rapporteur: Yonnec Polet, (BE/PES) - COR-2022-05490-00-00-AC-TRA.

⁴ Programme chosen to embody the axis of mutual learning and capacity building within the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness. Co-financed by the European Union, the French Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing (DIHAL) and the King Baudouin Foundation, the programme will last for two years.

⁵ SEDEC-VII/051: *Addressing territorial inequalities by improving access to social services* – rapporteur: Declan McDonnell, (IE/EA) - COR-2024-03099-00-00-AC-TRA

- Following a call from the EP and the CoR for a separate Commissioner post dedicated exclusively to fisheries, aquaculture and maritime affairs, the new European Commission 2024-2029 appointed a Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans;
- The 22nd edition of the European Week of Regions and Cities was an excellent celebration and showcase for Cohesion Policy, with over 8000 registrations to its 156 sessions and 2500 CoR onsite participants. Over 572000 views on social media were registered for the live stream of high-level sessions, with 1 198 views for the SOTEU local speech. 585 elected politicians participated, including Members, YEPs and EU Councillors and over 500 speakers from all over Europe and beyond.

In 2024, media and social media communication activities have generated a consistent impact and have, maximising the CoR's visibility and credibility . In particular, they resulted in around 17.600 media mentions (highest since 2017 when the media monitoring system was implemented at the CoR). On top of the large coverage registered in regional and local media, 2024 has been marked by large quality coverage in main national and European outlets. Social media activities have also produced excellent results, About the same number of posts generated an increased organic engagement. Formats such as Instagram stories were more exploited that contributed to the high growth and increased engagement.

The engagement gained through boosted and paid social media content continued to have an even larger impact on the CoR's social media accounts allowing to reach out to new audiences in a targeted manner. The CoR social networks have registered a steady growth of followers 220 233 (+11.6%): Facebook: 63 635, Instagram: 20 373, LinkedIn: 74 110, X: 57 460 and Threads 4 655 (pilot account).

Moreover, in 2024 the CoR as maintained 3 types of websites:

- The old institutional website running on SharePoint (1 January 2024 to 17 September 2024),
- A dedicated website for the Mons summit (November 2023 to 17 September 2024),
- The new institutional website running on Drupal (since 17 September 2024).

All three together summed up to more than 1,75 million page views. **57,300** of these on opinion related pages. Best performing language is English (44%), followed by Spanish and Italian (10%). If we compare the numbers of the **new website** with the old one, the page views of the last two months (17 Sep – 31 Dec) represent already **more than 32 %** (18.600 views) **of the total amount** this year. This big increase is due to the **new search engine** for opinions, which allows people to search by rapporteur, title, adoption date, adoption status, commission and themes.

As part of its Annual Strategic Planning Cycle (ASPC), the CoR also continues to boost its strategic planning and cross-commission cooperation. The CoR Conference of Presidents (CoP) met with the Commission Chairs with a view to prepare the change of term of office and build on the achievements and recommendations from 2020-25, including on aspects related to cross-cutting work and bringing the different activities of the CoR together under its ASPC for greater coherence and impact. The work of the CoR's impact oversight coordinator, in the person of the president of the Renew Europe group in the second half of the CoR term of office, was completed in 2024 measurably contributing to further boosting the CoR's transition to an impact culture. Furthermore, in 2024 the CoR successfully completed negotiations with the European Commission and the European Parliament on the revision of its bilateral cooperation agreements, which seek to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation for greater impact. It also achieved an improved cooperation with the Council, having held a debate with its Secretary General followed by an exchange of letters with proposals to this effect.

2. Foreword by the CoR's Coordinator for Impact Oversight

During the 2020-2025 term of office CoR has been working diligently to increase its political impact on the EU's legislative and political processes. This effort has been guided by recommendations and a series of measures to shift the CoR's focus from output to impact from Ms. Ulrika Landergren (SV/Renew) appointed as the first Impact Oversight Coordinator established at the beginning of the 2020-2025 term of office. With this report, I complete the mission of Impact Oversight Coordinator that the Conference of Presidents entrusted me with in July 2022, to continue the work.

The impact oversight work conducted throughout the 7th mandate has had the merit of further boosting the CoR's transition from an output culture to an impact culture. This impulse should be continued but in a structured, focused and manageable way centred on the CoR's Annual Impact Report (AIR), which could benefit from political level implication in its coordination.

The push for concrete impact was indeed directed by our political leadership and priorities: protecting our democratic values and rights, bringing Europe closer to people by ensuring a strong territorial dimension; managing fundamental societal transformations, by addressing the climate and energy crises and their social impact at local and regional levels; and defending cohesion as a fundamental value of our Union. To enhance our impact several innovations took place, such as, amongst others, the Rule of Procedures revision which gave the possibility of having shadow rapporteurs who are multipliers of the CoR's message, the test access to the trilogue 4-column documents to be able timely to provide pertinent comments and the renewal of our cooperation agreements with the European Parliament and the European Commission.

This Annual Impact Report provides a summary of the work and achievements of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) in 2024 which adopted 4 resolutions and 53 opinions. Moreover, over 3,000 of Europe's LRAs promoted our messages towards the election of the European Parliament and the new European policy cycle via the adopted Mons Summit declaration containing the recommendations of a million politicians elected at local and regional level. Finally, our impact was clearly visible during the 22nd edition of the European Week of Regions and Cities that gathered over 7,000 participants onsite, over 7,000 online via web streaming and 8,000 registrations to 156 sessions.

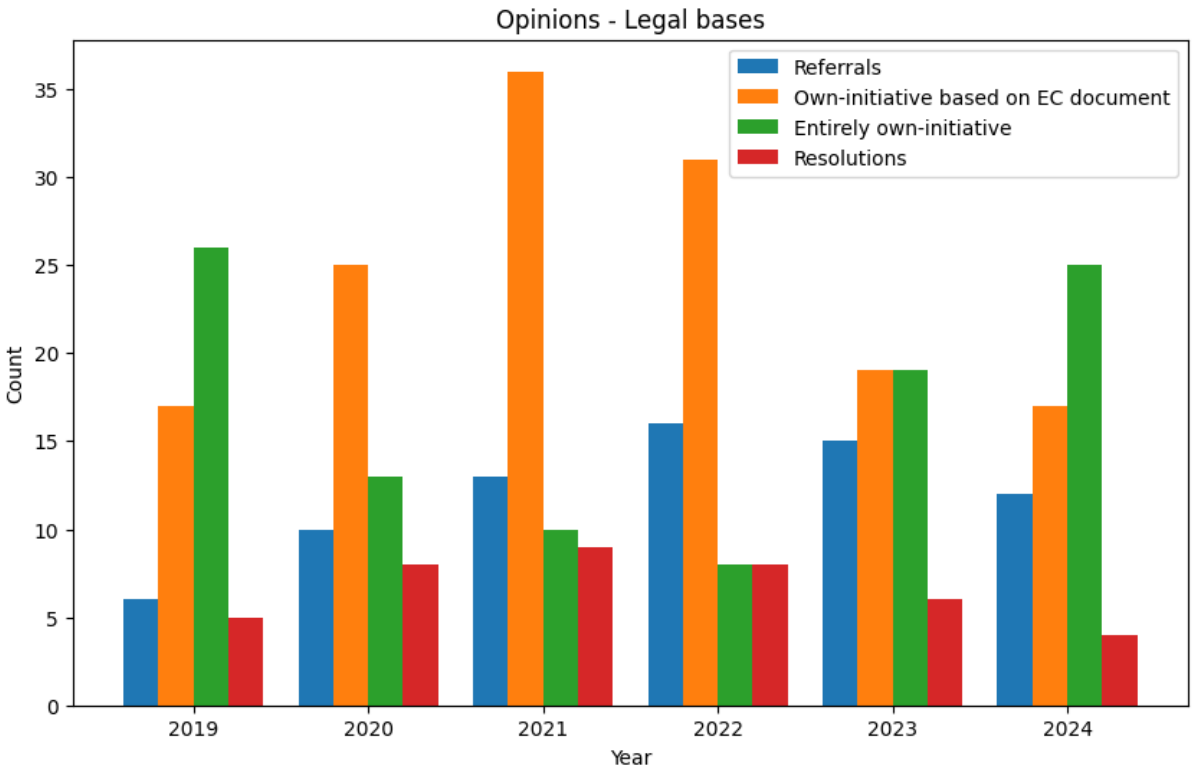
Our achievements in 2024 will inspire us for continuing our efforts to strengthen the impact of the CoR's political work and enhance its outreach by reflecting on a new format of our opinions, which had remained the same for several mandates: the use of new technologies and a more systematic knowledge sharing of our local and regional experiences to build upon the CoR's strengths.

Mr. Francois Decoster, Impact Oversight Coordinator

3. 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 (LRAs) in the EU decision-making process. Its 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 setting of the EU's agenda or tangible changes in the EU's working methods or in the day-to-day lives of citizens brought about through EU legislation or EU actions promoted or initiated by the CoR.

In 2024, the CoR adopted a total of 57 opinions and resolutions. This is slightly less than the average consultative output of the past 3 years (68 in 2021, 63 in 2022 and 59 in 2023), because of the reduced legislative production by the European Commission in its last year of the term of office. It's very similar to the number of the opinions and resolutions adopted in 2019, the year which is comparable to 2024 from the EU inter-institutional cycle perspective. In 2019 54 opinions and resolutions were adopted.



	Opinions - Legal bases			Resolutions	Total
	Referrals	Own-initiative based on EC document	Entirely own-initiative		
2019	6	17	26	5	54
2020	10	25	13	8	56
2021	13	36	10	9	68
2022	16	31	8	8	63
2023	15	19	19	6	59
2024	12	17	24	4	57

This table shows that the number of referrals based on European Commission documents (12) has only slightly decreased in 2024 compared to 2023 and it's the double of 2019. Compared to the previous years, in 2024 the CoR focused very much on entirely own-initiative opinions (not based on European Commission documents) in order to continue contributing to the implementation and further development of EU policies and programmes despite of the reduced legislative production by the European Commission.

The indicators regarding CoR members' interaction with the representatives of other EU institutions, namely the European Parliament and the Council of the EU (and its rotating Presidency), and the European Commission are important, because meetings and exchanges with EU institutions are essential to present and defend CoR's views and opinions.

Therefore, compared to previous years, more detailed figures were collected for 2024. To streamline management and quality follow-up processes, efforts have been made to align the indicators used in this report with the indicators used in CoR administrative planning and reporting processes, namely Annual Operational Programme (AOP), Annual Activity Report (AAR) and follow-up to the EP Discharge report.

Number of high-level representatives of EU institutions in CoR statutory meetings⁶ in 2024			
MEPs	EC representatives	Council representatives	Total
44	23	11	78

In previous years only the statistics on the number of the MEPs present in CoR commission meetings and plenaries (58 in 2021, 45 in 2022, 57 in 2023) were collected and provided in this report. 2024 figures confirm that the EP remains CoR privileged partner.

	Number of CoR members participating in the EU institutions' meetings and events			
	EP committee / inter-group	National Representations to the EU / EU Council	Permanent to the European Council Presidency	Total
2019	13	6	22	41
2020	14	11	15	40
2021	42 ⁷	13	20	75
2022	20	26	46 ⁸	92
2023	18	12	152 ⁹	182
2024	9	11	26	46

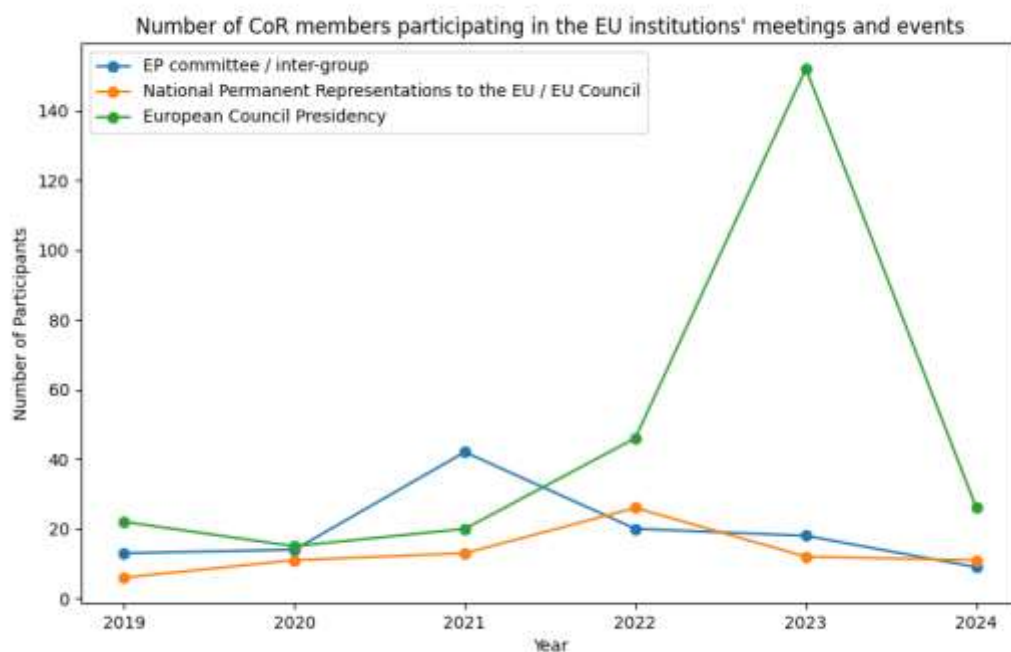
In 2024 the number of the CoR members invited to the meetings and events organised by other EU institutions, namely the European Parliament and the Council of the EU (and its rotating Presidency) remained stable. Data collection method was reviewed to exclude meetings organised by the CoR under European Council Presidency patronage. This was not the case in 2022 and 2023 and such events had disproportionate influence on the end results (see footnotes 9 and 10).

⁶ Plenary Sessions, Bureau meetings and CoR commissions' meeting

⁷ This high number is due to the participation of a large CoR rapporteurs' delegation in AGRI Committee meeting.

⁸ This high increase is due to 22 CoR members having participated in a seminar in Lednice, Czechia, which was part of the activities of the Czech presidency of the Council of the EU.

⁹ This exceptionally high number is due to the fact that the CoR External Bureau meeting in Logrono and well as the CoR ENVE commission's external meeting in Malaga, Spain, were part of the Spanish Presidency events.



Over the years CoR has developed a number of tools to contribute to all phases of the law and policy-making. These Better regulation tools aim at improving the quality of legislation through better impact assessments, evidence-based policymaking, increased transparency and stakeholder involvement, and a circular approach to EU legislation. That is why the number of Territorial Impact Assessments (TIA), Regional Hubs (RegHub) consultations, Subsidiarity Expert Group consultations and assessments, Fit for future opinions (allocated to the CoR members) is also a pertinent performance indicator for the CoR. In 2024, 5 Regional Hubs (RegHub) consultations, 2 Subsidiarity Expert Group consultations and 2 assessments were performed, and 2 Fit for future opinions were drafted by CoR rapporteurs. This year additional data was collected on the use of all existing CoR Better Regulation tools for the drafting of the CoR opinions. The references to Better Regulation tools were included in 7 CoR opinions adopted in 2024.

All in all, these indicators show that the CoR has maintained its crucial role as the voice of the local and regional level at EU level.

This report is structured around the CoR political priorities for the 2020-2025 term of office. In doing so, it indicates progress made with regard to:

- bringing Europe closer to its people
- building resilient local and regional communities
- promoting cohesion as an overall value of the EU.

In line with the Communication Plan and priorities of the 2020-2025 term of office, the outreach and communication activities in 2024 with the greatest potential for political impact in 2025, relate to the Mons Summit, European Week of Regions and Cities, and the EU elections related campaign.

As part of its Annual Strategic Planning Cycle (ASPC, see Section 2 below) the CoR also continues to reinforce its strategic planning and cross-commission cooperation. The CoR Conference of Presidents (CoP) adopted strategic guidance for 2024 with a view to bringing the different activities of the CoR together under its ASPC, in order to ensure consistency and maximise impact. This includes the intensified cooperation between the CoR commissions in cross-cutting areas and in better regulation. In addition, as part of the ASPC a joint session of the CoP and the CoR commission chairs in October 2024 prepared the change of term of office, building on the challenges and achievements and

experience with cross-cutting work. The CoP's annual evaluation of progress towards the CoR's priorities with the Commission Chairs allowed for a concerted approach towards their implementation and impact, as reflected in the Report on the implementation of the CoR political priorities.

Furthermore, in 2024 the CoR successfully completed negotiations strengthening its bilateral [inter-institutional agreements](#) with the European Commission and the European Parliament. These foresee new avenues for political and administrative cooperation in numerous areas, from policy work throughout the entirety of the policy making cycle to better-regulation, communication or strengthening partnership in the run-up to elections, among others. Furthermore, further to an exchange of views with the Council Secretary General, there was an exchange of letters developing forms of improved cooperation. Work with the Belgian and Hungarian Presidencies during 2024 led to the adoption of opinions on the referrals received, to CoR participation in a restricted number of Working Parties and informal meetings, and to cooperation on other meetings and events.

4. The CoR's Annual Strategic Planning Cycle (ASPC)

Based on the approach to strategic planning agreed by the Conference of Presidents in December 2020, the CoR continued implementing the reinforced ASPC in 2024. This planning cycle seeks to improve the coherence and impact of the CoR's political work in implementing the 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 reacts to their proposed initiatives.



This impact-focused strategy enables the CoR to contribute to key annual milestones of the other EU institutions.

Based on the new cooperation agreement with the European Commission, each year the CoR adopts a resolution towards the European Commission's work programme. These resolutions are based on input from the CoR's six thematic commissions and have thus far also built on contributions from the consultation with regional parliaments and assemblies with legislative powers, in cooperation with the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE). Under the political guidance of the Conference of Presidents, the CoR's annual strategic planning is implemented through the strategic guidelines adopted each year in November, which provide the thematic orientation for the CoR's political work. The guidelines, which are debated with the CoR commission chairs, and the resolutions inform the adoption of the work programmes of the CoR's thematic commissions each year. Since 2020, the ASPC also builds on the CoR's EU Annual Report on the State of Regions and Cities.

In 2024, the ASPC was adjusted in light of the transition in the institutional terms of office. In this context, the focus of the ASPC was placed on LRAs' need to define their key objectives and targets in the EU policy process in the medium and long-term. The CoR contributed to the European Elections and the

new institutional priorities via the mobilization actions for citizens and by feeding the institutional and political debates. The Mons Summit Declaration adopted on 19 March outlines LRAs' priorities for a stronger, fairer and more resilient future of Europe and was shared with all EU leaders. It influenced the content of the EU Strategic Agenda, adopted by the European Council in June, and the European Commission's political guidelines, presented in July. In October, the 2024 Annual Report on the State of Regions and Cities was issued with a resolution adopted by the Plenary drawing on these recommendations and responding to the European Commission's Political Guidelines, with a view to the new legislative term and the 2025 European Commission work programme. With the new Commission in place, and in light of the new cooperation agreement, it is expected that the European Commission President will address the CoR on its priorities, and joint cooperation sought on the identification of areas of strengthened cooperation and political follow-up to CoR recommendations.

