

THE ReppORTER

May-June 2017

Activity report of the EPP Group in the European Committee of the Regions



EPP Congress in Malta

Future of Cohesion Policy

Brindisi External Seminar



Foreword

by **President Schneider**

Dear Members,
Dear friends,

Even in times when Europe remains to be haunted by the scars of populism, eurosceptical tunes, anti-integrational rhetoric or United Kingdom's divorce prospects, let us not be too shy and allow ourselves cherish the 60 successful years of peace and prosperity brought by the European integration. With the recent Rome Treaty anniversary celebrations reuniting the European leaders, re-election of Donald Tusk as the President of the European Council, positive outcome of the elections in the Netherlands, Bulgaria and France as well as pro-European civic movements like the Pulse of Europe spread across Europe, there is a feeling of a more positive wave towards our European project and our cooperation. Thus, we shall continue recalling that the European Union can only deliver on its promises if citizens and their regional and local communities are personally engaged. As CoR Members, through our citizens' dialogues "Reflecting on the future of Europe" we contribute to bringing Europe closer to the citizens.

The Europe Day we have just celebrated on 9 May always brings to my mind the following quote from the Schuman declaration: "*Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity*". Thinking of such concrete results, resembling a true sense of solidarity, one cannot neglect the positive effects that the EU's Cohesion Policy brought us over the years. There are no better advocates of its true impact on the everyday lives of our citizens than us, regional and local representatives. Thus, we should proudly underline at any occasion that the Cohesion Policy is inextricably linked to the future of the European Union as a whole. Sadly, the policy is not lacking opponents of its present shape. Following the adoption of my draft opinion at CoR's plenary session in May, we will have to continue our intense efforts to secure its status in the future EU's multiannual budget, especially in view of the expected costs of Brexit. In this context with open arms I welcome European People's Party decision to set up a Working Group on the Future of Cohesion Policy announced at the EPP Congress in Malta and strong references to securing its share in the EU budget, adopted by our political family there.



Michael Schneider
President of the EPP-CoR Group

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Schneider".

This issue:

- ➔ **Foreword**
by EPP-CoR President
Michael Schneider *p. 2*
- ➔ **EPP Congress 2017** *p. 3*
- ➔ **The Future of Cohesion Policy** *p. 4*
- ➔ **Commissioner Hogan:**
generational renewal of farmers
an imperative for the future *p. 6*
- ➔ **MAY PLENARY SESSION:**
Overview of the May Plenary
Session *p. 7*
- ➔ **EPP Opinions in the upcoming
Plenary Session** *p. 8*
- ➔ **The Future of Cohesion
Policy beyond 2020:**
Michael Schneider *p. 8*
- ➔ **Health in Cities:**
the common good –
Roberto Pella *p. 9*
- ➔ **Subsidiarity report** *p. 10*
- ➔ **Upcoming events** *p. 11*
- ➔ **Ongoing opinions** *p. 11*
- ➔ **Brindisi External
Seminar** *p. 12*



EPP Congress:

1st Vice President Eleni Loukaidou, Vice Presidents Arnoldas Abramavičius, Malina Edreva, Jacques Blanc, Mauro D’Attis, Michel Lebrun, Marek Woźniak and Members Apostolos Tzitzikostas and Róbert Szabó represented the EPP Group in the European Committee of the Regions at the EPP Congress in Malta on 29 and 30 March this year.

The event featured addresses by the EPP’s EU heads of state and government, leaders of the EU institutions – European Council President **Donald Tusk**, European Commission President **Jean-Claude Juncker**, European Parliament President **Antonio Tajani** and EPP Group in the European Parliament Chairman **Manfred Weber** – as well as EPP leaders from across Europe.

The Congress outlined the EPP’s vision for how to secure Europe’s future for the next decade. EPP President Joseph Daul made the following statement:

“To bring results to the European people, we need to preserve European unity and move forward together. We can move at different speeds; but we all need to look in the same direction, without leaving anyone behind. We are providing solutions for how to make our Union more secure. We have put forward bold proposals to make our Union more prosperous, more sustainable and more fair. We have set the path for our Union to be an inspiring leader, both regionally and globally. But above all, we want a Europe close to its citizens, a Europe that acts where it can make a difference. This is the biggest political challenge ahead of us, and we are determined to reconnect with European citizens.”