In addition to the medium-term dimension of the Annual Strategic Planning Cycle, which focuses on the CoR's five-year priorities, in the longer-term it also seeks to enhance the CoR's capacity for strategic foresight, both internally and in the context of the ongoing interinstitutional work on foresight, including through the CoR's cooperation in the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS) network and contributing to the preparation of the ESPAS Global Trends Report. In this context the CoR continued to mainstream foresight in its policy work. It initiated and supported building a network of regions and cities with experience in foresight to share good practices at subnational level. This is evidenced in 2024 by a workshop on strategic foresight for regions and cities, by a group of seven European regions successfully applying for an Interreg Europe project on foresight, by a pilot foresight exercise for the members of the CoR's CIVEX Commission in cooperation with the Commission's Joint Research Centre, and through the inclusion of a foresight dimension in all relevant externally commissioned studies.

The dedicated administrative Task Force 1 on strategic planning supports a strategic planning process in the CoR with a particular focus on cross-cutting issues and the implementation of political priorities. It encourages cross-service teamwork between the various directorates and the political groups, and ensures effective information flow, including on interinstitutional developments. It contributes to improved coordination of the work of the CoP, the Bureau, the CoR commissions and the plenary assembly.

5. Impact report with respect to the Committee's three political priorities for the 2020-2025 term of office

5.1 Bringing Europe closer to its people

5.1.1 Democracy and the EU elections

Main impact:

- Strong contribution to the implementation of the CoR roadmap on EU elections, through the Summit, the organization of relevant debates in Plenary and commissions as well as putting together on the CoR website relevant materials on [countering disinformation](#).
- In [response](#) to the CoR opinion on the *Defence of Democracy*, the European Commission recognised the need to further connect the pan-European citizen engagement activities with the local level. In line with the CoR's recommendation, the Commission committed to organising a session of the [European cooperation network on elections](#) dedicated to local and regional elections.
- The fourth edition of the Mayor Paweł Adamowicz Award continues to promote the contribution of stakeholders at local and regional level in the fight against intolerance, radicalisation, hate speech, oppression and xenophobia. For the first time the Chair of the European Parliament's LIBE commission, M. Zarzalejos at the European Parliament was part of the jury who will meet in December 2024.

Significant efforts have continued to be invested in delivering on the main political objective of the CoR for the period 2020-2025: [Bringing Europe closer to people](#), stemming from the conviction that local and regional good governance entails the respect of democracy, rule of law, and fundamental rights and freedoms. These principles further gained in importance in view of the European elections held in June 2024. The CIVEX commission, in cooperation with other relevant CoR stakeholders, strongly delivered on the CoR [roadmap on EU elections](#), as adopted in May 2023 by the CoR Bureau with a twofold objective: to mobilise LRAs and citizens on the one hand, and on the other to contribute to the political and institutional debates, both before and after the elections.

The CoR work on democracy and the 2024 European elections has been presented and political messages conveyed at relevant debates and other events, organised at EU, national and local level including:

- The 10th European Summit of Regions and Cities in Mons (Belgium), which gathered over 3,500 local and regional leaders in person from across Europe and beyond (with 4000 following online) to shape the agenda for Europe's future, restating their power to deliver and tackle challenges at local level. Dedicated discussions were organized, including [Capacity lab EU elections 2024](#) and [Agora EU elections 2024](#);
- Relevant debates in meetings of the CIVEX commission, including on the *Defence of Democracy*¹⁰ opinion (February 2024); on Communicating Europe to citizens and countering disinformation in the context of the 2024 European elections (April 2024); and on the Outcome of the 2024 European elections: shaping the new legislative term at its external meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania (July 2024);
- Participation of the chair of the CIVEX commission, Patrick Molinoz in the Strong Cities network workshop on countering hate crimes held in May in Strasbourg, France;

¹⁰ CIVEX-VII/030 – Defence of Democracy – rapporteur : József KÓBOR, (HU/EA) - COR-2024-00087-00-00-AC-TRA COR-2024-04253-10-00-NB-REF (EN) 17/62

- Participation of the chair of the CIVEX commission in the ALDA Summer school on Local Democracy, held in August in Thiene, Italy;
- Participation in the event of the International Democracy Day in September 2024, organised by the European Endowment for Democracy, European Partnership for Democracy, European Network of Political Foundations, International IDEA and Carnegie Europe, which was opened jointly on the first day by the chair of the CIVEX commission, Patrick Molinoz (FR/PES), and the European Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography Dubravka Šuica, and on the second day by the CoR First Vice-President Apostolos Tzitzikostas;
- Contribution to the Inter-institutional Kick-Off Event for the European Cybersecurity Month in October 2024, through participation of the CIVEX chair in the discussion on the Cybersecurity awareness for regional and local public administration entities.

In [response](#) to the CoR opinion on the *Defence of Democracy*, the European Commission recognised the need to further connect the pan-European citizen engagement activities with the local level. In line with the CoR's recommendation, the Commission committed to organising a session of the [European cooperation network on elections](#) dedicated to local and regional elections. The Commission also referred to the CoR as an EC partner in its five-year political programme, with the joint common project of the EU Local Councillors network (EULC), which aims to increase citizens' ownership of the European project thanks to the involvement of their locally elected politicians.

The CIVEX commission has continued to pursue enhanced synergies with partner institutions in the area of protecting democratic rights and freedoms, such as the [Congress of Local and Regional Authorities](#), and established links with other relevant partners in the area of resilience of democratic processes, such as the [Strong Cities Network](#). Fourth edition of the [Mayor Paweł Adamowicz Award](#) continued to promote the contribution of actors at local and regional level in the fight against intolerance, radicalisation, hate speech, oppression and xenophobia.

Furthermore, the CoR concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA) in April, and a related Action Plan was adopted by the CoR CIVEX commission in July 2024, setting the course for cooperation on the mutual priorities of the promotion of local representative and participative democracy and good governance, the promotion of multilevel governance, active subsidiarity and better law-making, and the promotion of values on which the European Union is founded.

5.1.2 Multiannual Financial Framework

Main impact:

- Invitation of the rapporteur of the opinion *EU budget and place-based policies – proposals for new design and delivery mechanisms*¹¹ to the first hearing organised by the EP BUDG committee for the EP's own-initiative report on the MFF 'A revamped long-term budget for the EU in a changing world'¹²;
- Commitment from European Parliament rapporteurs on the post-2027 MFF, Siegfried Mureşan and Carla Tavares, to work with the CoR for a place-based and ambitious future EU Budget;
- Stronger provision in the revised cooperation agreements with European Parliament and Commission on cooperation on Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA);
- Need to take account of territorial impacts fully addressed in the final report of the Group of High-Level Specialists on the Future of Cohesion Policy and partly reflected in both Letta and Draghi reports.

The own-initiative opinion *EU budget and place-based policies: proposals for new design and delivery mechanisms in the MFF post-2027* makes concrete policy recommendations to ensure that the 'do no harm to cohesion' principle becomes operational under the next MFF post-2027. In the context of work on this opinion, the rapporteur was invited to the first hearing organised by EP-BUDG in October 2024 to feed the EP's own-initiative report on the MFF (for adoption in Spring 2025), ahead of the presentation of the European Commission's proposals in July 2025. The CoR rapporteur relayed the call included in the draft opinion for '*enhanced collaboration with EP to make the negotiations more democratic*'. Political awareness is growing within the EP to ensure that territorial disparities within the EU need to be addressed and that this cannot be left to cohesion policy alone.

During 2024, the CoR continued promoting Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) with other European Institutions and organisations and the revised cooperation agreements with the European Commission and Parliament include stronger provisions on cooperation in this regard. In EPSCO Council conclusions adopted in December, the work of the CoR on TIA was recognised again.¹³ The CoR is also contributing to related actions in the context of the European Urban Initiative (EUI) and with Member States in view of further enhancement and promotion of TIA.

5.1.3 Localising Sustainable Development Goals

Main impact:

- Agreement by Eurostat to integrate a chapter on regional data in the next EU SDGs monitoring report for the European Semester;
- Cooperation with European Commission services to improve SDGs financing for cities and regions, notably via the Technical Support Instrument;

¹¹ COTER-VII/041 - EU budget and place-based policies: proposals for new design and delivery mechanisms in the MFF post-2027 – rapporteur: Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA). COR-2024-02161-00-01-AC-TRA

¹² Co-rapporteurs S. Muresan (RO, EPP) and C. Tavares (PT, S&D) – INI report to be adopted in May 2025 (tbc) ahead of the presentation of the European Commission's proposals in July 2025.

¹³ See Draft Council conclusions of 22 November 2024: "*impact assessments with territorial aspects, such as those regularly conducted by the European Committee of the Regions, are important for analysing and mitigating the potential asymmetric effects of individual EU measures across the various EU territories*".

- Regular interventions and interaction with the Council Working Party on the Agenda 2030, with recognition in Council Conclusions of the CoR's key contribution to SDGs implementation and call for a structured dialogue with the CoR and regions and cities;
- Take up of "SDGs localisation" as a topic of key interest by the Joint Research Centre and the European Parliament through the JRC 2030 CATALYSTS project, working with up to 20 regions on SDGs implementation and monitoring.

In 2024, the CoR continued to strengthen its leading role on SDGs in the EU, following up on its two opinions on SDGs¹⁴, and a CoR resolution on the SDGs¹⁵. Through these 2 opinions and resolution, the CoR guided the European Commission with key recommendations to implement the SDGs by 2030 and maximise the key contribution of local and regional authorities. In its first opinion, the CoR focused on the integration of LRAs in an EU SDGs multi-level governance, through a structured multi-stakeholders' dialogue, and the need for financing. The second opinion completed these recommendations explaining the importance of monitoring at regional level and showing the extent of SDGs localisation in the EU.

Following the presentation of the EU Voluntary Review in 2023 at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum with intense cooperation between the CoR, the European Commission and the Council, the risk was that all the focus on SDGs implementation would fade away. The CoR focused on maintaining a regular dialogue with the European Commission and decided to organise a dialogue in June 2024 with European Commission services dealing with SDGs on a CoR priority topic: financing. An exchange with the EC Secretariat General, DG REFORM, DG REGIO, and the EIB, helped identify bottlenecks and possible improvements. This gave way to a closer cooperation with DG REFORM to better promote one of their financing tools to regions and cities, the Technical Support Instrument, as well as an EIB lending tool. Vice-President Markkula and the CoR ECON commission Member Jaromir Beranek represented the CoR and helped maintain the close cooperation we had forged with the EC during the Voluntary Review drafting process.

Another priority of the CoR listed within its opinions was the monitoring of SDGs, which is exclusively analysed at national level by Eurostat and is the basis for recommendations of the European Commission for reforms and investment in Member States via the European Semester. The European Semester is a pivotal mechanism as it integrates SDGs and is also closely linked to the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility. The CoR President participated in a high-level conference on SDGs in June 2024 co-organised by Commissioner for Economy Gentiloni and the Belgian Presidency of the Council. He participated in a panel discussion with Eurostat Director General, MEP Petros Kokkalis, and the President of the European Youth Forum. They agreed that monitoring should be done at a more granular level for EU policies to be more targeted. This led to further exchanges with Eurostat and JRC services and the agreement that for the next EU SDGs monitoring report in 2025, within the framework of the European Semester, there will be a chapter on regional data.

Moreover, the CoR stepped up its cooperation with the European Parliament. The EP took onboard its suggestions on SDGs localisation and governance in its latest report in 2023. This started a more structured cooperation with one of the co-rapporteurs, Petros Kokkalis who became convinced of the key impact of SDGs localisation. This in turn led to the financing of the EP of a project on regional SDGs monitoring, which the CoR has been calling for in all its opinions. The JRC has been tasked with carrying this pilot project: REGIONS2030. Within this cooperation between the EP, CoR and JRC, we co-organised two workshops during the European Week of Regions and Cities (2023 and 2024), the kick-off meeting, and final event. Based on its results, which were taken on board in the relevant Council

14 ECON-VII/014 – Delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 – Rapporteur: Ricardo RIO (PT/EPP) COR-2021-00103-00-00-AC-TRA

ECON-VII/028 – Progress in the implementation of SDGs – Rapporteur: Ricardo RIO (PT/EPP) COR-2022-04274-00-00-AC-TRA

15 RESOL-VII/030 - SDGs in EU regions and cities following the EU Voluntary Review and 2023 UN discussions. COR-2023-03638-00-00-RES-TRA

Conclusions, thanks to the CoR input, the European Parliament decided to finance a follow-up project of the JRC: 2030 CATALYSTS, involving up to 20 regions, with the support of the CoR.

The JRC and the CoR are now strong partners promoting SDGs' localisation to EU decision-makers and regions. The CoR regularly quotes the work of the JRC to be fully recognised in the Council Conclusions issued end of 2024, giving a mandate to the JRC to continue its work. The JRC will also issue an SDGs monitoring report at regional level, fully in line with CoR requests.

In parallel the CoR has forged a strong cooperation with the Council Working Party and its delegates. It continued its exchanges with the Spanish delegate once the Spanish Presidency ended, ensuring a regional perspective in the Council work. It was invited by the Belgian Presidency to the high-level SDGs conference in June 2024, and it has exchanged several times with the Hungarian Presidency in view of the Council Conclusions on SDGs policy coherence expected at the end of 2024. It was also invited to speak and exchange with national delegates at a Council Working Party meeting in October 2024 and was represented by CoR Vice-President Markku Markkula and CIVEX Chair Patrick Molinoz.

In addition, the CoR was invited to work within the Council Voluntary Taskforce on policy coherence for sustainable development, led by the Slovak delegation, and whose recommendations were integrated within the Council Conclusions. All CoR positions, including key recommendations on SDGs multi-level governance, are integrated in the Council's work and requests to the European Commission, notably the call to reinstate a multi-stakeholders dialogue on SDGs, with the support of the CoR and the EESC; and the need for all EU institutions, including the CoR, to better cooperate on SDGs. These [Council Conclusions](#) published on 17 December also recognise the key contribution of SDGs localisation and refer namely and several times to the CoR as well as regions and cities.

5.1.4 Better regulation

Main impact:

- New cooperation agreements with the European Commission and with the European Parliament signed by the CoR¹⁶ both include stronger references to the cooperation on better regulation and subsidiarity, potentially opening new avenues for action.
- The 11th Subsidiarity Conference, a biennial event fostering meaningful exchanges between institutions and stakeholders, involved in active subsidiarity and better regulation activities, took place in October 2024, a crucial moment at the outset of the new institutional term. The discussions particularly focused on the European Commission's intentions regarding the future MFF and its possible recentralisation. Concerns were expressed about the risks associated with increased simplification, which would be a misinterpretation of active subsidiarity.

Building on the mandate of ensuring synergies and seeking coherence across the range of CoR activities in the field of better regulation that the Bureau assigned to Better Regulation and Active Subsidiarity Steering Group (BRASS-G), the group ensured oversight and coordination to the many activities.

The BRASS-G adopted recommendations on [Developing and enhancing the CoR's policy and toolbox on better regulation](#), outlining proposals to streamline the CoR's governance in relation to better regulation and to strengthen the strategic guidelines and coordination in this area¹⁷. The recommendations were submitted to the CoR Bureau in November, with a view to debate the legacy of the current CoR term of office and guidelines for the 2025-2030 one.

¹⁶ Protocol on cooperation between the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions, signed on 20 March 2024; Cooperation agreement between the European Parliament and the European Committee of the Regions, signed on 14 May 2024.

¹⁷ [COR-2024-03580-00-00-TCD-EDI](#)

The CoR opinion on [Active subsidiarity: a fundamental principle of the EU Better regulation agenda](#)¹⁸, adopted in June, has emphasized the importance of active subsidiarity in the EU's Better Regulation agenda. The opinion advocates for greater involvement of regional and local authorities in all phases of the European legislative process and stresses the need for systematic use of better regulation tools in all phases of the decision-making process. Highlighting the CoR's commitment to making EU legislation more efficient, transparent, and responsive to local needs by ensuring that EU policies are closer to the needs of European citizens, the opinion puts forward proposals concerning all the components of the CoR better regulation toolbox (strategic foresight, subsidiarity assessment, territorial impact assessment, rural proofing, participation in the Fit 4 Future Platform and RegHub network).

The CoR contributed to the works of the Fit4 Future Platform of the European Commission with two opinions on the (1) [Evaluation of the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the Just Transition Fund](#)¹⁹ and on the (2) [Evaluation of the European Social Fund Plus \(ESF+\)](#)²⁰ both adopted in October 2024. The preparation of the opinion involved the CoR network of Regional Hubs (RegHub) through dedicated consultations.

The study "[Charting the course to better EU law-making: optimisation of EU Treaties through inter-institutional cooperation with the European Committee of the Regions](#)"²¹, published in September, aims to support and accompany the CoR work on better regulation. It analyses existing EU and CoR instruments and processes on better regulation and how they interact with each other. It also explores the CoR's options to improve existing tools and setting new ones up, both within the current Treaty framework and with a view to potential Treaty amendments.

The [11th Subsidiarity Conference](#) took place in Warsaw (Poland) in October 2024. A biennial event fostering meaningful exchanges between institutions and stakeholders involved in active subsidiarity and better regulation activities, this year conference, happening in a crucial moment at the outset of the new institutional term, was structured around two themes, '*Active subsidiarity: a new approach for the new institutional cycle*' and '*Active subsidiarity and European added value in policy making*'. The discussions particularly focused on the European Commission's intentions regarding the future MFF and its possible recentralisation. Concerns were expressed about the risks associated with increased simplification, which would be a misinterpretation of active subsidiarity. The conclusions of this Conference, underpinned by the opinion on *Active subsidiarity: a fundamental principle in the EU better regulation agenda* and the BRASS-G recommendations mentioned above, provide a good starting point to plan and implement better regulation activities in the next term of office, with the primary aim to improve their coordination and impact, as well as the interinstitutional cooperation.

¹⁸ [CIVEX-VII/029 – Active subsidiarity: a fundamental principle of the EU better regulation agenda](#) – rapporteur: Mark SPEICH, (DE/EPP) - COR-2023-05624-00-00-AC-TRA

¹⁹ Fit for Future Platform's opinion on the – [Evaluation of the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the Just Transition Fund](#) – rapporteur: Mark SPEICH, (DE/EPP)

²⁰ Fit for Future Platform's opinion on the – [Evaluation of the European Social Fund Plus \(ESF+\)](#) – rapporteur: Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES)

²¹ [Charting the course to better EU law-making - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)

5.1.5 From the European Year of Skills to a Union of Skills: Cities and Regions Leading the Way

Main impact:

- The CoR has had a significant impact on supporting regional skills development during the European Year of Skills (EYS), with local and regional authorities (LRAs) leading these efforts at grassroots level with a view to ensuring that skills policies are localised so they can respond to local and regional needs. Additionally, it has expanded its outreach by actively cooperating with EU institutions and key stakeholders, enhancing its influence across all levels of government.
- The European Commission's DG EMPL report on the EYS acknowledges the CoR's significant contributions, mentioning the CoR opinions and resolutions on skills policies, while highlighting the CoR's work on skills and the vital role of LRAs in driving the success of the European Skills Agenda.

The CoR was heavily involved in shaping the policy landscape during the EYS, which began in May 2023 and concluded in 2024. Throughout this period, the CoR significantly advanced the EU's Skills Agenda, focusing on upskilling, reskilling and ensuring that LRAs were central to addressing labour market needs. The CoR's involvement in the EYS was highlighted by the adoption of two important resolutions that have reinforced the importance of skills and employment at the local and regional level across the EU:

- The CoR's Resolution on the *European Year of Skills*²² emphasised the critical role of LRAs in advancing upskilling and reskilling efforts, particularly for the green and digital transitions. It called for territorial approaches tailored to regional needs, aligning education and training with labour market demands, and highlighted mentorship, lifelong learning and cross-sector cooperation as key to ensuring inclusive growth and resilience across the EU.
- The Resolution on *Harnessing Talent in European Regions*²³ focused on regions facing demographic and economic challenges, emphasising the need to create attractive living and working conditions to retain and attract skilled workers.

In support of these efforts, the CoR adopted several key opinions throughout the year. The opinion *Mentoring: A Powerful and Meaningful Tool for the Europe of Tomorrow*²⁴ advocated mentoring as an effective tool to enhance people's skills, while fostering social inclusion and employment, particularly for marginalised groups. The opinion on *Skills and Talent Mobility*²⁵ emphasised the importance of labour and VET mobility, advocating the free movement of skilled professionals to promote talent exchange, innovation and economic growth. After the adoption of the *Skills and Talent Mobility* opinion, former MEP and French politician Jean Arthuis, who attended the CoR SEDEC commission meeting, highlighted the significance of this opinion on the ground.

On the international stage, the CoR rapporteurs presented the findings of these opinions at the OECD LEED meetings, contributing to global skills policy discussions and reasserting the CoR's contribution to advancing the European Skills Agenda. Moreover, the CoR was invited to expert groups organised by CEDEFOP and other stakeholders, where key topics such as skills intelligence were discussed, reinforcing the CoR's broader skills agenda and supporting the local and regional perspective.

In 2024, the CoR published the study on [The role of local and regional authorities in fostering regional partnerships for up and reskilling within the framework of the Pact for Skills](#), which contributed to better

²² RESOL-VII-026 – Resolution on the *European Year of Skills 2023* – COR-2022-05216-00-00-RES-TRA.

²³ RESOL-VII/028 – Resolution on *Harnessing Talent in Europe's Regions* – COR-2023-00574-00-00-RES-TRA.

²⁴ SEDEC-VII/038 – *Mentoring: a powerful and meaningful tool for the Europe of tomorrow* – rapporteur: Anne Rudisuhli (FR/Renew Europe) – COR-2023-01537-00-00-AC-TRA.

²⁵ SEDEC-VII/046 – *Skills and talent mobility* – rapporteur: François Decoster (FR/Renew Europe) – COR-2023-05840-00-01-AC-TRA.

understanding of the current state of the Pact for Skills within the EU and providing a roadmap for future improvements. The findings of the report have raised awareness among decision-makers, educational institutions and relevant stakeholders about the role that LRAs play in shaping Europe's narrative on skills. It has been republished online and has garnered significant interest from a diverse range of stakeholders, further amplifying its impact.

Throughout the European Year of Skills, CoR members actively engaged in discussions and events to promote skills development, particularly in the context of the digital and green transitions. The CoR members participated in more than 80 skills policy related events during the EYS.

One of the major highlights was the CoR's closing event of the EYS in May 2024, co-organised with the European Commission's DG EMPL, *Investing in Skills in Europe's Regions and Cities*. This event brought together key stakeholders to review the achievements of the EYS and outline future steps. A joint Commission-CoR report²⁶ was published after the event, outlining the key takeaways, outcomes and recommendations. Additionally, an op-ed authored jointly by the CoR SEDEC commission chair and the former chair of the European Parliament's EMPL Committee²⁷ was published as a follow-up of the CoR's closing event to highlight its importance for skills policies at the local and regional level and reaffirm the commitment to further cooperation between LRAs and EU institutions.

Moreover, the European Commission's DG EMPL report on the EYS, recognises the CoR's contributions during the year and highlights the crucial role of LRAs in the success of the EYS. This report will serve as a foundation for continued cooperation with the CoR, ensuring that regional perspectives remain central to the EU's evolving skills agenda.

5.1.6 Outreach and communication activities

In line with the Communication Plan and priorities of the 2020-2025 term of office, the outreach and communication activities in 2024 with the greatest potential for political impact in 2025, relate to:

- The European Week of Regions and Cities ;
- the Mons Summit;
- the EU elections related campaign.

5.1.6.1 The European Week of Regions and Cities

Main impact:

- The 22nd edition of the European Week of Regions and Cities was an excellent celebration and showcase for Cohesion Policy, with over 7000 participants onsite, over 7000 online via web streaming and 8000 registrations to 156 sessions. Over 572000 views on social media were registered for the live stream of high-level sessions, with 1 198 views for the Annual Address on the State of Regions and Cities, by the CoR President Vasco Alves Cordeiro (#SOTEU local) . 585 elected representatives participated, including Members, YEPs and EU Councillors and over 500 speakers from all over Europe and beyond.
- The CoR President's messages set the tone of the #EURegionsWeek, positioning the CoR as a central actor in the debate and ensuring exceptional media coverage across Europe. Through a close cooperation across directorates and services and media actions, the CoR successfully opened a European debate on the centralization of the MFF and Cohesion Policy after 2027, with an unprecedented quality media coverage across Europe (1,731 media mentions on the #EURegionsWeek, representing an increase of 50.39% over last year's final result).

²⁶ [cor-2024-02811-00-00-rs-ref-en.pdf](#)

²⁷ <https://cor.europa.eu/en/plenaries-events/investing-skills-europes-regions-and-cities#toc-documents>

- The CoR Network of European Regional and Local Councillors announced its merger with the European Commission's 'Building Europe with Local Councillors' project, representing the biggest Network of European Local Councillors across Europe. This marked an unprecedented step forward for the Committee and the first time the CoR is directly mentioned in the EC's five-year political programme as an EC partner.
- The #EURegionsWeek is the most important event on social media for the CoR. A yearlong both organic and paid social media campaign for #EURegionsWeek promoting video stories saw a **16.5% increase** in engagement, **300% increase** in engagement with CoR related keywords, **430% increase** with #CoRplenary, **gaining 1 300 new followers** across all channels in a week. The paid campaign saw over 1.5 million impressions.

The #EURegionsWeek provided an impactful platform to continue to mobilise all regions, cities, and other stakeholders around the Cohesion Alliance. The CoR succeeded to open a broad debate at European level and attract media attention on the possible centralisation of the MFF and on the future of Cohesion Policy after 2027, which is now in full swing.

The President's annual address on the State of Regions and Cities in Europe was delivered in front of a full hemicycle at the European Parliament, during the Opening session, the most successful session with over 1000 participants and 1647 online views (+ 57000 views on Facebook, 1409 views on LinkedIn, 476 views on EbS).

Moreover, the amount of views of web stream and recordings doubled compared to the 2023 edition with 6000 people connected during the week alone. It provided full visibility to promote the main outcomes of the 2024 edition of the EU annual report on the State of Regions and Cities, registering a high number of downloads and nearly a 500% increase in #SOTEUlocal engagement over last year's final result. The report's social media launch resulted in a double increase in organic engagement compared to the previous year, and its feature in POLITICO brought significant reach into the EU institutions.

The CoR networks of Young Elected Politicians and EU Councillors were closely associated and benefitted from common sessions where they had the opportunity to meet the political groups and network. 113 members of the YEP programme participated in the #EURegionsWeek, benefiting from dedicated sessions like meeting the CoR President and a "Social Media Masterclass" session with expert speakers from the EP and EC and launching of a mobile journalism campaign with YEPs by the CoR.

The media coverage continued after the #EURegionsWeek, with the 11th subsidiarity conference on 25/10 in Warsaw, the opinion on a renewed Cohesion policy post 2027 that leaves no one behind²⁸ and the opinion on EU budget and place-based policies²⁹ adopted in the November Plenary. It will continue with the constitutive Plenary and the next #EURegionsWeek. As a novelty this year, the former side events were replaced by the "EURegionsWeek close to you" sessions (50 in 8 EU countries, Ukraine, and Serbia) taking place from 7 October until 28 November 2024.

²⁸ COTER-VII/040 - A renewed Cohesion Policy post 2027 that leaves no one behind - CoR responses to the 9th Cohesion Report and the Report of the Group of High-Level Specialists on the Future of Cohesion Policy - co-rapporteurs: Vasco Alves Cordeiro (PT/PES) and Emil Boc (RO/EPP). - COR-2024-01799-00-01-AC-TRA-EN

²⁹ COTER-VII/041 - EU budget and place-based policies: proposals for new design and delivery mechanisms in the MFF post-2027 – rapporteur: Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA). COR-2024-02161-00-01-AC-TRA

5.1.6.2 The Mons Summit

Main impact:

- Over 3500 of Europe's LRAs promoted their message towards the elections and new European policy cycle via the adopted Summit [declaration](#) containing the recommendations of a million politicians elected at local and regional level to bring Europe closer to its citizens. The declaration was directly handed to the Prime Minister of Belgium, Alexander De Croo, holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union, and shared with all 27 EU leaders and Presidents of EU institutions. It influenced the content of the EU Strategic Agenda, adopted by the European Council in June, and the Political Guidelines of the European Commission, presented in July.
- More than 3600 registered participants representing more than 50 countries and all five continents and extending the voices beyond the borders of the EU and many more online, with around 150.000 page views from 122.000 unique visitors to the dedicated summit website. 1022 elected representatives of which 100 EU Councillors and BELC members, 83 YEPs participated at the Summit. More than 4.000 people followed the live streams of the summit during the two days of the events alone.
- Among the almost 800 media mentions, 60 interviews with CoR members were directly facilitated by the press and audiovisual teams, resulting in European, national, and local media broadly covering the Summit works. Sources included POLITICO, Agence Europe, Spain's RTVE, El Diario, Italy's Il Sole 24 Ore, Corriere della Sera, Belgium's RTL Info, Le Soir, France's Régions Magazine, Portugal's Expresso, Público, Austria's APA-OTS, Der Standard, Germany's SWR, Bayerischer Rundfunk, Poland's PAP, Wirtualny Nowy Przemyśl, and Ukrainian RBC and Vita TV, among others.
- Since 28 November 2023, the Summit was covered on all social media channels and the LiveBlog, with 2 683 posts mentioning the Summit hashtags and keywords and 2 251 mentions of the CoR, resulting in the highest social media results of the CoR. The CoR institutional channels posted 252 posts on all the social media accounts generating 8 628 engagements. Paid social media campaigns in 6 languages generated over 44 190 link clicks, with the specific Mons Declaration campaign generating over 44 800 link clicks towards the Declaration page.

The 10th European Summit of Regions and Cities was held on 18 and 19 March 2024 in Mons and its deliverables can be characterised as significant and sustainable. It was organised jointly by the CoR and the Walloon Region with a view to playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of the EU in the framework of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, ahead of the European elections, and kicking off the 30th anniversary celebrations of the CoR.

The Summit was designed to be a platform for action and political innovation and showed that regions and cities are the beating heart of Europe. Its programme featured a high-level debate with lead candidates for European elections and reinforced European democratic values with the Mayor Pawel Adamowicz Award.

The Mons Summit engaged the whole Committee and contributed to increase more than 1/3 to the media mentions in the first half of 2024, compared to last year. The numbers show the success in terms of mobilisation, global ambition and engagement with elected representatives including Members, YEPs, EU (and BELC) Councillors and beyond. The communication results also show a successful Summit in terms of media, social media, and other digital outreach.

The CoR Summit coincided with the 30th anniversary of the first CoR plenary session, with the prime focus on the future of cohesion policy and a joint call to EU leaders to renew the policy that leaves no one behind. Participants from all corners of the Union and from the world, mayors of cities and municipalities, presidents of parliaments and local and regional governments, representatives of

territorial associations, political families, youth organisations and NGOs came together to discuss and reflect on visions for our communities, our future.

The Summit was also the occasion to strengthen the CoR international relations, with delegations coming from the United States, Brazil, Canada, and participants from all continents.

The exceptional number of high-level speakers, the quality of the sessions, and the innovative and sustainable approach to the organisation led to the most successful and largest Summit ever organised by the CoR, which contributed to increase its political profile in the European Union and beyond.

5.1.6.3 The EU elections related campaign

Main impact:

- The European elections 2024 were an important political focus for the CoR, with a Bureau roadmap being adopted already in May 2023, and a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Parliament signed on February 2024. The CoR provided intensive support to the European Parliament to mobilise citizens to vote in the European Elections 2024 through a wide array of activities, bringing their contribution to the political and institutional debates, before and after the elections,
- The CoR fully mobilized its Members and networks in the European elections 2024 campaign in its flagship activities, such as the Summit of Regions and Cities, as well as the dedicated activities on the ground throughout the EU, such as the EU Local Dialogues.
- Intense communication activities on the European elections 2024 were rolled out in press, social media and through newly developed resources on the CoR webpage to engage a high number of citizens and their representatives. The CoR press team joined forces with the EP press unit to organise press trips and disseminate information to media professionals. These communication activities contributed to strengthening the outreach to citizens.
- The European elections obtained the highest voter turnout in 30 years and the CoR played its part through intensified communication support and awareness raising to its networks with its 329 members and 329 alternates from all Member States, with many European politicians having roots in the local and regional level.

The CoR and its members have been uniquely positioned to reach out to the citizens. Since the beginning of its campaign on the 2024 European Elections, the CoR members, Political Groups and networks have all played an important role in mobilizing citizens to vote.

The CoR gave its full political and operational support to the European Parliament by adopting a Bureau roadmap on the European elections 2024 in May 2023, as well as by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the European Parliament in February 2024.

The European elections 2024 were a focal point in all CoR flagship events, including the 2023 European Week of Regions and Cities and EuroPCom, as well as the 2024 European Summit of Regions and Cities. Furthermore, Members and partners alike were engaged in a series of debates held in Plenary sessions and CoR commission meetings throughout the first half of 2024.

As the level of government closest to the citizens, CoR members organised EU Local Dialogues on the road towards the 2024 European Elections, directly engaging citizens and their representatives. Through 15 EU Local Dialogues on European Elections, organised since January 2024, CoR members reached thousands of citizens and engaged 12 MEPs and 3 European Parliament Liaison Offices (EPLO).

The CoR also mobilised the European Network of Regional and Local Councillors, counting more than 3 000 members. The network was fully engaged in activities such as the “Light your monument” initiative and ensured that the importance of the 2024 European Elections reach citizens who live far from the capital cities.

The CoR network of more than 750 Young Elected Politicians (YEP) was also committed to promoting the 2024 European Elections. From dedicated sessions on Youth and Democracy in milestone events, to monthly updates on together.eu and systematic promotion of EP materials, the YEPs were an integral part of the CoR’s campaign on the elections.

Following a capacity building programme on citizen engagement and participatory democracy from November 2023 until February 2024, YEPs committed to use their newly acquired expertise through a Call to vote in the 2024 European Elections.

To reach citizens as well as locally and regionally elected representatives, the CoR produced tailored materials in its campaign to promote the 2024 European Elections. This included a series of go-to-vote videos with CoR members representing all Political Groups, as well as videos and social media reels produced with Young Elected Politicians.

A dedicated web page on the CoR website was published in December 2023 and promoted on the homepage starting from January 2024 until July 2024. The website was promoting resources and tips for CoR members and local and regional politicians to encourage their citizens to vote. It also linked to relevant resources on other EU institutions’ websites. More than 10.000 page views by 8.000 visitors were recorded between January and July 2024.

Broad social media coverage was also provided from the beginning of the year until the elections took place. Throughout the social media campaign, the CoR produced original visual content through inter-institutional cooperation with the European Parliament and the European Commission. These activities led to more than 9000 engagements, reaching almost 5 million accounts, in the campaign on European elections and several interinstitutional cooperation posts on different social media channels.

Further cooperation with the European Parliament materialized in press, where CoR supported European journalists. All these efforts led to the communication campaign on “A new chapter for EU democracy” becoming the one with the most media mentions out of the four CoR communication campaigns in the first half of 2024.

5.1.6.4 CoR's 30th anniversary

Main impact:

- The 30th anniversary action plan, adopted by the CoR Bureau in November 2023, included several high-profile actions (e.g. CoR Summit in Mons, 30th anniversary plenary and resolution, first transfer of historical archives, CoR’s 30th anniversary exhibition) which were implemented throughout 2024, the year CoR celebrated its anniversary. These actions contributed concretely to recalling the historical achievements of the CoR to its members but also to the EU citizens and other EU institutions, while at the same time showcasing the way forward for the institution.
- The first transfer of CoR archives to the Historical Archives of the EU in Florence (part of the European University Institute), was included as one of the actions in the 30th anniversary plan adopted by the CoR Bureau. The first transfer was followed by a concrete cooperation agreement with the European University Institute, which was signed in November 2024.
- Within the CoR administration, the working group entrusted with the implementation of the 30th anniversary action plan, consisted of 21 permanent staff members (and others attending on a case-

by-case basis) from all directorates. The cooperation within the working group set a benchmark for new cooperation methods and the successful implementation of the action plan and the work from all staff is an example of ameliorating the cooperation between different services and breaking silos.

2024 marked the 30th anniversary of the CoR. In order to celebrate the milestone, at its meeting on 28th November 2023, the Bureau adopted a relevant action plan. The latter had a forward-looking perspective and identified 23 actions across three streams: 1) policy proposals, 2) celebratory initiatives and 3) communication actions. Implementing the action plan, an administrative working group (WG) was set up, which included 21 staff members from most of the CoR Directorates and was active from October 2023 until the end of 2024.

On top of the 23 actions included in the original action plan, three more actions were identified during the WG meetings and subsequently added in the plan. The celebrations of the 30th anniversary of the CoR, kicked off during the Summit in Mons, which contributed to the strengthening of the political profile of the CoR. With various events and testimonies, it also included the first transfer of archives of the CoR to the Historical Archives of the EU in Florence. This led also to a new cooperation agreement with the European University Institute, signed in November 2024.

The final action implemented consisted of a policy one, during the last plenary session of the CoR's 2020-2025 mandate. It concerned a forward-looking resolution titled 'Building on 30 years of the European Committee of the Regions: Local and regional authorities shaping the future of the EU'.