The Congress Documents recognises the role of the European Committee of the Regions as the representative of regions and local communities’ interests calling for their increased involvement in the decision making processes, at the same time asking EU institutions to systemati-



cally reach out to regional and municipal authorities, which enjoy greater trust from citizens. At the same time it states that the “Cohesion Policy post-2020 should remain an EU investment policy covering all Member States and EU regions” and that “the share of Cohesion Policy in the total EU budget should be maintained in the future”.

The first day of the Congress coincided with triggering Article 50 by the British Prime Minister Theresa May, officially starting the process by which the United Kingdom will leave the European Union. Regarding this process, the EPP President made the following statement:

“Our priority in negotiations with the UK will be to protect the rights and freedoms of more than 4 million EU citizens living in the UK and the interests of all people from the EU 27. We also expect that the UK will comply with its financial obligations. The exit bill must be fully paid, as it is customary that one not leave the table without paying the bill. We will also focus on the Irish border, as we must do everything possible to avoid reinstating a hard border with Northern Ireland.”

In the upcoming talks with the UK, the 27 Member States and the 3 EU institutions must speak with one voice. Unity will be our strength. The UK is an important partner, and we hope for an amicable atmosphere in these discussions.”

Following a vote in the EPP Political Assembly, **Rafał Trzaskowski**, was confirmed by Congress delegates as new EPP Vice-President.

Finally, the EPP Political Assembly voted unanimously to accept the Belarus Christian Democratic Party as an observer member in our political family. Following brutal arrests and the suppression of the opposition in Belarus, the EPP has condemned the crackdown against peaceful protests and has demanded an urgent halt to political repression.



The Future of Cohesion Policy

*As the EU's assembly of regional and local political representatives we are pleased to see that EU ministers made clear commitments in favour of cohesion policy as an investment lifeline for many regions and cities – **Markku Markkula**, President of the European Committee of the Regions commented on the outcome of General Affairs Council (GAC) held on 25 April, Luxembourg – If implemented effectively and in synergy with other public and private funding, this investment will contribute to achieving economic, social and territorial cohesion. It will continue to spark innovation, create jobs and prosperity, support social integration and tackle regional disparities.*

More importantly, it directly benefits citizens' lives showing that the EU does matter. The future of Europe now needs a stronger, simpler and more effective cohesion policy. Local and regional authorities know how cohesion funds can best serve their communities so their role must be strengthened to make this cornerstone of EU policy fit for the future.

For European regions and cities the conclusions by the General Affairs Council is therefore a concrete commitment that the forthcoming discussions on the EU budget post 2020 will take into account the crucial role of cohesion policy. This was the political message we shared in an open letter on cohesion policy addressed to the Maltese EU Presidency and shared with all 28 Ministers.

These are testing times for Europe. The worst of the economic crisis may have passed, but the economies in many regions are still too weak. The migration crisis has led to too many tragedies in the Mediterranean, as well as the terrorist threat, has strained consensus between Europe's states. This has caused an increasing sense of disillusionment in the EU which, as the vote for Brexit highlighted, has been blamed for not doing enough. Yet as President of the European Committee of the Regions, I can testify that the EU has and continues to benefit Europe's regions and cities.

Working for the Committee – 350 elected local and regional leaders from all 28 EU member states – has shown that the opposite is true. Founded on a commitment for a better Europe and prosperity for all, the EU has contributed to counter top-down growth policies. This commitment towards balanced and inclusive economic growth is demonstrated in the money that it allocates to its Cohesion Policy: between 2014 and 2020, €351.8 billion has been made available.

With one third of the overall EU budget devoted to promote regional development and cohesion, this policy counteracts the argument that the European Union is a driver of centralised control. The funds are managed in partnership with national and local governments to implement investment plans tailored to the need of our local communities. It is the largest commitment in the EU's budget supporting less developed regions



to create local jobs, support innovative companies and strengthen the single market benefiting everyone in Europe.