5.2 Building resilient regional and local communities

5.2.1 Green Deal Going Local

Main impact:

- Green Deal 2.0 report influenced Council conclusions, aligning with CoR's call for policy synergies, just transition, regional perspectives, and increased investment for local authorities. Elements of its 29 recommendations are reflected in the political guidelines of the new European Commission President and the mission letters.
- CoR cooperation with Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union put local and regional priorities on top of the EU agenda during the first half of 2024 with conference *Translating the EU Green Deal into local action* gathering over 550 Mayors and representatives of local and regional governments for a high-level debate. Belgian presidency political declaration echoed key CoR messages.
- The debate *Towards a Green Deal 2.0: Driving the Green Transition Locally* at the CoR Summit in Mons strengthened the cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB). Later in the CoR Plenary the EIB affirmed the leadership of EU cities and regions to promote convergence and economic growth, renewing a partnership with the CoR to support the green and digital transitions.
- Strong presence at climate international negotiations (UNFCCC COP 29): [Council conclusions for COP29](#) incorporated key CoR proposals ahead of the negotiations, [European Parliament resolution for COP29](#) was aligned with CoR positions, with CoR amendments included in the text, and CoR has taken the lead within the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) constituency in drafting a [joint position for COP29](#), which unites LRAs worldwide.
- CoR opinion on *Towards a Global Green Deal: harmonizing global frameworks for climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development* had solid impact on the [Council conclusions](#), especially on mainstreaming biodiversity within and across all levels of government and society, and across all policies and sectors. Thanks to its engagement at the biodiversity COP16, the CoR is now part of the coordinating committee of the *Global Partnership on Subnational and Local Governments for Biodiversity*.

The CoR report [Regions and Cities shaping the Green Deal 2.0](#) was launched in May 2024. The report includes recommendations developed under the leadership of the Green Deal Going Local Working Group (GDGL WG). For the first time ever, strategic foresight was used as a tool to develop a CoR official position. This allowed building on the 78 CoR opinions and resolutions addressing the different areas of the European Green Deal and at the same time having a forward-looking approach.

The report was presented at a high-level political event attended by Executive Vice-President (EVP) Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ, members of the GDGL WG, along with CoR Ambassadors from the CoR Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and the Climate Pact.

The report is a key milestone in the CoR term of office and its work on the European Green Deal. Released ahead of the 2024 EU elections, it calls for a renewed EU green agenda that fosters sustainable competitiveness and strategic autonomy, eradicates social inequalities and further exploits the potential of green innovation within planetary boundaries. It emphasizes that regions and cities, and their specific contexts and needs, should be at its centre. It aims to ensure that regions and cities have the necessary tools and resources to meet ambitious objectives and are empowered to design and govern their own transition pathways.

The report had both internal and external impact. Internally, it introduced strategic foresight and involved all CoR commissions, fostering more integrated policymaking and providing an opportunity for testing creative and innovative approaches. GDGL WG proved to be a useful platform to work on horizontal topics and provide political position across political spectrum for the Bureau. Externally, it influenced the Council conclusions of 17 June 2024, aligning with CoR call for policy synergies, a just transition, regional perspectives, and increased investment for local authorities. Importantly, it provided political advocacy positions ahead of the new term of office.

Elements of its 29 recommendations are reflected in the political guidelines of the new European Commission President and the mission letters, showing a shift toward greater inter-Commissioner cooperation and closer engagement with regions and cities. This approach aligns with CoR's vision of a fairer and more sustainable Europe.

On another note, the CoR cooperated closely with the Belgian presidency of the Council of the European Union and the EIB, which managed to put local and regional priorities on top of the EU agenda during the first half of 2024. In March 2024, the Conference *Translating the EU Green Deal into local action* gathered over 550 Mayors and representatives of local and regional governments for a high-level debate on the EU green agenda for cities and regions within the framework of the Belgian presidency activities.

This event, building on the CoR opinion on *Fostering the potential and synergies of EU Green Deal initiatives for regions and cities*³⁰, served as a unique platform to highlight the need of a more effective support framework for cities and regions, including better synergies and cooperation between EU initiatives for cities and regions, stronger multilevel governance and funding. A political declaration by the Belgian presidency³¹ echoed key CoR messages, formalizing closer synergies between leading initiatives like the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and the Green City Accord.

At the CoR Summit in Mons, CoR ENVE commission organised a session titled *Towards a Green Deal 2.0: Driving the Green Transition Locally*, aimed at exploring the evolving framework of the European Green Deal. The debate highlighted the need for a stronger bottom-up approach in the next phase of the Green Deal, emphasizing the involvement of local and regional authorities to create more inclusive and tailored solutions for the green transition. This discussion strengthened the cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB). Later in the CoR Plenary of October, the EIB President, Nadia Calviño, affirmed the leadership of EU cities and regions to promote convergence and economic growth, renewing a partnership with the CoR to support the green and digital transitions.

The CoR had also a strong presence at international climate negotiations (UNFCCC COP29). COP29 took place in Baku, Azerbaijan, in November 2024. Building on the achievements of previous years, a delegation of 8 CoR members, led by the CoR President Vasco Alves Cordeiro, attended COP29 with a mandate to advance the CoR^[oob] outlined in the opinion *Towards a Global Green Deal*.^{32[ooj]}

As was the case last year, the [Council conclusions for COP29](#) incorporated key CoR proposals ahead of the negotiations. The conclusions included the CoR's proposal to recognise the leadership of LRAs in accelerating and broadening socially just climate action and stressed the need for enhanced cooperation with LRAs in preparing and implementing national climate plans. This was made possible through the annual engagement of the CoR delegation, which included early discussions with the Belgian and Hungarian presidencies. In addition, the proposed paragraph was sent to all Permanent Representations, and the CoR delegation engaged with their national governments for the approval of the proposal.

³⁰ ENVE-VII/036- Fostering the potential and synergies of the EU Green Deal initiatives for regions and cities-rapporteur: Andries GRYFFROY (BE/EA)- COR-2023-00229-00-00-AC-TRA

³¹ "[Brussels Declaration of European mayors](#)", a joint declaration by cities on the future of the EU

³² ENVE-VII/048 – Towards a Global Green Deal: harmonizing global frameworks for climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development - Rapporteur: Rafał Trzaskowski, (PL/EPP) and Kata Tüttő (HU/PES) COR-2023-05586-00-00-AC-TRA COR-2024-04253-10-00-NB-REF (EN) 31/62

Additionally, the [European Parliament resolution for COP29](#) was once again aligned with CoR positions, with CoR amendments included in the text. This was made possible through the strong relationships established between the CoR delegation and the European Parliament delegation at past COPs, as well as early engagement ahead of COP29, during which we proposed key language for inclusion in the resolution to like-minded MEPs within the Parliament delegation.

For another year, the CoR has taken the lead within the LGMA in drafting a [joint position for COP29](#), building on last year's success. The position unites LRAs worldwide and reflects the messages in the CoR's COP29 opinion³³. It was launched internationally during the New York Climate Ambition Summit and at the EU level during the ENVE Commission meeting in Espoo, Finland.

Throughout 2024, the CoR has been working towards the effective implementation of the decisions made at COP28, both within the EU and globally. This includes follow-up actions related to the COP28 Coalition for High Ambition Multilevel Partnership ([CHAMP](#)) for Climate Action. CHAMP is a commitment made by national governments at COP28 to collaborate more closely with their subnational governments, particularly in the development and implementation of their next Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) ahead of COP30. Launched at COP28, this initiative aligns with the calls by the CoR and the LGMA Constituency in previous COPs: the critical need to integrate local and regional climate plans as a complement to NDCs.

In 2025, CoR will build on this work in preparation for COP30, which will take place in Belém, Brazil. Finally, the CoR contributed to shaping global biodiversity policies at the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP16). Following the successful participation of the CoR in the CBD COP15 in Montreal, where it was explicitly referred to as one of the key actors in implementing the Plan of Action of subnational authorities on Biodiversity, the CoR sent a delegation of two members to the COP in Cali, Colombia (October - November 2024).

The delegation took part in a high-level meeting with world local and subnational leaders to showcase commitments and priorities with the COP16 Presidency and Secretariat to the CBD.

The CoR delegation shared the messages outlined in the CoR opinion on *Towards a Global Green Deal: harmonizing global frameworks for climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development*³⁴. The opinion had solid impact on the [Council conclusions](#), especially on mainstreaming biodiversity within and across all levels of government and society, and across all policies and sectors. The Council also stressed the importance of a whole-of-government approach for mobilizing resources to mainstream biodiversity since key points were included such as the importance of taking a whole-of-government approach and the commitment to addressing the triple planetary crises in a comprehensive, integrated and coherent approach comprising mutually beneficial strategies.

As a practical contribution to the Plan of Action³⁵, the CoR launched a study collecting best practices from EU cities and regions and analysing their support to achieve the goals of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). This study was presented at the [8th Summit for Subnational Governments and Cities](#), an official parallel event at COP16 aimed at highlighting the critical importance of collaborating across levels of government to effectively fulfil the GBF targets. The study was shared with DG ENV of the European Commission, to be included into their outreach and database, and with the ENVI Secretariat of the European Parliament. The European Commission took note of the lessons learned and policy recommendations derived from the study.

33 ENVE-VII/048 – Towards a Global Green Deal: harmonizing global frameworks for climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development - Rapporteur: Rafał Trzaskowski, (PL/EPP) and Kata Tüttő (HU/PES). COR-2023-05586-00-00-AC-TRA

34 ENVE-VII/048 – Towards a Global Green Deal: harmonizing global frameworks for climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development - Rapporteur: Rafał Trzaskowski, (PL/EPP) and Kata Tüttő (HU/PES). COR-2023-05586-00-00-AC-TRA

35 [Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity](#) (Decision 15/12 of the CBD COP15)

Thanks to its engagement and participation to COP16, the CoR is now part of the coordinating committee of the *Global Partnership on Subnational and Local Governments for Biodiversity*. This platform will advise and inform directly the Secretariat of the biodiversity convention, to ensure that the challenges, needs and actions from cities and regions on biodiversity are properly considered in future negotiations.

5.2.2 Transport

Main impact:

- [Joint paper](#) published by the CoRAutomotive Regions Alliance (ARA) with relevant automotive industry associations to voice concern on the progress of the automotive industrial transition;
- Reference, in the Draghi report on '*The future of European competitiveness*', to the CoR study on automotive regions, and recognition of the key importance of the transport sector for future EU industrial policy;
- Inclusion of key elements of the CoR opinion on *Greening Freight Transport*³⁶ package into the draft EP reports on the package³⁷.

The efforts towards decarbonisation of road transport continued in the CoR 'Automotive Regions Alliance' (ARA). In [Regulation EU/2023/851](#), the CoR was for the first time mentioned in a legal text and assigned to assist the EC with a TIA of the automotive transition and its effect on the regions. The CoR also continued to be represented in the 'Route35' meetings initiated and chaired by Commissioner Breton and, on working level, continued to cooperate with the relevant EC services. The efforts led to a [joint paper](#) of the CoR with relevant industry associations³⁸ to voice concern on the progress of the transition and the budgetary and policy measures called for in CoR opinions³⁹.

In May 2024, the CoR's ARA technical secretariat organised a high-level [workshop](#) on the main outputs of the CoR study '*State of play and future challenges of automotive regions*', bringing together politicians from automotive regions, and representatives of regional automotive clusters, the European Commission, and the automotive sector. The main result of the study, the call for a joint just transition measuring tool, was widely supported. The study was also cited in the Draghi report, which contains a specific section on mobility as well as the automotive industry.

Thanks to the CoR opinion *Proposing a European Declaration on Cycling*⁴⁰ and its presentation in numerous high-level events, including by the Belgian Council Presidency in January 2024, broad political support for promoting cycling as a key pillar of the mobility transition was reached.

The draft EP reports on some of the legislative proposals under the greening transport package reflect positions the CoR had expressed in its opinion *Greening Freight Transport*⁴¹, namely:

- concerns about road safety,
- need for a more detailed analysis on which roads are suitable for heavier/larger vehicles,
- demands to earmark revenues generated into sustainable transport, and,

³⁶ COTER-VII/033 – Greening Freight Transport – rapporteur: José Ribau Esteves (PT/EPP) - COR-2023-04958-00-00-AC-TRA.
³⁷ [Use of railway infrastructure capacity](#) and [Revision of the Weights and Dimensions Directive](#).

³⁸ ACEA (the European Carmakers), CLEPA (the automotive supply industry), IndustriALL (the European Trade Union) and ASA (the Automotive Skills Alliance). The paper was presented to the September 'Route 35' meeting.

³⁹ COTER-VII/015 - Towards zero emission road transport: Deploying alternative fuels infrastructure and strengthening CO2 emission performance standards - rapporteur: Adrian Teban (RO/EPP) - COR-2021-04913-00-00-AC-TRA;
COTER-VII/029 - A Just and Sustainable Transition for Automotive Regions - rapporteur: Sven Schulze (DE/EPP) - COR-2023-01449-00-00-AC-TRA;

COTER-VII/039 – A Just Transition for all EU regions – rapporteur: Marco Marsilio (IT/ECR) - COR-2024-00424-00-00-AC-TRA [3 opinions].

⁴⁰ COTER-VII/035 - Proposing a European Declaration on Cycling – rapporteur: Arianna Maria Censi (IT/PES) - COR-2023-05839-00-00-AC-TRA

⁴¹ COTER-VII/033 – Greening Freight Transport – rapporteur: José Ribau Esteves (PT/EPP) - COR-2023-04958-00-00-AC-TRA.
COR-2024-04253-10-00-NB-REF (EN) 33/62

- concerning the improved usage of railway infrastructure, call for ‘national plans developed by Member States following a bottom-up approach’.

5.2.3 Regional Innovation Valleys: Strengthening Local Innovation Ecosystems and the networks among them

Main impact:

- Thanks to the excellent cooperation with the services of European Commissioners Mariya Gabriel (later with Commissioner Iliana Ivanova) and Elisa Ferreira, the pilot calls for the Regional Innovation Valleys (RIV). Their launch on 17 May 2023, responded to the CoR calls to address the innovation divide and to increase the coordination between different EU instruments supporting innovation ecosystems in Europe's regions.
- As a result, a substantial number of CoR member regions, many of which had participated in the Partnerships for Regional Innovation pilot, were selected among these 149 RIV regions and will receive European funding in the months and years to come.
- The CoR members also had the opportunity to participate many times in the European Research Area (ERA) Forum and other related events (such as the EU R&I Days, WIRE conference and the EURegionsWeek workshops) coordinated by both DG RTD and DG REGIO, as well as to carry out study visits at the premises of JRC in Ispra, Italy and Seville, Spain. This substantially boosted regular interinstitutional cooperation with the EC services, while the CoR members and rapporteurs could share their views on key EU policy issues firsthand.

2024 has been the fourth year of carrying out the Joint Action Plan, signed in November 2020 between the CoR and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation and the Joint Research Centre. Its dedicated actions to innovation, research, culture and education and the 2023 yearly monitoring report were presented by Commissioner Ivanova herself and debated with the CoR members at the 27 June 2024 SEDEC commission meeting. The 27 actions would aim to increase the administrative and implementation capacity of the regions and cities in order to leave no one behind, to reduce the innovation divide and to build an interconnected innovation ecosystem in Europe.

The main focus of the CoR-Commission joint activities during 2024, but also in previous years, was the implementation of the New European Innovation Agenda and strengthening regional innovation ecosystems, with particular emphasis on place-based innovation. The already established cooperation with DG R&I and the JRC in this field greatly facilitated this process, not least via established transversal instruments such as the renewed [Knowledge Exchange Platform](#) (KEP 2.0) and the final phase of the Science meets Regions project.

Several key Commission initiatives and funding streams, such as the Horizon Europe Missions and New European Bauhaus, aimed at promoting sustainable and green transition in EU territories received unprecedented attention and widespread participation from CoR member regions and various regional associations. Parallel to this, the European Research Area (ERA) Hubs pilot project and the Partnerships for Regional Innovation gave rise to the first Regional Innovation Valleys across Europe. Other bottom-up and networking initiatives such as the Seal of Excellence and Horizon Europe (FP9) widening measures also accelerated during the reference period. They also hold considerable promise for local impact.

Thanks to the excellent cooperation with the services of European Commissioners Mariya Gabriel (later with Commissioner Iliana Ivanova) and Elisa Ferreira, the pilot calls for the Regional Innovation Valleys (RIV) were launched on 17 May 2023, while the first winners were announced at the 18 June 2024 CoR plenary session by Commissioners Ivanova and Ferreira. Apart from the significant breakthrough for the

CoR on the RIVs with DG RTD and DG REGIO, the JRC and the EP on their side launched the Partnerships for Regional Innovation – renamed ‘Place-based Local Transformation’ under an EP Pilot Action.

As a result, as of October 2024, a substantial number of CoR member regions, many of which had participated in the Partnerships for Regional Innovation pilot, were selected among these 149 RIV regions and will receive European funding in the months and years to come. These regions committed to:

- Strengthen their Research & Innovation (R&I) ecosystem;
- Enhance the coordination and directionality of their R&I policy and investment towards key EU priorities; and
- Engage in R&I collaboration between more and less advanced regions with complementary smart specialisations (S3).

Also, the presence of local and regional representatives, as well as the inclusion of regional (innovation) associations, such as ERRIN and EURADA, in the debates of the ERA Forum made it possible to maintain a specific priority on place-based innovation in the different strands and priority areas of this important policy forum. Overall, the regular participation in events and contacts between the CoR administration and political members, on the one hand, and Commission senior managers and administrators, on the other, made it possible for this mutually beneficial inter-institutional partnership to continue.

As regards the near future, cooperative initiatives such as the Knowledge Exchange Platform (KEP), Place-Based Transformation, Regional Innovation Valleys, EU Missions and the New European Bauhaus are to provide ample space for further cooperation between local innovation ecosystems and the key players operating them, particularly the Commission.

5.2.4 Energy and Climate Action

Main impact:

- The CoR increased its participation and impact in the Global Covenant of Mayors Board and the European Climate Pact. ;
- European Commission Communication on Clean Transition dialogues reflected several CoR messages: the importance of implementation on the ground, expanding clean and affordable energy, and unlocking finance for the transition;
- In line with CoR's advocacy in 2024, the portfolio of the designated Commissioner for Energy and Housing stresses the need for multi-level and multi-actor dialogues and puts forward for the first time ever a European Affordable Housing Plan addressing energy poverty and sustainable housing;
- The CoR opinion "Towards a resilient water management to fight climate crisis within an EU Blue Deal" advocated for the appointment of a dedicated Commissioner for Water. In line with CoR's advocacy, President von der Leyen appointed a Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience, and a Competitive Circular Economy.

Through the active engagement of the ENVE chair and other CoR members in the Covenant of Mayors activities, the CoR has significantly strengthened its leadership role in the initiative both at European and at Global level. The Covenant Europe Political Board, alongside the CoR Covenant National Ambassadors, has been instrumental in ensuring cities play a central role in high-level discussions with key EU commissioners. The Global Covenant of Mayors Board has had a key role in international fora including the New York Climate Week and UNFCCC COP. The CoR political leadership of the Covenant

has had a positive impact on the new Covenant phase started in 2024: in this new phase the Covenant will start its journey to be profiled as the EU umbrella initiative for the climate and energy transition at the local level, in line with the CoR call.

The European Committee of the Regions together with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA) has organised across 2024 the European Climate Pact Going Local Talks in Milano (Italy), Zagreb (Croatia), Rakvere (Estonia) and Braga (Portugal).

In the context of the 2024 EU elections, the Climate Pact going local talks have strengthened the connection between EU policies, local authorities, and community concerns, allowing Climate Pact Ambassadors to engage with a broader audience and inspiring the EU Commission's Clean Transition Dialogues launched in April 2024.

Additionally, the CoR became a key partner in Clean Transition Dialogues. This key initiative was announced by President von der Leyen in the 2023 State of the Union address and led by EVP Maroš Šefčovič, focused on advancing the European Green Deal. In March, a Rapporteur⁴² from the ENVE Commission was invited to join the dialogue with cities and regions and addressed challenges like building and transport decarbonization. This exchange allowed local and regional authorities to engage with EVP Šefčovič on strengthening Green Deal implementation at the local level, reinforcing the CoR influence and credibility as a key partner of the European Parliament and Commission.

In April, the European Commission published a [Communication](#)⁴³ summarizing the dialogues, reflecting several CoR messages emphasized through ENVE's participation: the importance of implementation on the ground, expanding clean and affordable energy, and unlocking finance for the transition.

Following the adoption of the Fit for 55 package, the Green Deal shifted focus to implementation. The CoR has prepared the ground for accelerating implementation of new legislation on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and the energy performance of buildings. ENVE commission actively promoted local and regional initiatives through social media and gathering over 400 best practices showcasing innovative decarbonization solutions and energy cost reductions.

Through dedicated opinions⁴⁴ and active outreach on geothermal energy, the European Hydrogen Bank, the electricity market reform and the wind power energy plan the CoR is playing a prominent role in the discussions on how to achieve the climate and energy targets by 2030 and beyond. The [State of the Energy Union Report 2024](#) reflects the concerns raised in the CoR's opinions. While significant progress has been made on renewable energy, it is still insufficient to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030.

In line with CoR's advocacy in 2024, the portfolio of the designated Commissioner for Energy and Housing stresses the need for multi-level and multi-actor dialogues and puts forward for the first time ever a European Affordable Housing Plan addressing energy poverty and sustainable housing.

The Draghi report⁴⁵ highlights future challenges such as lagging renewables, energy poverty, high prices, and strategic dependencies. To address these, ENVE commissioned a study, due in early 2025, which will identify key priorities and gaps in the local implementation of the energy provisions from the Fit for 55 package. The study will collect national data and figures to show the potential benefits and risks for EU regions in this transition.

⁴² Joško KLISOVIĆ (HR/PES)

⁴³ [The clean transition dialogues – stocktaking / A strong European industry for a sustainable Europe](#)

⁴⁴ ENVE-VII/043- Localising energy production: the role of geothermal energy-rapporteur: József RIBÁNYI (HU/ECR)- COR-2023-04406-00-00-AC-TRA

ENVE-VII/040-European Hydrogen Bank-rapporteur: Arianna CENSI (IT/PES)- COR-2023-03286-00-00-AC-TRA.

ENVE-VII/039- Reform of the EU electricity market design-rapporteur: Josef FREY (DE/Greens)- COR-2023-02118-00-00-AC-TRA.

ENVE-VII/045- European Wind Power Action Plan-rapporteur: Andries GRYFFROY (BE/EA)- COR-2024-00710-00-00-AC-TRA

⁴⁵ Draghi, Mario; [The future of European competitiveness](#), September 2024

The CoR supported the reinforcement of the role of regions and cities in climate adaptation and water resilience. The CoR has been long calling for adaptation to become central to the EU's climate priorities to reflect the growing urgency to address the increasing risks posed by climate impacts, as identified in this year's [European Climate Risk Assessment \(EUCRA\)](#). In previous years, mitigation often dominated EU climate action efforts. However, due to long demands of subnational actors, including the CoR, the political guidelines presented by President von der Leyen for the next Commission term of office include a central focus also on adaptation, announcing a European Climate Adaptation Plan, potentially accompanied by concrete legislative proposals. Building on this achievement, in 2025 the CoR will focus on contributing to this Plan to ensure it reflects the demands and needs of LRAs.

In 2024, the CoR actively participated in the 3rd Forum of the Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change. In addition, the ENVE commission launched a reflection on the existing financing gap for adaptation action, publishing a [study](#) on the subject.

On water resilience, the CoR opinion *Towards a resilient water management to fight climate crisis within an EU Blue Deal*⁴⁶ advocated for the appointment of a dedicated Commissioner for Water. In line with CoR's advocacy, President von der Leyen appointed a Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience, and a Competitive Circular Economy. In this opinion, the CoR also called for a comprehensive European Water Strategy, urging a broader, more strategic approach beyond the European Commission's initially proposed water 'initiative.' This strategy is now expected to address not only pollution, but also water scarcity, efficiency, digitalization, and security, among other areas. This approach, requested by the CoR, is reflected in the mission letters of the relevant Commissioners.

5.2.5 Environment

Main impact:

- EU Nature Restoration Law adopted in June 2024 incorporated key points from the CoR opinion: the importance of considering regional and local characteristics in National Restoration Plans, with special attention to the Union's outermost regions, and the involvement of local, regional and managing authorities in the preparation of the Plans;
- CoR Rapporteur on Biodiversity protection and coexistence with large carnivores in Europe was invited for the debate to the Working Party of the EU Council;

CoR opinion on Ambient Air quality proposals on access to justice and on compensation for local communities were included in the Parliament's position.

The CoR was nominated as observer in the [EU Biodiversity Platform](#) and the [Expert Group on the Nature Restoration Regulation](#), set up by the EC. The CoR will continue to participate in future meetings to ensure that the challenges for the implementation of biodiversity conservation and restoration measures and legislation by local and regional authorities are effectively addressed.

Additionally, the EU Nature Restoration Law was adopted in June 2024, incorporating key points from the CoR opinion⁴⁷. It emphasizes the importance of considering regional and local characteristics in National Restoration Plans, with special attention to the Union's outermost regions. It also mandates the involvement of local, regional and managing authorities in the preparation of the Plans. The European Commission acknowledged the CoR's call for comprehensive technical support and capacity building system for local and regional administrations and is preparing an assessment of the funding needs.

⁴⁶ ENVE-VII/-47 – Towards a resilient water management to fight climate crisis within an EU Blue Deal – rapporteur: André Viola, (FR/PES)- COR-2023-05587-00-00-AC-TRA

⁴⁷ ENVE-VII/030 - EU Nature Restoration Law - Rapporteur: Roby Biber, (LU/PES)- COR-2022-04206-00-00-AC-TRA COR-2024-04253-10-00-NB-REF (EN) 37/62

The CoR strengthened its cooperation with the European Commission's DG ENV under Action 11.3 of the EU Pollinators Initiative⁴⁸, to promote multi-level involvement and better support for local and regional actions. Together, a session with over 90 registered participants was co-organized to exchange knowledge and best practices for pollinator protection. The CoR is exploring modalities to join the DG ENV Task Force on "National strategies, regional and local plans for pollinators" and will continue working to ensure that local and regional strategies are integrated into national and EU frameworks.

Additionally, the CoR opinion on *Biodiversity protection and coexistence with large carnivores in Europe – challenges and opportunities for local and regional authorities*⁴⁹, analysed the question of the implementation of the current legislation, and called for the involvement and active participation of local and regional authorities to be continued so that new ways can be found, whenever possible, for livestock, people and large carnivores to coexist sustainably and safely.

The rapporteur⁵⁰ was very active during the drafting process of the opinion and in June 2024, was invited to the Working Party of the EU Council focused on the proposal to revise wolf protection under the Bern Convention, in order to discuss the CoR perspective. The rapporteur had the opportunity to present his opinion in detail, followed by active discussion on the way forward with Member States.

Finally, the Zero Pollution Stakeholder Platform (ZPSP), co-chaired by the ENVE Commission and DG ENV organized several activities in 2024, including two Platform meetings, a steering committee with Member States, a workshop, a survey, two newsletter issues and updates to the website, including the Zero Pollution Going Local webpage of the CoR. In April, the Platform met with all CoR political groups to discuss priorities for the next term. The ZPSP was consolidated as an effective forum for discussion.

The CoR shared its best practices to the upcoming Scoreboard of EU Regions' green performance. The Platform Co-chair intervened at the Green Deal Going Local Working Group to discuss the ongoing activities. There is an overall consensus (the CoR, the European Commission, and platform stakeholders) about the importance of the ZPSP continuation in the next EU legislative term and the need to raise ambition and to adopt a more cross-sectoral and more systematic approach to facilitate a bottom-up systemic transformation.

ENVE promoted the local and regional dimension and raised the visibility of CoR opinions, in particular on ambient air quality⁵¹, wastewater⁵², and soil⁵³.

ENVE advanced the CoR zero-pollution agenda, notably through the opinion on *Ambient Air Quality* with a strong connection with the local dimension, including the pilot project to reach out to the Council and follow the trilogues on this file. CoR's proposals on access to justice and on compensation for local communities were included in the Parliament's position. The opinion also supported the proposed creation of the Innovation Centre for Industrial Transformation and Emissions (INCITE) that was approved and started operating. CoR rapporteurs participated as speakers to the EU Clean Air Forum and met the Commissioner to promote the CoR positions.

Finally, the CoR had a growing influence for supporting the implementation of circular economy. The OECD Programme on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions and the Circular Cities and Regions

⁴⁸ This Action was inspired by the opinion ENVE-VII/020 - Local and regional authorities accelerating the implementation of the EU Pollinators Initiative - Rapporteur: Frida Nilsson, (SE/Renew Europe) - COR-2021-03508-00-00-AC-TRA-EN

⁴⁹ ENVE-VII/046 - Biodiversity protection and coexistence with large carnivores in Europe – challenges and opportunities for local and regional authorities – Rapporteur: Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP) - COR-2023-05585-00-00-AC-TRA-EN

⁵⁰ Csaba Borboly (RO/EPP)

⁵¹ ENVE-VII/035 - Revision of the EU Ambient Air Quality Legislation-Rapporteur: Una Power (IE/Greens) - COR-2022-06180-00-01-AC-TRA-EN

⁵² ENVE-VII/034 - Revision of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive. Rapporteur Åsa ÅGREN WIKSTRÖM (SE/EPP) - COR-2022-06179-00-01-AC-TRA-EN

⁵³ ENVE-VII/042 - Soil Monitoring and Resilience-Rapporteur: Frida Nilsson (SE/Renew Europe) - COR-2023-03680-00-00-AC-TRA-EN

Initiative (CCRI) of the European Commission are identifying local best practices, territorial policy deployment, challenges and opportunities to accelerate the circular economy transition in the EU.

The CoR contributed actively to these efforts by engaging in a survey, the results of which will inform the flagship report on “The Circular Economy in EU cities and regions”, set for release in April 2025. The report will guide the European Commission in developing policies and legislation to facilitate circular economy in cities and regions.

This active cooperation is a follow-up to the 5th Roundtable on the Circular Economy in Cities and Regions organized by ENVE during the 2023 external meeting in Tallinn in partnership with the OECD. The CoR reinforced its advocacy on the matter with the adoption of opinions on *Preventing plastic pellet losses to reduce microplastic pollution*⁵⁴ and on *The role of local and regional authorities in the transition towards a circular economy*⁵⁵. ENVE is an active “associated partner” of the CCRI and also contributes to the activities of the European Circular Economy Stakeholders Platform.

5.2.6 Economic governance

Main impact:

- Following the CoR long-standing demand, the revised Stability and Growth Pact excludes co-financing of EU programmes from the calculations of expenditure under the fiscal rules. The fact that the exclusion is uncapped (whereas the EP report initially included a cap of 0.25% of GDP), and the very broad wording used in the definition also open the possible use of this provision in the next MFF, with regards to any future new EU programme or instrument based on co-financing;

The economic governance framework (and notably its centrepiece the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) adopted in 1997) had long been the subject of calls for reform, with critics underlining its procyclicality, its complexity, its lack of transparency and legitimacy as well as its limited efficacy. The CoR, among others, was particularly critical of the SGP's negative impact on public investment, notably by local and regional authorities, which are responsible for nearly 60% of public investment in the EU. The European Commission itself acknowledged certain flaws in the framework and therefore launched a far-reaching "review" process of analysis, consultations, and debates in view of putting forward reform proposals. Initially started in February 2020, this economic governance review process was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and did not conclude until 2024.

The CoR played a very active role in the entire economic governance review process, adopting three separate opinions.⁵⁶ First, in 2020 the CoR adopted an opinion⁵⁷ based on the original communication on the initial Review of Economic Governance. The following year, a new communication set out the Commission's main takeaways from the review and emphasised the higher and more diverse public debt levels in the wake of the COVID crisis and the need to enable investments for common EU priorities, in particular to facilitate the green and digital transitions, and to ensure energy security in the years to come. This formed the basis of the second CoR opinion⁵⁸, which was adopted in Plenary in April 2022. Then, in November 2022, the Commission presented a communication on orientations for a reformed EU economic governance framework, which was then finally followed in April 2023 by the presentation of 3 legislative proposals. The orientations and legislative proposals were the basis for the third and last CoR opinion⁵⁹ of the process, adopted in plenary in October 2023.

⁵⁴ ENVE-VII/044 - Preventing plastic pellet losses to reduce microplastic pollution – Rapporteur: Roberto Ciambetti (IT/ECR) - COR-2023-05588-00-00-AC-TRA-EN

⁵⁵ ENVE-VII/049 - The role of local and regional authorities in the transition towards a circular economy – Rapporteur: Loredana Capone (IT/PES) - COR-2024-00709-00-00-AC-TRA-EN

⁵⁶ Opinions prepared by rapporteur Elio Di Rupo (BE/PES).

⁵⁷ ECON-VII/005 - Economic governance review – Rapporteur: Elio Di Rupo (BE/PES) - COR-2020-01370-00-01-AC-TRA-EN

⁵⁸ ECON-VII/020 - The EU economy after COVID-19: implications for economic governance – Rapporteur: Elio Di Rupo (BE/PES) - COR-2022-00194-00-00-AC-TRA-EN

⁵⁹ ECON-VII/030 - Reform of the EU economic governance framework – Rapporteur: Elio Di Rupo (BE/PES) - COR-2023-00157-00-00-AC-TRA-EN

Thanks to close engagement with the European Parliament (EP) throughout this years-long process, several key demands of the CoR were taken up by the EP report⁶⁰ on the legislation adopted in December 2023. However, the Council's position – also adopted in December – was much less favourable from a CoR standpoint.

The final agreement reached in trilogue highlights a clear success for the CoR, as the key objective the Committee has been pursuing in this field for ten years⁶¹ is achieved, with the text including a clear and broad exclusion of co-financing from net expenditure as measured and monitored under the economic governance framework. Article 2 of the final legislation reads:

'net expenditure' means government expenditure net of interest expenditure, discretionary revenue measures, expenditure on programmes of the Union fully matched by Union funds revenue, national expenditure on co-financing of programmes funded by the Union, cyclical elements of unemployment benefit expenditure, and one-offs and other temporary measures;

This exclusion is a significant step forward to promote quality public investment supported by the EU through the instruments under the current 2021-27 MFF, in which co-financing is estimated at 166 billion for Cohesion Policy alone⁶². Furthermore, the fact that the exclusion is uncapped (whereas the EP report initially included a cap of 0.25% of GDP), and the very broad wording used in the definition also open the possible use of this provision in the next MFF, with regards to any future new EU programme or instrument based on co-financing.

This very positive result for the CoR can be linked to several factors. The years-long review of economic governance process (4 years in total) allowed the CoR to build expertise and credibility through three successive opinions, all with the same committed rapporteur. Over this period, the CoR and the EP built close links with regards to this file, both at administrative level and – facilitated by their being part of the same political group – at political level between the CoR rapporteur and EP rapporteur Margarida Marques. For instance, Ms Marques took part in a total of four ECON commission and CoR plenary meetings and held different exchanges with the CoR rapporteur. This resulted in a final EP report on the reform which was particularly well aligned with CoR demands. Despite initial opposition from the Council, those key demands, and particularly the exclusion of co-financing from expenditure, were largely preserved in the final legislation.

5.2.7 European Health Data Space: better access for citizens, new horizons for research and innovation

Main impact:

- Several amendments proposed in the CoR opinion on the European Health Data Space (EHDS) included in the EP report, directly referring to the involvement of either local and regional authorities or local and regional level;
- Additionally, several amendments either fully or partly corresponding to CoR amendments or reflecting more broadly the concerns expressed in the CoR opinion;

⁶⁰ European Parliament, REPORT on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council the effective coordination of economic policies and multilateral budgetary surveillance and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1466/97. Ref: A9-0439/2023

⁶¹ The CoR has been calling for this co-financing exclusion since at least the 2014 and the Marini opinion on "Promoting quality of public spending in matters subject to EU action" (ref: COR-2014-0488)

⁶² Ecorys, CEPS, et. al., *RRF mid-term evaluation: External supporting study – Case study on the functioning of the RRF and other EU funds*, 2024. Available online [here](#), p.2

- Stronger focus on the involvement and responsibilities of the local and regional level with several references to the regions both in the recitals and in the articles of the EHDS Regulation;
- The CoR rapporteur on the EHDS drew on her regional experience with electronic health records and translated this policy knowledge into recommendations that found resonance with the EP: several points in the final compromise text directly reflect the amendments proposed by the CoR.

While the CoR adopted the opinion on the European Health Data Space (EHDS)⁶³, in February 2023, the European Parliament and the Council reached a political agreement on the Commission proposal in spring 2024. In the opinion, the CoR set out as its key objective to ensure that both the legislative and non-legislative framework related to the future European Health Union and more specifically the legal framework for the European Health Data Space reflect the responsibilities of local and regional authorities in public health and take into account their positions, given that 19 of the 27 Member States have opted to give local and regional authorities primary responsibility for healthcare. It was convinced of the need for a multi-level governance approach in the implementation of the EHDS and for solutions not only at EU and national level, but also at regional and local level.

The rapporteur met with Tomislav Sokol, Member of the European Parliament and the co-rapporteur of the EP report on EHDS. MEP Sokol also participated in the CoR Plenary debate on EHDS when the opinion was adopted. The rapporteur attended and spoke at conferences and engaged in dialogue with health interest representatives, such as EUREGHA and Italian ProMIS networks, bringing more visibility to the CoR opinion.

Consequently, several references to the regions were included in the recitals and articles of the Regulation, in particular regarding local and regional technical solutions and electronic health data access services at national, regional or local level. CoR opinion also directly contributed to the inclusion of the right to not be informed of certain findings, and to the requirements that the newly created EHDS Board take into account the regional and local level in its work in certain situations, and that the new Digital Health Authority cooperate with other relevant entities and bodies at local, regional, national or Union level.

The rapporteur drew on her regional experience with electronic health records and translated this policy knowledge into recommendations that found resonance with the European Parliament. Such successful outcome was achieved thanks to sound technical expertise combined with political grasp, as well as the analytical input and the perseverance in targeting the Parliament on the part of both the team of the Rapporteur and the secretariat and the active involvement of the political group in lobbying their MEPs.

5.2.8 Digital Policy

Main impact:

- The European Commission includes LORDIMAS as a key tool to measure digital transformation by cities;
- Increased awareness and active steps towards a higher digital resilience by cities and regions;
- CoR taking up its role in the Interoperable Europe Board.