The European Commission has shown that for every €1 invested through cohesion funds, €2.7 is created. Cohesion funds and membership of the single market are helping poorer regions: based on per-capita GDP, 16 of the 20 fastest-growing of the EU's 276 regions come from the countries, most of them less well-off, that joined the EU in 2004 or 2007. The EU's Cohesion Policy – like the single market – benefits both richer and poorer regions. That is why the relatively prosperous region of Lower Austria is leading a formidable alliance of almost 200 European regions, representing over 70% of the EU's population, in a campaign to maintain and strengthen Cohesion Policy.

The case to maintain, strengthen and reform Cohesion Policy is even stronger now than ever before especially due to the alarming drop in investment at the local level since the start of the economic crisis. Investment levels in Europe have dropped by 15% over the last decade with government expenditure half the level it was. Last year, a Europe-wide survey conducted by the OECD and our Committee found that since 2010 public investment had fallen in over 40% of local and regional governments. The EU's Cohesion Policy has helped soften the impact of this drop in investment but regional disparities continue to rise.

In 2017 the critical challenge will be for the EU's regions and cities – and for their official representative to the EU, the European Committee of the Regions – to persuade authorities at all levels to increase investment. Public funds will never be enough which is why public authorities must strive to work even more with private investors. We therefore support the European Commission's new European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) which uses EU money and aims to trigger private investment which the objective of unleashing €500 billion of investments by 2020 in our regions and cities.

This year, we are developing our proposals for the future of Cohesion Policy beyond 2020, the end of the current budget period. We want the EFSI and Cohesion Policy to be simplified. Cohesion Policy and the EFSI are complementary but we need them to work even more in synergy.

We want to see the EFSI's money spread more widely: the EFSI is primarily being used by the 15 richer countries, leaving the poorer behind. We are advocating investment that accelerates the EU's drive towards a greener economy, so we see investment in energy, transport and the digital economy as strategic priorities. We are stressing the need to invest more to build up our human capital. We are championing policies that foster open innovation ecosystems. We are facilitating cross-border cooperation.

A better Europe will emerge through partnerships. Many of the regions and cities that send representatives to the European Committee of the Regions are taking the lead. Our European Entrepreneurial Regions Award has led, for example, to EU funding for collaboration between ten regions and cities to support young entrepreneurs and start-ups. In another policy field, bioeconomy, the region of Łódź – led by a CoR member, **Witold Stępień** – last year launched collaboration with regions across central and eastern Europe.

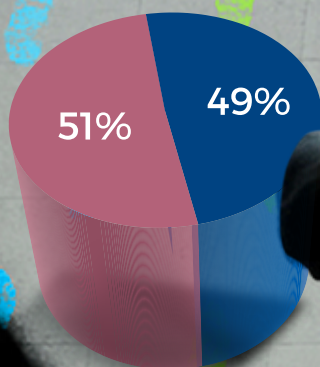
A better Europe will also emerge from a clearer understanding of the role of cities and regions in economic growth. Cities and regions are not only investors. They are providers of services such as transport, education, and health care. They are planners through development strategies, for example. They are regulators. And they are investment partners. Europe's investment gap cannot be bridged without them.

Back in 1950, when he proposed the creation of a European Coal and Steel Community, the forerunner of the EU, Robert Schuman said: "Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single general plan. It will be built through concrete achievements. Many of those achievements must – and can – be built by working with the EU's cities and regions"

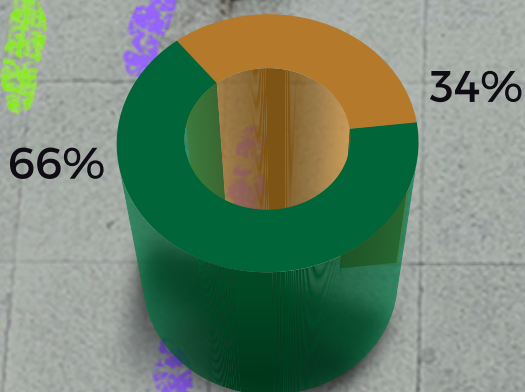
Markku Markkula

President of the European Committee of the Regions

Just under half (49%) of Europeans said they had heard of either the European Regional Development Fund or the Cohesion Fund.



57% think that decisions should be taken at sub-national levels



Just over a third (34%) of Europeans said that they had heard about EU co-financed projects to improve the area in which they live. Country-level awareness of EU co-financed projects ranges from just over three quarters (76%) of those interviewed in Poland to under one tenth (9%) of respondents in the United Kingdom.

Commissioner Hogan: generational renewal of farmers an imperative for the future



Commissioner **Phil Hogan**, responsible for Agriculture and Rural Development, joined the Members of the European Committee of the Regions in the February 9th plenary session for a debate on encouraging young people to take up farming. The Commissioner began his address by highlighting the important role of the CoR Members, the representatives of local communities and regions, on building the next CAP after 2020.

"This is a policy for all Europeans and the generational renewal is an absolutely imperative for me. One young farmer has 9 farmers aged 55 years and older to him," Commissioner Hogan stressed and continued to present concrete tools to facilitate the generational renewal with: business

startup aid, annual or one off payments for small farm owners, advisory services as well as specific training to help young farmers.

The Commissioner stated that more needs to be done: *"In this age we need highly educated farmers to deliver on the new CAP. There will be no better life for the rural areas without the young people taking the reins."* Mr Hogan emphasised three issues to be solved: access to finance, since young farmers have very little collateral and are considered high-risk clients; access to land, as the competition for area is growing this has become the biggest obstacle; and access to knowledge. These can be addressed through funding instruments, simplification of conditions and eligi-

bility rules, better practical training and exchange of knowhow. The Erasmus programmes should also be used for practical apprenticeships.

The EPP-CoR NAT Coordinator, Mr **Mark Weinmeister**, gave the Group's support for the Commissioner, especially on finding best ways to cut red tape. He continued to accent that "agriculture is not just to produce food but to ensure the vitality of rural areas".

Mr **Konstantinos Agorastos**, Governor of the Regions of Thessaly, emphasised that *"we have to move from remarks to action and preserve the real agricultural production, making sure that payments also reach farmers more quickly."*



May Plenary Session



The 123rd Plenary Session of the European Committee of the Regions takes place May 11-12 right after Europe Day on May 9th. This session includes several debates with high-profile speakers on current topics, namely the Future of the European Union and the Cohesion Policy, EU enlargement and the EU budget.



Reflecting on Europe, the contribution of the European Committee of the Regions to the debate on the future of the European Union, opens the plenary session with two key visitors to debate the issue with the CoR Members: **Antonio Tajani**, President of the European Parliament, and European Commission Vice-President **Jyrki Katainen**, Commissioner for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness. Vice President Katainen will discuss also the European Commission White Paper on the Future of Europe (on which the CoR resolution will be adopted on Friday) as well as investment and trade.



Günther Oettinger, Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources, will join the CoR Members on Friday to discuss budgetary and own resources issues, and the CoR resolution on the draft annual budget for 2018 will be adopted on Friday. Commissioner Oettinger also comes to address Cohesion Policy, the opinion **The Future of Cohesion Policy beyond 2020** (Schneider EPP/DE),

having already been discussed on the first day of the plenary.

Improving the governance of the European Semester: a Code of Conduct for the involvement of local and regional authorities (Jonkman ECR/NL) and the **Financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union** (Rijs-

berman ALDE/NL) are the

opinions from ECON and COTER focusing on better and more efficient inclusion of local and regional authorities in the processes while enabling better operational environment for businesses as well as the public sector.

Christian Cardona, Minister for Economy, Investment and Small Business of Malta, will address the plenary on behalf of the Maltese

Presidency of the Council

related to the maltese Presidency's referral opinion **Entrepreneurship on Islands: contributing towards territorial cohesion** (Mauptuis EA/FR) - also adopted together with a debate with Tonino Picula (HR/PES), Member of the European Parliament and Vice-President



of Seas, Rivers, Islands and Coastal Areas EP Intergroup. Blue growth, a hot topic few years back, is again on the agenda with **A new stage in the European policy on blue growth** (Clergeau PES/FR).