The CoR has continued to play a key role in developing indicators for measuring digital transformation at local and regional level with the Local and Regional Digital Maturity Assessment Tool (LORDIMAS),

⁶³ [OJ C 157, 3.5.2023, p. 64–81](#). NAT-VII/028 – European Health Data Space – rapporteur: Daniela CÎMPEAN (RO/EPP) - COR-2022-03754-00-00-AC-TRA
COR-2024-04253-10-00-NB-REF (EN) 41/62

developed together with the European Commission, ESPON and partners within the living-in.eu initiative.

LORDIMAS, with almost 100 participating cities and regions from at least 16 Member States and three non-EU countries, has become a key tool for the European Commission services to measure digital transformation for Local Digital Twins Toolbox projects supported under the Digital Europe Programme. The CoR has also continued to negotiate with the European Commission on how to use know-how from LORDIMAS to inform annual reporting on the state of play Digital Decade, in order to ultimately build a comprehensive dataset of regional and local indicators on digital transformation.

LORDIMAS has also been backed by the political work of Markku Markkula (FI/EPP) – CoR LORDIMAS ambassador – and managed to spread beyond CoR members to regions, cities and municipalities of different sizes, even those that are not active in EU policies. The Living-in.EU Digital Assembly, organised within the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities, with participation of three CoR members⁶⁴, provided an opportunity to debate the political priorities of the movement and to provide strategic orientation in support of the twin green and digital transformation of EU cities and communities.

The CoR has been actively making its case in the field of cyber security and digital resilience. Further to the adoption of its opinion on "EU Cyber Solidarity Act and Digital Resilience"⁶⁵, the CoR rapporteur participated in a number of events presenting key policy recommendations from the CoR opinion, in particular those referring to practical steps to build digital resilience of cities and regions. These events, co-organised by the European Cyber Security Organisation (ECSO), in May and October⁶⁶ marked the continued efforts of the CoR and ECSO to build a community of trust among cities and regions that seek to cooperate and share limited resources on cybersecurity.

In 2024, the CoR also continued its work on interoperability of public services by actively contributing to the drafting of the Interoperability Assessment Guidelines⁶⁷, in anticipation of the constitutive meeting of the Interoperable Europe Board, with the contribution of the CoR, which took place on 5 December 2024. The guidelines have for objectives to explain, in a non-binding manner:

- why an interoperability assessment is useful and how it can help public organisations provide better digital public services at lower cost and with greater effectiveness;
- when an interoperability assessment is mandatory according to the Interoperable Europe Act;
- the different ways to perform an interoperability assessment;
- what to take into account for the report on the interoperability assessment;
- the critical factors for the successful implementation and governance of the processes related to interoperability assessments in your public organisation;
- further resources and information on how to contribute to the further development of the guidelines.

The guidelines, to be adopted by the Interoperable Europe Board, therefore fully take on board CoR recommendations of "providing specific information on when the mandatory interoperability assessment will take place and what factors may trigger such an assessment, for example in the case of public procurement" raised in the CoR opinion on Interoperable Europe Act⁶⁸.

⁶⁴ Mirja Vehkaperä (FI/Renew), Markku Markkula (FI/EPP) and Guido Rink (NL/PES)

⁶⁵ ECON-VII/34 - EU Cyber Solidarity Act and Digital resilience – rapporteur: Pehr GRANFALK (SE/EPP) - COR-2023-02191-00-01-AC-TRA

⁶⁶ Interinstitutional Kick-Off of the Cyber Security Month

⁶⁷ Pursuant to Art 15(5) a) of the Interoperable Europe Act (Regulation), "the [Interoperable Europe] Board [shall] adopt guidelines with regard to the interoperability assessment pursuant to Article 3(5) [...]"

⁶⁸ ECON-VII/029 – Interoperable Europe Act – rapporteur Michele PAIS (IT/ECR) – COR-2023-00152-00-00-AC-TRA
COR-2024-04253-10-00-NB-REF (EN) 42/62

The CoR's work on interoperability also reflects recommendations from a Fit for Future opinion on "Governments Interoperability Strategy"⁶⁹ and fed into by a dedicated RegHub consultation also in 2022. Namely, the Hubs, through the CoR, asked to be more involved in a newly created interoperability governance framework, which has been allowed by defining interoperability regulatory sandboxes in the Interoperable Europe Act and, operationally, by inviting regions and cities to feed into preparatory works of the CoR ahead of the Board meetings and into pilot phase of interoperability assessments.

⁶⁹ Fit for Future Platform opinion on "Governments interoperability strategy" – rapporteur Anne KARJALAINEN (FI/PES), available at: https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/de8cb369-8f41-49f7-9611-23db6da6f952_en?filename=Final%20opinion%202022_SBGR3_10%20Governments%20interoperability%20strategy_fup_0.pdf

5.3 Cohesion as a fundamental value

5.3.1 Cohesion

Main impact:

- Adoption of a second opinion on *a renewed cohesion policy post-2027 that leaves no one behind*, contributing to a high level of influence in the debate on the future of cohesion policy, and positioning the CoR as a key stakeholder;
- The Mons Summit was a central platform for the Cohesion Alliance to push for messages on the CoR vision for the future of cohesion policy ahead of the European elections and the renewal of the EU's leadership, including the launch of a new call which gathered the support of local and regional representatives and other stakeholders;
- Recognition in several key documents of the European Commission and of the Council (including the Council conclusions on the 9th Cohesion Report, the Strategic Agenda 2024-2029, and the Political Guidelines for the next European Commission 2024-2029) for the need for a reinforced and improved cohesion policy, the importance of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) and of Just Transition;
- Wide echo of the CoR messages related to the future of these topics in the media and in the communication of local and regional authorities (LRAs);
- Invitation of the CoR President and rapporteurs for the relevant opinions to meetings of Council (e.g. Informal Ministerial September 2024) and Parliament (e.g. REGI committee December 2024) to promote and defend the policy;
- Participation of EC Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms Raffaele Fitto in the joint meeting of the CoR COTER commission and EP Committee on Regional Development (REGI) at the CoR in December 2024;
- Participation of the CoR in the informal Council GAC meeting on cohesion and demography in September 2024 and in the EP REGI committee in December 2024;
- Revised European Commission (EC) proposal for a Regulation on a Mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context⁷⁰ taking on board all CoR proposals.

The CoR started its work on the future of Cohesion Policy in early 2023; an opinion on *The future of Cohesion policy post-2027*⁷¹ was adopted in November 2023 and a *Resolution on a renewed cohesion policy post 2027 that leaves no one behind*⁷² in response to the publication of the 9th Cohesion Report in April 2024. This approach allowed the CoR to significantly influence the discourse. The CoR was also involved in the work of the Group of High-Level Specialists on the Future of Cohesion Policy (HLG) through the appointment of CoR members (in their personal capacity) as Group members and the participation of the CoR President as a guest speaker in one meeting. Finally, the active engagement of President Cordeiro, including the sending of a letter to the President of the European Commission, and the CoR activities to build alliances with like-minded partners in the renewed Cohesion Alliance amplified our voice in the overall debate.

⁷⁰ Formerly called: European Cross-Border Mechanism.

⁷¹ COTER-VII/030 - The future of cohesion policy post-2027 – co-rapporteurs: Vasco Alves Cordeiro (PT/PES) and Emil Boc (RO/EPP) - COR-2023-02250-00-01-AC-TRA.

⁷² RESOL-VII/033 - Resolution on a renewed cohesion policy post 2027 that leaves no one behind - Responses of the CoR on the Report of the High-Level Group on the future of cohesion policy and on the 9th Cohesion report - COR-2024-00548-00-00-RES-TRA.

Although it is not possible to establish direct causal links, the CoR work on this matter has contributed to the fact that the need for a reinforced and improved cohesion policy is recognised in a number of key documents produced by Council and European Commission:

- The [Council conclusions on the 9th Cohesion Report](#) pointed in many areas in the same direction as the CoR opinion on *The future of Cohesion policy post-2027* and the CoR *Resolution on a renewed cohesion policy post 2027 that leaves no one behind*;
- The [Strategic Agenda 2024-2029](#) contained a commitment to enhancing economic, social and territorial cohesion aiming for continuous upward convergence, reducing disparities, and stimulating long-term growth across the Union;
- Ms von der Leyen's [political guidelines](#) stipulate that regions will remain at the centre of the EC's work by addressing regional and social disparities with strengthened cohesion and growth policy.

The [final report](#) of the HLG, presented in February 2024, contains many elements in line with the CoR position, putting territorial cohesion at the centre of the political debate. Two other 2024 reports also refer positively to cohesion policy: (i) Enrico Letta's report on the future of the Single Market ('[Much more than a market](#)') underlines the key role of cohesion policy and calls for a more balanced and inclusive development across the EU to ensure all citizens (and areas/regions) can benefit from the Single Market, and (ii) Mario Draghi's report on [The future of European competitiveness](#) underlines the importance of social, economic and territorial cohesion and the need to ensure that EU cohesion policy be more focused, supporting innovation, the skills agenda and completing the Single Market.

Key CoR messages on the necessity of a strong cohesion policy for all regions and the importance of maintaining its 'golden principles' (shared management, multi-level governance and partnership, and the place-based approach) have also been echoed by several Member States, regions, associations of LRAs, and other stakeholders in their own positions on future cohesion policy adopted during 2024⁷³. The [Presidency paper](#) for the debate on the management of cohesion policy funds post-2027 at the General Affairs Council (Cohesion) on 28 November 2024 also included an explicit reference to the CoR opinion on *The future of cohesion policy post 2027* and its key requests on the matter.

Other activities during 2024 and a strategic package of opinions adopted at the October and November 2024 Plenaries allow the CoR to further target the preparations of the legislative proposals for the post 2027 period:

- *A renewed Cohesion Policy post 2027 that leaves no one behind*⁷⁴ for which several debates have taken place in the presence of high-level EC representatives.
- *The future of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) post 2027*⁷⁵, which led the EC to initiate a broad consultation with EU member states on the strategic vision of the ETC post-2027. The CoR also organised a high-level conference in May 2024 to put forward key proposals on how ETC can further support development in border regions, gathering over 300 decision-makers and stakeholder from 30 European countries.

⁷³ Among positions transmitted to the CoR: joint position paper initiated by Nouvelle Aquitaine and Emilia Romagna and signed by 136 regions, as well as the position papers of the Eastern German States, the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic, the Association of the Slovak Self-Governing Regions and the Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia, the network of Northern Sparsely Populated Areas, and the Baltic Sea States sub-regional cooperation.

⁷⁴ COTER-VII/040 - A renewed Cohesion Policy post 2027 that leaves no one behind - CoR responses to the 9th Cohesion Report and the Report of the Group of High-Level Specialists on the Future of Cohesion Policy - co-rapporteurs: Vasco Alves Cordeiro (PT/PES) and Emil Boc (RO/EPP). - COR-2024-01799-00-01-AC-TRA-EN

⁷⁵ COTER-VII/038 - The future of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) post 2027 - rapporteur: Karsten Uno Petersen (DK/PES). - COR-2024-01007-00-00-AC-TRA-EN

- With regard to the issue of a just transition, the continuous efforts of the CoR via opinions (such as '*A Just Transition for all EU regions*'⁷⁶) and events (such as the Multi-Level Dialogue on Just Transition) in favour of a robust future cohesion policy with a very strong just transition component have contributed to a higher profile of the topic within the missions of several Executive Vice-Presidents-designate and Commissioners-designate, while also advancing and strengthening the EU's just transition framework.
- The preparation of the CoR opinion on *How to exploit the full potential of cohesion policy to tackle demographic change*⁷⁷ requested by the Hungarian Council Presidency resulted in an invitation to present the draft opinion at working level in the Council's Working Party on Structural Measures and Outermost Regions (SMOR) and uptake of many of the recommendations set out in the CoR opinion by the [Council conclusions](#) on the matter that were adopted at the General Affairs Council (Cohesion) on 28 November 2024.

CoR members in the EC's Fit for Future (F4F) Platform were also rapporteurs of two F4F opinions adopted in October 2024: 'Evaluation of the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the Just Transition Fund'⁷⁸ and 'Evaluation of the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)'⁷⁹. These opinions make concrete proposals on how the implementation of cohesion policy can be simplified within the current timeframe up to 2027 and beyond. They will contribute to the EC's mid-term evaluations of ERDF-CF-JTF and of ESF+, and future EC work on simplification and Better Regulation.

The Mons Summit, a few months before the European elections, acted as a central platform for the Cohesion Alliance to mobilise and push messages on the future of cohesion policy together with the 6 main associations representing local and regional authorities. Finally, the 2024 edition of the European Week of Regions and Cities provided an opportunity for CoR members to express their concerns about reported plans within the EC to centralise and nationalise the cohesion policy. These concerns received a large echo in the press in many Member States, with articles published in leading national newspapers⁸⁰. The upcoming Polish Presidency, through the voices of several of its ministers expressed its clear opposition to any form of dismantling of cohesion policy. Moreover, thanks to close contacts with the EP REGI committee, the written questions for the confirmation hearing of EC's Executive Vice-President-designate for Cohesion and Reforms were to a large extent convergent with the CoR position, including on the 'Do no harm to cohesion principle' and on the necessity to ensure the shared management model, the principles of multi-level governance and partnership, and the place-based approach in the post 2027 period.

The importance of the CoR and LRAs in the EU political debate was confirmed by the invitation of CoR President Cordeiro to the informal Council GAC meeting on cohesion and demography in September 2024 (replaced by the Secretary-General) and to the EP REGI committee in December 2024, as well as the participation of EC Executive Vice-President for Cohesion and Reforms Raffaele Fitto in the joint meeting of the CoR COTER commission and EP Committee on Regional Development (REGI) at the CoR on 12 December 2024.

As regards ongoing legislative files, the CoR opinion *European Cross-Border Mechanism 2.0*⁸¹ adopted in October 2023 has been very impactful during 2024, as the [EC's subsequent amended proposal](#) for a Regulation a *Mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context* largely takes on board the CoR recommendations. Each point from the CoR opinion is reflected in this draft

⁷⁶ COTER-VII/039 – A Just Transition for all EU regions – rapporteur: Marco Marsilio (IT/ECR) - COR-2024-00424-00-00-AC-TRA.

⁷⁷ COTER-VII/043 - How to exploit the full potential of cohesion policy to tackle demographic change – rapporteur: Raquel García González (ES/PES). - COR-2024-01985-00-01-AC-TRA-EN

⁷⁸ Rapporteur: Mark Speich (DE/EPP) – [Link to the F4F opinion](#).

⁷⁹ Rapporteur: Anne Karjalainen (FI/PES) – [Link to the F4F opinion](#).

⁸⁰ including FAZ (Germany), Corriere della sera (Italy), Rzeczpospolita (Poland), Der Standard (Austria) and El País (Spain).

⁸¹ COTER-VII/025 - European Cross-Border Mechanism 2.0 – rapporteur: Magali Altounian (FR/Renew Europe) - COR-2022-06083-00-01-AC-TRA.

regulation, such as the request to simplify the regulation and the procedures, to clarify the voluntary nature of the regulation and that everyone concerned can submit a request, including individual citizens.

5.3.2 Enlargement of the European Union and support to Ukraine

Main impact:

- Several CoR proposals, as expressed in the [opinion on the Ukraine Facility](#)⁸² adopted in October 2023, found their way into the final regulation adopted by the Parliament and the Council in February 2024⁸³.
- At the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC), which took place on 11-12 June in Berlin, the local and regional dimension was highlighted more than at any of the preceding URCs, including through the active participation of several CoR members. President Cordeiro and the chair of the Working Group on Ukraine Ms Dulkiewicz were officially invited and participated as speakers in the URC. The European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the reconstruction of Ukraine had addressed recommendations to the URC and was present with a joint stand (CoR, CEMR, ALDA, Service Agency “communities in one world”)
- The CoR and U-LEAD with Europe started a new phase in their long-standing cooperation by launching preparations for the initiative "Training and internship programme support for Ukrainian Municipalities" (TIPS4UA), together with the Ukraine Alliance. The programme was announced by the CoR President in his speech on the State of Regions and Cities and will be launched in 2025.
- Following a longstanding request from the CoR, the EU-Albania Stabilisation and Association Council decided to set up a Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) with a view to promoting dialogue and cooperation between the local and regional authorities from the EU and Albania (the decision entered in force on 1 December 2024). This represents a major upgrade in the involvement of Albania's LRAs in the accession process, as JCCs serve as the statutory vehicles for this purpose. The JCC will become operational in 2025.
- President Cordeiro addressed letters to HR/VP Borrell and Commission Várhelyi, expressing the readiness of the CoR to participate in JCCs also with Ukraine and Moldova, as soon as the necessary Association Council decisions have been adopted.
- In response to the requests made in the opinion *Enlargement package 2023 - Western Balkans and Türkiye*, the European Commission has taken significant steps to address the outlined needs and priorities of the CoR. For instance, in response to the longstanding CoR request repeated in several opinions, the recently updated version of the assessment framework 'Principles of Public Administration' incorporates dimensions of multi-level and sub-national governance. In 2024, it was used by SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Government and Management Administration) to assess the situation in the six Western Balkan partners.

The regulation on the Ukraine Facility, which entered into force in March 2024, refers in a more substantive way to the local and regional dimension and includes more financial support for LRAs than the original proposal. The CoR had liaised in a very constructive way with the European Parliament and engaged the [European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine](#) in the consultation process including through a meeting with relevant European Commission services. This facility will provide predictable and flexible support to Ukraine with up to EUR 50 billion in grants and loans for the period 2024-2027. The European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of

⁸² CIVEX-VII/025 - The Ukraine Facility – Rapporteur-General: Dario Nardella (IT/PES) - COR-2023-03816-00-00-AC TRA

⁸³ Regulation (EU) 2024/792 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 February 2024 establishing the Ukraine Facility COR-2024-04253-10-00-NB-REF (EN) 47/62

Ukraine was mentioned in the related Ukraine Plan, presented by the Ukrainian government in March 2024.

Thanks also to the continuous and intensive work of the CoR from Lugano (URC2022) to London (URC2023) to Berlin (URC2024), including the organisation and hosting of pre-conference events and the full involvement of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine, the local and regional dimension clearly increased in visibility and weight at this annual forum, which was reflected in a high number of speaking and moderating roles for key CoR representatives and the presence of the Alliance with a stand (CoR jointly with other partners) in the "Recovery Forum". At the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC) in June 2024 in Berlin, the local and regional dimension was highlighted more than at any of the preceding URCs. The CoR President, the chair of the Working Group on Ukraine, Ms Aleksandra Dulkiewicz and the CIVEX chair, Mr Patrick Molinoz, represented the CoR together with other CoR members.

The CoR and U-LEAD with Europe started a new phase in their long-standing cooperation by launching preparations for the initiative "Training and internship programme support for Ukrainian Municipalities" (TIPS4UA), together with the Ukraine Alliance.

The Working Group on Ukraine continued its work, offering expertise on decentralisation reform and discussing the state of EU accession with representatives from the EU Commission, the Ukrainian government, and local and regional authorities.