The second day of the plenary session begins with a discussion the **EU Enlargement Policy** (Pihelgas ALDE/EE) with **Gudrun Mosler-Törnström**, President of the Congress of the Council of Europe. The CoR maintains that the EU enlargement policy is still the Union's most powerful foreign

policy tool. The current situation of holding off the accession of new Member States until the end of term of the current Commission in 2019, while continuing the ongoing enlargement processes with the Western Balkan countries is welcomed and

an important element in tackling issues such as security and migration.

Social innovation as a new tool for creating growth and jobs (Hendrickx ALDE/NL), **Local and Regional dimension of Bioeconomy and the role of regions and cities** (Budde PES/DE) and

Investing in Europe's youth

(Grzybowski ECR/PL) are the opinions from

SEDEC for this session, reflecting the current priorities from the European Commission.

Another big issue is health, and the opinion on **Health in cities: the common good** (Pella EPP/IT), strives to look at the issue

across policy fields.

EPP Opinions in the upcoming Plenary Session



Michael Schneider, President of the EPP Group in the CoR and State Secretary of Saxony-Anhalt, EPP/DE

The Future of Cohesion Policy beyond 2020

COTER-VI/015

Rapporteur Schneider believes that Cohesion Policy is the key European instrument to ensure the promotion of economic, social and territorial cohesion within the European Union and is one of the most visible EU policies at local and regional level, demonstrating the benefits of Europe to its citizens. Cities and regions are the primary beneficiaries of EU cohe-

sion policy. The future of Cohesion Policy beyond 2020 is therefore one of the key issues for European cities and regions.

Building on the experiences from the previous funding periods – the opinion notes that it is necessary to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the current Cohesion Policy and to identify ways to increase its effectiveness. Fulfilling the Treaty obligations and focusing on the long-term strategic objectives of smart, inclusive and sustainable growth are both

of key importance in this connection.

“Future Cohesion policy needs to be based on solidarity – suggests Michael Schneider - In the light of the growing regional divide in Europe, we need cohesion policy more than ever. Subsidiarity as the local and regional level have best knowledge about their strengths and weaknesses and how to tackle them. And simplification, as many of the current regulations are perceived as too bureaucratic and complex by the managing authorities”.



Corina Crețu,
Commissioner
for Regional
Policy

“This is one of the key opinions to ensure tomorrow's cohesion policy remains a pillar of the EU. Cohesion policy, with its strong regional and local identity, is the engine that drives Europe's economic growth; but yes a cohesion policy that is more tailored-made, better adapted to realities on the ground and simpler to use goes beyond growth and jobs; it is the cement that holds the EU together, a strong, modern and caring EU. This opinion shows that the Committee of the Regions and the Commission see eye to eye on tomorrow's Europe.”

KEY POINTS:

- 1 Cohesion policy (CP) is an essential component of the Treaties and a pillar of the European integration process – just like the internal market or the economic and monetary union. It creates a level playing-field as an essential counterpart to the internal market rules and helps to protect existing jobs and create new ones through investments in the real economy.
- 2 CP ensures that all Member States, regions and municipalities – from less developed to more developed – are able to benefit from the advantages offered by EU integration. As a result, CP makes a significant contribution to strengthening the EU as a whole.
- 3 The future of CP is inextricably linked to the future of the EU as a whole. A strong and effective European CP is vital for a strong and effective European Union. The CoR is therefore also strongly in favour of securing the important role of cohesion policy in the EU beyond 2020.
- 4 CP must in future be able to offer integrated and differentiated solutions on the ground at regional level, cutting across individual policy areas and issues. Like all EU policies, CP must contribute to the fulfilment of EU 2020 strategy goals and other key EU objectives as mandated by the Treaties. Conversely, other EU policies must also make a contribution to achieving CP Treaty objectives set out in the Treaties.
- 5 CP has to become more flexible in the next funding period, without impacting on the strategic focus and planning certainty for regional and local authorities. The CP should be able to respond to crises and unforeseen events in the short term, without abandoning its strategic focus.
- 6 The basic structure of CP with its three categories (most developed regions, transition regions and less developed regions) is tried and tested and should therefore be retained. It is precise and at the same time flexible enough to allow for the inclusion of new challenges, priorities and indicators.
- 7 GDP has proven its worth as the main indicator for classifying regions and should be retained. When distributing funds, additional harmonised and consistent criteria relating to the labour market and to specific regional challenges should also be considered.
- 8 European added value is without doubt one of the key criteria for the success of CP which is one of the most accurately measured and best analysed EU policies. However, uniform definition for European added value has to be discussed and approved together with the funds' regulations.
- 9 CP is the only one EU policy with a regional focus based on multi-level governance and bottom-up approach in partnership between all levels of government. The territorial and urban dimensions of CP as well as transnational, interregional and cross-border cooperation, including the macro-regional strategies, must therefore be further strengthened.
- 10 ESIF provide for the sustainable strengthening of economic, social and territorial cohesion while centrally managed initiatives such as the EFSI generate investments at European and national level. They should be mutually complementary and must not conflict with each other.
- 11 Financial instruments (FI) can be useful and may constitute an alternative or complement to grants where it is deemed to be useful by regional or local authorities on the ground or in a given policy area. Therefore, any obligation to further increase the share of FI in the next funding period should be avoided.
- 12 CP implementation is heavily overregulated and complicated. Simplification of the overall ESIF delivery system must therefore be part of the future reform process. In doing so, the principles of subsidiarity shall be applied more consistently than has previously been the case.



Roberto Pella, Mayor of Valdengo, EPP/IT

Health in Cities: the common good

NAT-VI/016

Health is one of the most visible current policy areas, and especially enabling a view on health as spreading across policy fields is something that the CoR has worked on for a long time. Local and regional authorities should act as the guarantors of equal access to healthcare, creating new models for collaborative governance where institutions, businesses, civil society organisations and individuals can contribute to the designing of a fair, shared and harmonious urban system.

The opinion stresses that particular focus is needed on sustainable investment, boosting innovation, empowering people, promoting health and preventing disease through an analysis of social, economic and environmental determinants and risk factors that may impact health. It is necessary to identify strategies for raising awareness of the importance of promoting health in urban settings among governments, regions, cities and individuals.

An appropriate food culture and food education should be promoted through targeted dietary programmes and educational events on the ground, thereby preventing the rise in obesity rates and generating savings on health and social resources within national healthcare systems. In addition, access to sports and exercise for all people should be widened and improved, in accordance with the principle of "citizenship sport", by encouraging the mental and physical development of young people and increase inclusion of old people in cities.



Vytenis Andriukaitis,
Commissioner for
Health and Food
Safety

"I never tire repeating this old adage 'prevention is better than cure'. Where better to integrate this mantra into real policies if not in urban areas given that we estimate that by 2020, almost 80% of EU citizens will be living in cities? Health and lifestyle equipment such as pedestrian zones and cycle paths or food procurement schemes for schools and healthier canteens are often in the hands of the municipalities and regions.

Also, it is in our regions that we are particularly well situated to address health inequalities by reaching out to young mothers, women on lower incomes, ethnic minorities and the elderly. These are groups that do not always benefit from equal access to health promotion initiatives. Locally developed projects can make real difference involving community actors such as social workers, midwives, chefs, charities and hopefully more and more businesses bringing about real, sustainable change.

The more EU cities and regions work together, learning from each other, the more we can all benefit from targeted, modern, sustainable community action that brings us all together to promote healthier lifestyles and live longer in a better health. "

KEY POINTS:

- ➔ Calls to study and analyse the determinants of health, looking at health in cities in the round (whole of government, whole of society) and assessing the opportunities and issues resulting from increased life expectancy, a review of welfare mechanisms would be necessary
- ➔ Calls for a specific partnership dedicated to health to be launched under the Urban Agenda for the EU
- ➔ Calls to frame policies that ensure healthy and active ageing in good physical and mental wellbeing, social life and relationships and encourage involvement in the city's leisure activities and intergenerational programmes
- ➔ Encourages designing transport and planning/land use policies according to a sustainable mobility hierarchy that prioritises incentives and measures to make active mobility on foot or by bicycle safer and more attractive and also encourages multimodal public transport
- ➔ Urges that action be taken directly on environmental and climate-related factors to cut risks of developing physical diseases, and mental illnesses, which develop in urban contexts
- ➔ Recommends the greatest possible attention be given to the importance of adopting a healthy diet, through precise guidelines that take account of the different contexts and different target populations; recommends to all local and regional authorities to use report on the Public Procurement of Food for Health to better integrate health and nutrition into food procurement specifications
- ➔ Given the growing evidence on the positive correlation between physical activity and mental health and cognitive processes in this regard, calls on the local and regional authorities to collect and share their good practice examples to inspire, lead and learn
- ➔ Calls on the European Commission to accentuate cooperation with national, regional and local authorities geared to broadening and improving access to playful sport activities for everyone – for all age groups and all ability levels
- ➔ Promotes and reinforces cooperation between the health and education sectors and local communities, creating a network of health practitioners and school teachers in order to establish clear guidelines for health
- ➔ Calls for more support to be given to local initiatives to inform people about primary prevention programmes and to encourage them to join them; calls for support for scientifically tested secondary prevention programmes for the public, which involve institutions and education services
- ➔ Calls for the forging of a strong alliance between municipalities, universities, healthcare companies, research centres, businesses, professionals and charities to study and monitor at urban level the determinants of citizens' health, so as to create a more effective and responsive multilevel governance to improve regional and cohesion policy

The Subsidiarity Annual Report 2016



The Subsidiarity Annual Report 2016 was adopted in the Bureau on May 10th, with EPP-CoR President Michael Schneider as the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network Coordinator.

In 2016, in line with the Treaty on the EU Article 5(3) which explicitly contains a local and regional dimension and thus underlines the need to respect the competences of local and regional authorities within the EU, the European Committee of the Regions monitored the application of the principle of subsidiarity through its various instruments. Via the Subsidiarity Work Programme, four initiatives selected from the European Commission Work Programme 2016 were monitored with particular attention. In addition, via its own internal rules, the CoR assessed compliance with the subsidiarity and proportionality principles of all legislative proposals on which it issued opinions.

In 2016 thirteen opinions were issued on legislative proposals, nine opinions of which were relevant in terms of subsidiarity and proportionality monitoring, in addition to those included in the SWP 2016. The CoR found that the majority complied with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. In two cases, and to differing degrees, the CoR raised

some proportionality concerns, notably the Circular Economy Package, and the Revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD). On the establishment of a European Deposit Insurance Scheme the CoR found that the justification was incomplete, and asked the European Commission to submit a more substantiated justification to allow an informed assessment of compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

In 2016, the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network continued to grow and included 153 partners by the end of the year. The newcomers were the Brandenburg State Parliament, the Parliament of the German-speaking Community in Belgium and the Tyrol State Government. The CoR further developed REGPEX – the sub-network of the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network open to parliaments and governments of regions with legislative powers – which at the end of 2016 counted 76 partners (47 regional assemblies and 29 regional governments). REGPEX remains an important tool for subsidiarity monitoring and fosters the exchange of good practices and plays a vital role in the monitoring of initiatives under the Early Warning System.

I WELCOME THE ROME DECLARATION SIGNATORIES' STATEMENT THAT THEY "WILL WORK TOGETHER AT THE LEVEL THAT MAKES A REAL DIFFERENCE, BE IT THE EUROPEAN UNION, NATIONAL, REGIONAL, OR LOCAL, AND IN A SPIRIT OF TRUST AND LOYAL COOPERATION, BOTH AMONG MEMBERS STATES AND BETWEEN THEM AND THE EU INSTITUTIONS, IN LINE WITH THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY".

MICHAEL SCHNEIDER



Upcoming events

Ongoing opinions

CIVEX

Managing migration along the Central Mediterranean route – **Hans Janssen**

Adoption foreseen July 2017

Reflecting on Europe: the voice of regional and local authorities to rebuild trust in the European Union – **Markku Markkula (with Karl-Heinz Lambertz/PES)**

Adoption foreseen July 2018

COTER

An European Strategy for Low-Emission Mobility – **József Ribányi**

Adoption foreseen July 2017

Territorial classification and typologies –

Mieczysław Struk

Adoption foreseen July 2017

ECON

Smart regulation for SMEs – **Christian Buchmann**

Adoption foreseen July 2017

European Commission report on Competition Policy 2016 – **Michael Murphy**

Adoption foreseen December 2017

ENVE

Energy Union and clean energy – **Bruno Hranic**

Adoption foreseen July 2017

→ 17.5. COTER

Adoption: **Ribányi (EPP/HU)** - *An European Strategy for Low-Emission Mobility*

Adoption: **Struk (EPP/PL)** - *Territorial classification and typologies*

→ 19.5. SEDEC Seminar Sofia, BG (Ms Malina Edreva)

"Culture for Social Inclusion, Social Innovation and Intercultural Dialogue"

→ 22.5. CORLEAP Bureau meeting, Belarus (Mr Pawel Adamowicz)

→ 31.5. - 1.6. Enlargement Day

→ 1. - 2.6. NAT External meeting & Conference Palma de Mallorca (ES)

"A new tourism calendar"

→ 8.6. SEDEC

→ 9.6. NAT Study Visit Germany (Mr Mark Weinmeister)

"Regional marketing to foster regional added value in agriculture"

→ 12.6. CAFA

→ 14.6. NAT Study Visit Spain (Mr Jesús Gamallo Aller)

"Milk production from a regional perspective: the case of Galicia"

→ 16.6. Brindisi EPP External Seminar

→ 21.6. PMG

→ 22.6. ECON

Discussion: **Murphy (EPP/IE)** - *Commission Report on Competition Policy 2016*

→ 28.6. COTER

→ 30.6. Task Force Ukraine Khyriv, Ukraine

→ 3.-4.7. ENVE External meeting & Conference Tallinn, EE

"Environmentally friendly smart living in European urban areas and regions"

→ 6.7. CIVEX

→ 7.6 COTER seminar, Italy (Mr Raffaele Cattaneo)

→ 11.7. BUREAU

→ 12.-13.7. CoR PLENARY SESSION

Adoption: **Bruno Hranic (EPP/HR)** - *Energy Union and clean energy*

Adoption: **Hans Janssen (EPP/NL)** - *Managing migration along the Central Mediterranean route*

Adoption: **József Ribányi (EPP/HU)** - *An European Strategy for Low-Emission Mobility*

Adoption: **Mieczysław Struk (EPP/PL)** - *Territorial classification and typologies*

Adoption: **Christian Buchmann (EPP/AT)** - *Smart Regulation for SMEs*

Brindisi External Seminar: "Cities and regions developing a territorial-based trans-European transport network"

Transport is a major contributor to a prosperous EU economy; it generates trade, fosters economic growth and provides millions of jobs. We need a TEN-T policy that ensures accessibility and connectivity for all regions of the Union, thus contributing further to their sustainable economic growth and long-term competitiveness. This can only be achieved can only be achieved by

properly applying the principles of a bottom-up, multilevel governance approach and subsidiarity.

By the invitation from **Mauro D'Attis**, Municipal Councillor of Brindisi (IT), and Vice President of the EPP-CoR Group, the EPP-CoR Group's External Seminar will be held this summer in Brindisi on June 16th.

The Seminar "*Cities and regions developing a territorial-based trans-European transport network*" will gather approximately 60 Members to the Nuovo Teatro Verdi in the heart of the city. The Seminar will be followed by a study visit.

The conference will gather top level speakers including President of the European Parliament, **Antonio Tajani** in two high-level panels:

the first titled "*A thriving European Transport strategy in support of development and job creation*", and the second "*Best practices and European support to regional and local authorities*".

More information from the Seminar can be found on the EPP-CoR website: <http://epp.cor.europa.eu/events/group-meetings-seminars/epp-group-seminar>

Cities and regions developing a territorial-based trans-European transport network

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in the european committee of the regions

European Committee of the Regions

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