The European Commission's [follow-up report](#) on the two CoR opinions on the 2023 Enlargement Package was published in October 2024 and the European Commission concurs with almost all points in the opinion [Enlargement package 2023 – Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia](#)⁸⁴. Notably, it agrees with the Committee's opinion that enlargement is, and remains, a geostrategic investment in the long-term peace, security, stability and prosperity of the whole of our continent. The Commission also agrees with the Committee's opinion that an inclusive enlargement process should involve local and regional authorities in the candidate countries and in the European Union. EC, as well as the CoR, encourages Ukraine and its partners from the European Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine, to continue pursuing decentralisation reforms and capacity building for local and regional authorities. Additionally, the Commission supports the CoR's recommendations for Moldova, particularly in combatting corruption and "de-oligarchisation". The EC shares the CoR concerns about deep political polarisation, the lack of effective cross-party cooperation, and widespread disinformation regarding the EU in Georgia as the main stumbling blocks on the country's path towards the EU.

Regarding the opinion [Enlargement package 2023 - Western Balkans and Türkiye](#)⁸⁵ the Commission welcomes the CoR's commitment to fostering engagement with the enlargement countries. This includes establishing Joint Consultative Committees (JCCs) where appropriate and organising the annual Enlargement Day conferences. Following a longstanding request from the CoR, the Stabilisation and Association Council decided in October 2024 to set up a JCC with Albania; the decision entered into force in December 2024. This represents a major upgrade in the involvement of Albania's LRAs in the accession process, as JCCs serve as the statutory vehicles for this purpose. The JCC will accompany the accession negotiations process facilitating policy dialogue and exchange of best practices. It will also help prepare Albanian LRA representatives for future roles as CoR members. The inaugural meeting could be held at the 10th Enlargement Day in 2025, provided there are sufficient assurances regarding political and gender balance in the composition of the JCC.

In response to the requests made in the opinion [Enlargement package 2023 - Western Balkans and Türkiye](#), the European Commission has taken significant steps to address the outlined needs and

⁸⁴ CIVEX-VII/028 – Enlargement package 2023 - Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia – rapporteur: Antje GROTHEER, (DE/PES) - COR-2023-05426-00-00-01-AC-TRA

⁸⁵ CIVEX-VII/027 – Enlargement package 2023 – Western Balkans and Türkiye – rapporteur: Nikola DOBROSLAVIĆ, (HR/EPP) - COR-2023-05623-00-00-01-AC-TRA

priorities of the CoR. For instance, in response to the longstanding CoR request repeated in several opinions, the Commission responded that a new version of the assessment framework 'Principles of Public Administration', was developed jointly by the Commission and SIGMA (Support for Improvement in Government and Management Administration) and adopted in November 2023. In line with the CoR request, this updated version now incorporates dimensions of multi-level and sub-national governance across various indicators, including those related to evidence-based policy-making, accountability, service delivery and public finance management. SIGMA is currently conducting new assessments in the six Western Balkan partners based on this new updated methodology. These assessments are expected to be finalised before the end of 2024 and will serve as a basis for further reforms and support measures aimed at empowering the local and regional administrations (LRAs) within their respective administrations. This initiative is crucial for identifying areas needing improvement and ensuring effective empowerment of LRAs.

The opinion also called for enhanced cooperation with LRAs in the Western Balkans through existing regional structures, notably NALAS (Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe). The Commission responded favourably, highlighting NALAS' key role in various initiatives such as the Covenant of Mayors project, supported by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Through this cooperation, the Commission and NALAS are building networks and capacities of local authorities committed to combating climate change and promoting sustainable. Representatives of NALAS are invited to participate in events organised in the framework of the project to improve knowledge and strengthen internal capacities. Additionally, a helpdesk for cities and municipalities in the Western Balkans and Türkiye is being set up, with NALAS selected to manage this task. CoR has consistently encouraged the greater involvement of NALAS in the field of enlargement policy due to their considerable pool of expertise and best practice, and they are regular contributors to CoR events such as the Enlargement Day.

By focusing on these responses, the European Commission demonstrates its commitment to supporting the Western Balkans and Türkiye, based on proposals made by CoR and other key players in the field of subsidiarity and multilevel governance. These proactive steps not only address the specific needs and requests outlined in the opinion but also highlight the tangible impacts of the Committee's initiatives on local governance and sustainability efforts. Their achievement also perfectly illustrates the importance of long-term work in external relations, where impact is not easy to measure quantitatively, e.g. by legislative changes.

The CoR plenary debate on "20 years after the 2004 EU enlargement: Lessons learnt and looking ahead", which took place on 8 October 2024, highlighted the benefits of enlargement and provided early views regarding the necessary EU policy reviews.

5.3.3 European Pillar of Social Rights in action

Main impact:

- Following up on the CoR's proposal contained in the opinion on *Zero long-term unemployment: the local and regional perspective*⁸⁶, the European Commission decided to launch a pilot project committing EUR 23 million from ESF+ to cofinance regions' and/or cities' projects to reintegrate long term unemployed to the labour market.
- In January 2024, the EPOCH practice programme – derived, among others, from the proposals contained in the CoR opinion on homelessness – was launched⁸⁷.

⁸⁶ SEDEC-VII/037: *Zero long-term unemployment: the local and regional perspective* – rapporteur: Yonnec Polet, (BE/PES) - COR-2022-05490-00-00-AC-TRA.

⁸⁷ Programme chosen to embody the axis of mutual learning and capacity building within the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness. Co-financed by the European Union, the French Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing (DIHAL) and the King Baudouin Foundation, the programme will last for two years.

- The opinion on *Addressing territorial inequalities by improving access to social services*⁸⁸ fed into and was mentioned in the EPSCO Council Conclusions of 2 December 2024.⁸⁹

On the subject of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) as a whole, the CoR has produced a significant number of opinions⁹⁰ pertaining to the principles of the EPSR, and at the same time has collaborated with a number of stakeholders to promote mutual interests through the Enhanced Cooperation Agreement with DG EMPL, which is currently ongoing, mainly through the zero long-term unemployment programme and skills-related initiatives, but also through consultations of CoR members on a number of topics.

The opinion on *Addressing territorial inequalities by improving access to social services*⁹¹ (requested by the Hungarian Council Presidency) continued the discussions of the 10th European Summit of Regions and Cities, particularly in the session *Agora Public Services: Quality and accessible healthcare, education, housing and culture across all territories*⁹² and was adopted in the CoR SEDEC commission meeting in the presence of a high-level representative of the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU, Attila Sztójka, State Secretary of Hungary for Social Opportunities and Roma Relations. The opinion fed into the 2 December 2024 Council conclusions, reaffirming the CoR's contribution to shaping EU-level strategies for social cohesion and equitable⁹³. The impact of the work on social services was also documented in the report from the Observer of the German Länder in the Council.

Regarding homelessness, the CoR rapporteur on the opinion *Eradicating homelessness in the European Union: The local and regional perspective*⁹⁴ and CoR representative in the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness, has continued his work as technical expert in consulting a number of cities and regions through mutual learning events. Furthermore, in January 2024, the EPOCH practice programme – derived, among others, from the proposals contained in the CoR opinion on homelessness – was launched⁹⁵. The work on homelessness will be used by the European Commission as one of the main starting points for forming an EU anti-poverty strategy.

In addition, the Council Presidency has invited the rapporteur on *Demographic change: a toolbox for action*⁹⁶ to present his opinion during the informal ministerial meeting on demography⁹⁷. The opinion will be cited in one of the Presidency's council conclusions (expected to come during the EPSCO Council formation on 2-3 December 2024).

Following up on the CoR's proposal contained in the opinion on *Zero long-term unemployment: the local and regional perspective*⁹⁸, the European Commission decided to launch a pilot project committing EUR 23 million from ESF+ to cofinance regions and/or cities' projects to reintegrate long term unemployed to the labour market. The launch of the project took place in April 2024, at the CoR premises

⁸⁸ SEDEC-VII/051: *Addressing territorial inequalities by improving access to social services* – rapporteur: Declan McDonnell, (IE/EA) - COR-2024-03099-00-00-AC-TRA

⁸⁹ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15610-2024-INIT/en/pdf>

⁹⁰ SEDEC-VII/044: *EU disability card and parking card for persons with disabilities* COR-2023-04646-00-00-AC-TRA; SEDEC-VII/045: *Improving the social inclusion of children by implementing the European Child Guarantee at local and regional level* COR-2023-04650-00-00-AC-TRA; SEDEC-VII/046: *Skills and talent mobility* COR-2023-05840-00-01-AC-TRA; SEDEC-VII/048: *Empowering Local and Regional Authorities in Integrated Child Protection Systems* COR-2024-00219-00-00-AC-TRA; SEDEC-VII/050: *Reinforced quality framework for traineeships* COR-2024-01795-00-01-AC-TRA;

⁹¹ SEDEC-VII/051: [Addressing territorial inequalities by improving access to social services](#) - rapporteur: Declan MCDONNELL (IE/EA) - COR-2024-03099-00-00-AC-TRA

⁹² Mons, 18-19 March 2024

⁹³ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15610-2024-INIT/en/pdf>

⁹⁴ SEDEC-VII/023: *Eradicating homelessness in the European Union: The local and regional perspective* – rapporteur Mikko Aaltonen (FI/PES) - COR-2021-03911-00-00-AC-TRA

⁹⁵ Programme chosen to embody the axis of mutual learning and capacity building within the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness. Co-financed by the European Union, the French Interministerial Delegation for Accommodation and Access to Housing (DIHAL) and the King Baudouin Foundation, the programme will last for two years.

⁹⁶ SEDEC-VII/047: *Demographic change: a toolbox for action* – rapporteur: János Ádám Karácsony (HU/ECR) - COR-2024-01173-00-01-AC-TRA.

⁹⁷ Budapest, 18-19 November 2024

⁹⁸ SEDEC-VII/037: *Zero long-term unemployment: the local and regional perspective* – rapporteur: Yonnec Polet, (BE/PES) - COR-2022-05490-00-00-AC-TRA.

with a joint statement by Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights Nicolas Schmit, CoR President Vasco Alves Cordeiro, MEPs and CoR members. The project has attracted considerable interest of local regional authorities: 78 expressions of interest have been received by the deadline of 30 September 2024.

The CoR has also cooperated in the OECD's Local Employment and Economic Development (LEED) programme on several issues, including social economy, demography, skills and labour shortages, algorithmic management at work and zero long-term unemployment. In this context, CoR rapporteurs and members have participated in the LEED plenaries and events. The cooperation is set to continue in 2025, extending to issues related to housing and cross-border labour markets. Additionally, a closer relationship with the European Labour Authority on matters related to labour mobility is being sought through cooperation to create a campaign on long-term care workers, which is currently being examined, focusing on their mobility and recognition of skills and qualifications.

5.3.4 The Common Fisheries Policy

Main impact:

- Synergies between the CoR opinion on *The Common Fisheries Policy on the ground: towards sustainable and resilient coastal communities in the EU* and the EP resolution on the *Implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and future perspectives*: both institutions plead in favour of a stronger role of local and regional authorities;
- Following a call from the EP and the CoR for a separate Commissioner post dedicated exclusively to fisheries, aquaculture and maritime affairs, the new European Commission 2024-2029 appointed a Commissioner for Fisheries and Oceans.

In accordance with the legal obligations to report on the implementation of the CFP 10 years after its revision in 2013, the European Commission published in February 2023 several Communications in view of improving the sustainability and resilience of the EU's fisheries and aquaculture sector.

In response, the CoR adopted its opinion on The Common Fisheries Policy⁹⁹ in November 2023 whereas the European Parliament published its resolution¹⁰⁰ in January 2024. Both institutions highlight the important role of Local and regional authorities in implementing the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), recognising the importance of coastal communities, small-scale fisheries and the need for regionally adapted policies. While the EP resolution pleads for strengthening the regionalisation of the CFP, allowing regions and local authorities to be more involved in the drafting, development and evaluation of the national operational programmes for fisheries and in fisheries management more generally, the CoR underscores that involving local and regional authorities is vital for the effective implementation of the CFP.

In addition, the CoR advocates for regional cooperation and local management of fisheries, arguing that policies should be tailored to the specific needs of each EU region. It suggests creating a Fisheries and Oceans Pact to involve local stakeholders more closely in decision-making.

While recognising the importance of healthy marine ecosystems for the prosperity of the EU's regions, the CoR report calls for a balance between the three sustainability pillars of the CFP - environmental, economic and social to safeguard the long-term viability of the sector. In the same vein, stressing the need to keep a balance between the three pillars of sustainability in the CFP, the European Parliament supports strengthening, addressing gaps and stepping up the ambition in the CFP's socio-economic

⁹⁹ [OJ C, C/2024/1043, 9.2.2024](#). NAT-VII/035 – The Common Fisheries Policy on the ground: towards sustainable and resilient coastal communities in the EU – rapporteur: Jesús GAMALLO ALLER (ES/EPP) - COR-2023-01876-00-00-AC-TRA-EN.

¹⁰⁰ [REPORT on the state of play in the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy and future perspectives | A9-0357/2023 | European Parliament \(europa.eu\)](#)

and food security dimensions. In this context, both underscore the vital socio-economic role of small-scale fisheries in many coastal communities and its strategic role in the availability of food supply.

Both documents also share common concerns about climate change impact on fisheries and emphasize the need for adaptation, decarbonisation, and ecosystem resilience. They advocate for policies that support the transition to greener fleets, promote sustainable fishing practices, and preserve marine ecosystems to enhance the fisheries sector's resilience to climate change. More in particular, the EP is calling for the EMFAF to provide effective support to more selective and less impacting fishing techniques for EU fishing fleets, while the CoR calls for a renewed inter-regional commitment to establishing greener fleets. Finally, both the EP and the CoR stress the connection between healthy marine ecosystems and climate resilience.

On global markets, both the European Parliament and the European Committee of the Regions documents stress the importance of fair competition and the need to enforce high environmental and social standards in the global seafood market. EU fisheries should be protected from low-standard imports and EU should take a leadership role in promoting sustainable global fisheries through trade agreements and partnerships.

Finally, both the EP and the CoR recognise the key, strategic role of aquaculture in providing food security and supporting jobs in coastal communities.

5.3.5 Common Agricultural Policy

Main impact:

The COR adopted an opinion on the future of the CAP in order to influence the report of the strategic dialogue on the future of agriculture. This opinion was presented to the AGRI commissioner during the March NAT commission meeting during a debate with various stakeholders and to the Chair of the Strategic dialogue during the June NAT meeting (together with the results of the REGHUB consultation). The COR opinion was also presented to various experts' groups of the European commission. Moreover, the NAT Chair attended the first panel of the EU AGRI FOOD Days in December with the new AGRI commissioner, the Chair of the EP AGRI committee and various stakeholders.

Despite numerous presentations of opinions on the future of the CAP, the impact was limited, mainly due to the absence of representatives of the regions in the working group on the strategic dialogue. Our specific requests to strengthen the regional dimension of the CAP were not taken into account in the final report.

6. Conclusions – Outlook

2024 was a crucial year for the European Union, its institutions and local and regional authorities, and its people. It required continued response to the challenges created by conflicts in Europe and the Middle East as well as other global challenges, such as the climate crisis or rising inequalities. On top of this, for the CoR, it was the last full year of its 2020-2025 term of office and was marked by the 30th anniversary of the institution with a resolution on local and regional authorities' role in shaping the future of the EU over the 30 years of the CoR being adopted in November 2024¹⁰¹.

This was a great opportunity to take stock of our institutional achievements and reflect on the new objectives for the years to come. In 2024, it was also important to combine the long-term political priorities of the CoR, which were set at the beginning of 2020-2025 term of office, with regular dialogue and cooperation with the other EU institutions, notably after the EU elections of June 2024 and ahead of the instalment of the new college of commissioners. It was important for the CoR to ensure that the main EU institutions include regional and local authorities' concerns in their priorities and in the new strategic agenda 2024-2029. In this regard, the 10th European Summit of Regions and Cities, which the CoR organised in March in Mons, was instrumental in mobilising a record number of local and regional representatives across Europe and beyond, and in delivering a vision for a stronger, fairer and more resilient Europe, built from the bottom.

The Strategic Agenda of the European Council adopted in June 2024 and the Political Guidelines of the EC 2024-29 in July 2024 addressed several policy areas important for local and regional authorities in view of the new CoR term of office 2025-2030, starting in February 2025. A number of strategic challenges and processes are of relevance to the future work and priorities of the CoR, such as a new European Democracy shield, cohesion policy, EU sustainable prosperity and competitiveness, as well as the vital processes related to the pre-enlargement policy reviews and the proposal for the next Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) post-2027. To deliver on these priorities substantial new steps should be taken in inter-institutional relations and policymaking, as well as in the overall context of the Better Regulation agenda, respect for the rule of law and the strengthening of European democracy. This also means positioning the CoR in the inter-institutional framework by enhancing compatibility between its commissions and the portfolios of the members of the new European Commission's college, as well as the European Parliament committees and Council bodies.

Furthermore, in 2024 the CoR successfully completed negotiations and signed new cooperation agreements strengthening its bilateral inter-institutional relations with the European Commission and the European Parliament. These foresee new avenues for political and administrative cooperation in numerous areas, from policy work throughout the entirety of the policy making cycle to better-regulation, communication or strengthening partnership in the run-up to elections, among others.

In October 2024 the CoR adopted the resolution on the State of Regions and Cities in the EU and the political guidelines for the next European Commission 2024-29¹⁰², in conjuncture with the release of its fifth [2024 EU Annual Report on the State of Regions and Cities](#) edition. This year's Report brought together the solutions and vision that regions and cities have come up with to address various challenges such as the green and digital transitions, rising inequalities and preparing for the future enlargement, while always maintaining the social fabric strong. With this report, the CoR wanted to ensure that the future ahead would be thought with the realities of all territories in mind.

The CoR's strategic choices for its 2025-2030 term of office will have an impact on its political and administrative organisation and determine the distribution of competences among its commissions and in its proposed working methods. The new commissions' remits are expected to provide CoR members

¹⁰¹ RESOL-VII/035 - Resolution on building on 30 years of the European Committee of the Regions: local and regional authorities shaping the future of the EU – COR-2024-03718-00-00-RES-TRA-EN

¹⁰² RESOL-VII/034 - Urgent draft resolution on the State of Regions and Cities in the EU - COR-2024-02872-00-00-RES-TRA COR-2024-04253-10-00-NB-REF (EN) 53/62

with the most effective political structures to enable them to implement the main priorities of the institution, including a proactive approach to new and emerging priorities.

The main objectives for the CoR commissions during the new 2025-2030 term of office are thus to:

- better reflect the strategic agenda of the EU and the political priorities of the CoR;
- address the transformational changes in European society and way of life;
- better position the CoR in the inter-institutional framework;
- ensure compatibility with the remits of the European Parliament's committees and the European Commission's DGs;
- build strong links between CoR members and MEPs;
- address the cross-cutting issues in the most cohesive way;
- balance the workload of commissions with other political activities;
- ensure synergies between the commissions and the CoR platforms and networks;
- ensure a budget neutral exercise.

All this should lead to the CoR opinions having a stronger impact overall.

7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix 1: List of opinions adopted in 2024

CIVEX

- CIVEX-VII/026 - EU roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime - Rapporteur: BIANCHI Matteo Luigi (IT/ECR) - COR-2023-05442-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/027 - Enlargement package 2023 - Western Balkans and Türkiye - Rapporteur: DOBROSLAVIĆ Nikola (HR/EPP) - COR-2023-05623-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/028 - Enlargement package 2023 – Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia - Rapporteur: GROTHEER Antje (DE/PES) - COR-2023-05426-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/029 - Active subsidiarity: a fundamental principle in the EU Better regulation agenda - Rapporteur: SPEICH Mark (DE/EPP) - COR-2023-05624-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/030 - Defence of Democracy - Rapporteur: KÓBOR József (HU/EA) - COR-2024-00087-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/031 - Regions and Municipalities implementing the EU Strategy with Africa - Rapporteur: MILANA Guido (IT/Renew) – COR-2024-01622-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/032 - Common Implementation Plan for the Pact on Migration and Asylum: The Local and Regional Perspective - Rapporteur: Antje GROTHEER (DE/PES) - COR-2024-02717-00-01-AC-TRA

COTER

- COTER-VII/033 - Greening Freight Transport – Rapporteur: RIBAU ESTEVES José (ES/EPP) - COR-2023-04958-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/034 - Smart, sustainable and affordable housing as a tool for local authorities to face multiple challenges - Rapporteur: JAADLA Andres (EE/RENEW E.) - COR-2023-04562-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/035 - Proposing a European Declaration on Cycling - Rapporteur: CENSI Arianna Maria (IT/PES) - COR-2023-05839-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/036 - Creation of a common European mobility data space – Rapporteur: Zdeněk HŘIB (CZ/GREENS) - COR-2024-01012-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/037 - Mechanism to resolve legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context - The Cross-Border Facilitation Tool - Rapporteur: ALTOUNIAN Magali (FR/RENEW E.) - COR-2024-01008-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/038 - The future of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) post 2027 - Rapporteur: PETERSEN Karsten Uno (DK/PES) – COR-2024-01007-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/039 – A just transition for all EU region - Rapporteur: Marco MARSILIO (IT/ECR) - COR-2024-00424-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/040 - A renewed Cohesion policy post 2027 that leaves no one behind - CoR responses to the 9th Cohesion Report, the Report of the High-Level group on the future of cohesion policy and the Council conclusions on the future of Cohesion Policy (June 2024) - Rapporteur: BOC Emil (RO/EPP) – COR-2024-01799-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/041 - EU budget and place-based policies: proposals for new design and delivery mechanisms in the MFF post-2027 - Rapporteur: MAUPERTUIS Marie-Antoinette (FR/EA) – COR-2024-02161-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/042 - Solving obstacles to the cooperation of emergency services in the EU's border regions - Rapporteur: BRANDA Pavel (CZ/ECR) – COR-2024-01609-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/043 - How to exploit the full potential of cohesion policy to tackle demographic change - Rapporteur: GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ Raquel (ES/PES) – COR-2024-01985-00-00-AC-TRA

ECON

- ECON-VII/035 - The SME Relief Package and the BEFIT framework - Rapporteur: FEENEY Kate (IE/RENEW E.) - COR-2023-04941-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/036 - Enhancing the European Administrative Space (ComPAct) - Rapporteur: JUNGEN Tom (LU/PES) - COR-2024-00028-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/037 - *Examen à mi-parcours du plan de relance européen post-Covid (Facilité pour la reprise et la résilience)* - Rapporteur: Christophe ROUILLON (FR/PES) - COR-2024-01372-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/038 - Challenges and Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence in the Public Sector: defining the role of Regional and Local Authorities - Rapporteur: CIRIO Alberto (IT/EPP) – COR-2024-01594-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/039 - Shock-proofing European regions: Strengthening local and regional economic resilience in the strategic evolution of the Single Market – Rapporteur: Ilpo HELTIMOINEN (FI/ECR) - COR-2024-01340-00-01-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/040 - Proposal for a Regulation on the screening of foreign investments in the EU - Rapporteur: GRANFALK Pehr (DK/EPP) – COR-2024-03403-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/043 - The future of the single market and the EU's competitiveness - Rapporteur: VAN GRUIJTHUIJSEN Martijn (NL/RENEW E.) – COR-2024-02106-00-00-AC-TRA

ENVE

- ENVE-VII/041 - Green Deal and Health - Rapporteur: MORENO BONILLA Juan Manuel (ES/EPP) - COR-2023-03364-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/042 - Soil Monitoring and Resilience (Soil Monitoring Law) - Rapporteur: NILSSON Frida (DK/RENEW E.) - COR-2023-03680-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/043 - Localising energy production: the role of geothermal energy - Rapporteur: RIBÁNYI József (HU/ECR) - COR-2023-04406-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/044 - Preventing plastic pellet losses to reduce microplastic pollution - Rapporteur: CIAMBETTI Roberto (IT/ECR) - COR-2023-05588-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/045 - European Wind Power Action Plan - Rapporteur: Andries GRYFFROY (BE/EA) - COR-2024-00710-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/046 - Biodiversity protection and coexistence with large carnivores in Europe – challenges and opportunities for local and regional authorities - Rapporteur: BORBOLY Csaba (ROEPP) - COR-2023-05585-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/047 - Towards a resilient water management to fight climate crisis within an EU Blue Deal - Rapporteur: VIOLA André (FR/PES) - COR-2023-05587-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/048 - Towards a Global Green Deal: harmonizing global frameworks for climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development - Rapporteur: TRZASKOWSKI Rafał Kazimierz (PL/EPP) - COR-2023-05586-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/049 - The role of local and regional authorities in the transition towards a circular economy - Rapporteur: CAPONE Loredana (IT/PES) - COR-2024-00709-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/050 - The future of EU climate policy: aligning mitigation targets and adaptation challenges - Rapporteur: MARKKULA Markku (FI/EPP) – COR-2024-01474-00-01-AC-TRA

NAT

- NAT-VII/034 - Risk management and market regulation: the tools to strengthen the sustainability of European agriculture - Rapporteur: CAPUTO Nicola (IT/RENEW E.) - COR-2023-02288-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/038 - New genomic techniques and plant reproductive material - Rapporteur: KONCZER Erik (HU/PES) - COR-2023-04545-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/039 - Mental health - Rapporteur: STRUK Mieczysław (PL/EPP) - COR-2023-04544-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/040 - Addressing medicine shortages - Rapporteur: VON KALBEN Erika (DE/GREENS) - COR-2023-05498-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/041 - Creating an EU Blue deal from an agriculture and rural development perspective across EU Regions - Rapporteur: VANLOUWE Karl (DE/EA) - COR-2023-05513-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/042 - The Future of the Common Agricultural Policy - Rapporteur: CAŁBECKI Piotr (PL/EPP) - COR-2023-05512-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/043 - Promotion of roots tourism for sustainable local revitalization – Rapporteur: Giuseppe VARACALLI (IT/RENEW E.) - COR-2024-01545-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/045 - Fair working conditions in agriculture: the local and regional perspective - Rapporteur: GLOANEC-MAURIN Karine (FR/PES) - COR-2024-02565-00-00-AC-TRA

SEDEC

- SEDEC-VII/042 - Towards an integrated EU policy approach to support place-based innovation for the green and digital transition- Rapporteur: PUTZU Andrea (IT/ECR) - COR-2023-03934-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/043 - Recommendations for the next Framework Programme (FP10) for Research and Innovation - Rapporteur: Anne BESNIER (FR/PES) - COR-2023-03671-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/044 - EU disability card and parking card for persons with disabilities - Rapporteur: VEŠLIGAJ Marko (HR/PES) - COR-2023-04646-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/045 - Improving the social inclusion of children by implementing the European Child Guarantee at local and regional level - Rapporteur: LATTUCA Enzo (IT/PES) - COR-2023-04650-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/046 - Skills and talent mobility - Rapporteur: DECOSTER François (FR/RENEW E.) - COR-2023-05840-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/047 – Demographic change in Europe: a toolbox for action - Rapporteur: János Ádám KARÁCSONY (HU/ECR) - COR-2024-01173-00-01-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/048 - Empowering Local and Regional Authorities in Integrated Child Protection Systems - Rapporteur: KAISER Peter (AT/PES)-) - COR-2024-00219-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/049 – Ethical artificial intelligence and access to supercomputing for start-ups - Rapporteur: Emil BOC (RO/EPP) - COR-2024-01164-01-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/050 – Reinforced quality framework for traineeships - Rapporteur: Dimitrios BIRMPAS (EL/PES) - COR-2024-01795-00-01-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/051 - Addressing territorial inequalities by improving access to social services - Rapporteur: Declan MCDONNELL (IE/EA) – COR-2024-03099-00-00-AC-TRA

RESOLUTIONS

- RESOL-VII/033 - Urgent draft resolution on a renewed cohesion policy post 2027 that leaves no one behind. Responses of the CoR on the Report of the High-Level Group on the future of cohesion policy and on the 9th Cohesion report - COR-2024-00548-00-00-RES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/034 - Urgent draft resolution on the State of Regions and Cities in the EU - COR-2024-02872-00-00-RES-TRA

- RESOL-VII/035 - Draft resolution on the 30th anniversary of the European Committee of the Regions – COR-2024-03718-00-00-RES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/036 - Draft urgent resolution on Regional Emergency Support to Reconstruction (RESTORE) and EAFRD measures to provide assistance to Member States affected by natural disasters – COR-2024-04184-00-00-RES-TRA

7.2 Appendix 2: List of opinions included in this report

CIVEX

- CIVEX-VII/025 - The Ukraine Facility – Rapporteur-General: Dario Nardella (IT/PES) - COR-2023-03816-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/030 – Defence of Democracy – Rapporteur: József KÓBOR (HU/EA) - COR-2024-00087-00-00-AC-TRA
- CIVEX-VII/029 – Active subsidiarity: a fundamental principle in the EU better regulation agenda – Rapporteur: Mark SPEICH, (DE/EPP) - COR-2023-05624-00-00-AC-TRA

COTER

- COTER-VII/015 - Towards zero emission road transport: Deploying alternative fuels infrastructure and strengthening CO2 emission performance standards - Rapporteur: Adrian TEBAN (RO/EPP) - COR-2021-04913-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/019 - Guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) – Rapporteur: Isabelle BOUDINEAU (FR/PES) - COR-2022-01228-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/025 - European Cross-Border Mechanism 2.0 – rapporteur: Magali Altounian (FR/Renew Europe) - COR-2022-06083-00-01-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/029 - A Just and Sustainable Transition for Automotive Regions - rapporteur: Sven Schulze (DE/EPP) - COR-2023-01449-00-00-AC-TRA;
- COTER-VII/030 – The future of Cohesion policy post-2027 – Co-rapporteurs: Vasco Alves CORDEIRO (PT/PES) and Emil BOC (RO/EPP) – COR-2023-02250-00-01-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/033 – Greening Freight Transport – rapporteur: José Ribau Esteves (PT/EPP) - COR-2023-04958-00-00-AC-TRA.
- COTER-VII/035 - Proposing a European Declaration on Cycling – rapporteur: Arianna Maria Censi (IT/PES) - COR-2023-05839-00-00-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/038 - The future of European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) post 2027 - rapporteur: Karsten Uno Petersen (DK/PES). - COR-2024-01007-00-00-AC-TRA-EN
- COTER-VII/039 – A Just Transition for all EU regions – rapporteur: Marco Marsilio (IT/ECR) - COR-2024-00424-00-00-AC-TRA.
- COTER-VII/040 - A renewed Cohesion Policy post 2027 that leaves no one behind - CoR responses to the 9th Cohesion Report and the Report of the Group of High-Level Specialists on the Future of Cohesion Policy - co-rapporteurs: Vasco Alves Cordeiro (PT/PES) and Emil Boc (RO/EPP). - COR-2024-01799-00-01-AC-TRA-EN
- COTER-VII/041 - EU budget and place-based policies: proposals for new design and delivery mechanisms in the MFF post-2027 – rapporteur: Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis (FR/EA). COR-2024-02161-00-01-AC-TRA
- COTER-VII/043 - How to exploit the full potential of cohesion policy to tackle demographic change – rapporteur: Raquel García González (ES/PES). - COR-2024-01985-00-01-AC-TRA

ECON

- ECON-VII/005 - Economic governance review – Rapporteur: Elio Di Rupo (BE/PES) - COR-2020-01370-00-01-AC-TRA-EN
- ECON-VII/014 – Delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 – Rapporteur: Ricardo RIO (PT/EPP) COR-2021-00103-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/020 - The EU economy after COVID-19: implications for economic governance – Rapporteur: Elio Di Rupo (BE/PES) - COR-2022-00194-00-00-AC-TRA-EN
- ECON-VII/027 - Single market emergency instrument - Rapporteur: Muhterem ARAS, (DE/The Greens) - COR-2022-04234-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/028 – Progress in the implementation of SDGs – Rapporteur: Ricardo RIO (PT/EPP) COR-2022-04274-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/029 – Interoperable Europe Act - Rapporteur: Michele PAIS, (IT/ECR) - COR-2023-00152-00-00-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/030 - Reform of the EU economic governance framework – Rapporteur: Elio Di Rupo (BE/PES) - COR-2023-00157-00-00-AC-TRA-EN
- ECON-VII-031 - Critical Raw Materials Package - Rapporteur: Isidre RIES (DE/PES) COR-2023-02188-00-01-AC-TRA
- ECON-VII/34 - EU Cyber Solidarity Act and Digital resilience – Rapporteur: Pehr GRANFALK (SE/EPP) - COR-2023-02191-00-01-AC-TRA

ENVE

- ENVE-VII/036- Fostering the potential and synergies of the EU Green Deal initiatives for regions and cities - Rapporteur: Andries GRYFFROY (BE/EA) - COR-2023-00229-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/048 – Towards a Global Green Deal: harmonizing global frameworks for climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development - Rapporteur: Rafał Trzaskowski (PL/EPP) and Kata Tüttő (HU/PES) - COR-2023-05586-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/043- Localising energy production: the role of geothermal energy - Rapporteur: József RIBÁNYI (HU/ECR)- COR-2023-04406-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/040-European Hydrogen Bank - Rapporteur: Arianna CENSI (IT/PES) - COR-2023-03286-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/039- Reform of the EU electricity market design - Rapporteur: Josef FREY (DE/Greens) - COR-2023-02118-00-00-AC-TRA
- ENVE-VII/045- European Wind Power Action Plan - Rapporteur: Andries GRYFFROY (BE/EA) - COR-2024-00710-00-01-PAC-TRA
- ENVE-VII-47 – Towards a resilient water management to fight climate crisis within an EU Blue Deal – Rapporteur: André VIOLA, (FR/PES)
- ENVE-VII/030 - EU Nature Restoration Law - Rapporteur: Roby BIWER, (LU/PES)
- ENVE-VII/046 - Biodiversity protection and coexistence with large carnivores in Europe – challenges and opportunities for local and regional authorities – Rapporteur: Csaba BORBOLY (RO/EPP)
- ENVE-VII/035 - Revision of the EU Ambient Air Quality Legislation - Rapporteur: Una POWER (IE/Greens)
- ENVE- VII/034 - Revision of the Urban Wastewater Treatment Directive – Rapporteur: Åsa ÅGREN WIKSTRÖM (SE/EPP)
- ENVE-VII/042 - Soil Monitoring and Resilience-Rapporteur: Frida NILSSON (SE/Renew Europe)
- ENVE-VII/044 - Preventing plastic pellet losses to reduce microplastic pollution – Rapporteur: Roberto Ciambetti (IT/ECR)
- ENVE-VII/049 - The role of local and regional authorities in the transition towards a circular economy – Rapporteur: Loredana CAPONE (IT/PES)

NAT

- NAT-VII/028 – European Health Data Space – rapporteur: Daniela CÎMPEAN (RO/EPP) - COR-2022-03754-00-00-AC-TRA
- NAT-VII/035 – The Common Fisheries Policy on the ground: towards sustainable and resilient coastal communities in the EU– rapporteur: Jesús GAMALLO ALLER (ES/EPP) - COR-2023-01876-00-00-AC-TRA-EN

SEDEC

- SEDEC-VII/023: Eradicating homelessness in the European Union: The local and regional perspective – rapporteur Mikko Aaltonen (FI/PES) - COR-2021-03911-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/037: Zero long-term unemployment: the local and regional perspective – rapporteur: Yonnec Polet, (BE/PES) - COR-2022-05490-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/038 – Mentoring: a powerful and meaningful tool for the Europe of tomorrow – rapporteur: Anne Rudisuhli (FR/Renew Europe) – COR-2023-01537-00-00-AC-TRA
- SEDEC-VII/044: EU disability card and parking card for persons with disabilities COR-2023-04646-00-00-AC-TRA;
- SEDEC-VII/045 Improving the social inclusion of children by implementing the European Child Guarantee at local and regional level COR-2023-04650-00-00-AC-TRA;
- SEDEC-VII/046: Skills and talent mobility COR-2023-05840-00-01-AC-TRA;
- SEDEC-VII/047: Demographic change: a toolbox for action – rapporteur: János Ádám Karácsony (HU/ECR) - COR-2024-01173-00-01-AC-TRA.
- SEDEC-VII/048: Empowering Local and Regional Authorities in Integrated Child Protection Systems COR-2024-00219-00-00-AC-TRA;
- SEDEC-VII/050: Reinforced quality framework for traineeships COR-2024-01795-00-01-AC-TRA;
- SEDEC-VII/051: Addressing territorial inequalities by improving access to social services – rapporteur: Declan McDonnell, (IE/EA) - COR-2024-03099-00-00-AC-TRA

RESOLUTIONS

- RESOL-VII-026 – Resolution on the European Year of Skills 2023 – COR-2022-05216-00-00-RES-TRA.
- RESOL-VII/028 – Resolution on Harnessing Talent in Europe’s Regions – COR-2023-00574-00-00-RES-TRA.
- RESOL-VII/030 - SDGs in EU regions and cities following the EU Voluntary Review and 2023 UN discussions COR-2023-03638-00-00-RES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/033 - Resolution on a renewed cohesion policy post 2027 that leaves no one behind - Responses of the CoR on the Report of the High-Level Group on the future of cohesion policy and on the 9th Cohesion report - COR-2024-00548-00-00-RES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/034 - Urgent draft resolution on the State of Regions and Cities in the EU - COR-2024-02872-00-00-RES-TRA
- RESOL-VII/035 - Draft resolution on the 30th anniversary of the European Committee of the Regions – COR-2024-03718-00-00-RES-TRA

7.3 Appendix 3: References of the 6 Committee commissions' contributions to the Impact Report 2024

Commission	Presentation of the document (meeting date)	Reference number of the document
CIVEX	26 November 2024	COR-2024-03438-00-00-TCD-TRA
COTER	12 December 2024	COR-2024-03368-00-00-TCD-TRA
ECON	11 December 2024	COR-2024-03955-00-00-TCD-TRA

ENVE	10 December 2024	COR-2024-03543-00-00-TCD-TRA
NAT	27 November 2024	COR-2024-03529-00-00-TCD-TRA
SEDEC	6 December 2024	COR-2024-04100-00-00-TCD-TRA
