

Achieving recovery through a stronger European House of Democracy

Where we are now

1. We are at a critical juncture in our response to the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which is placing Europe, and its local and regional authorities, under unprecedented social, economic, environmental and financial strain.
2. As the EPP family, we are committed to a European Union that starts in our villages, cities and regions. We cherish a strong social market economy, a competitive place-based industrial policy, well-being as a hallmark of our European Way of Life, and establishing multi-level partnerships in the day-to-day decisions which affect Europeans, where active subsidiarity is the cornerstone.
3. **With focus shifting from emergency response and the cycle of lockdown/easing, to transitioning towards a resilient and green local economy, we affirm that tackling the pandemic and post COVID-19 economic recovery go hand in hand.**

We are very concerned that the pandemic now risks undoing decades of progress across Europe's territories. As leaders who fundamentally valorise cohesion, we find this deeply troubling. Now is not the time for business as usual. Instead, let's now bounce forward together.

What do we want and what are we committed to

4. We reiterate that the Recovery and Resilience Facility, the key recovery instrument at the heart of NextGenerationEU, must meaningfully embrace multilevel governance and respond to the challenges outlined in territorial impact assessments.
5. **We urge the Member States to act on the European Commission's statement at the highest political level, to fully engage local and regional authorities when preparing the national Recovery and Resilience Plans and to explicitly give them an active role throughout the process from identification of priorities, establishment of the feasibility of timelines, validation, to final submission.**

We draw attention to the flagship areas for investments and reforms, many of which reflect local and regional authorities' areas of competence.

6. We are committed to results fully in line with our local and regional competences, in particular the delivery of public services, support for the local economy and policies for job stimulation and social resilience, while using regional, national and EU-level resources along with more cross-border cooperation to achieve a stronger and better functioning internal market.

We are convinced that through multi-level governance, Europe can deliver a quicker felt recovery that reaches the real economy and citizens helping to build and consolidate social resilience.

Towards a stronger European House of Democracy

7. We caution that approaches which lack a deliberate, concerted and consistent coordination across levels of government in the shaping, delivery and assessment of policies weaken their effectiveness. We reaffirm our call on governance counterparts, in a spirit of strength in unity and strength in diversity, to join forces with regional and local leaders, and by so doing, reinforce the trust in democracy.
8. Cities and regions must have fair, timely and sufficient access to resources. In this way, we can reconcile the fundamentals of efficient and transparent government and better delivery of public policy and ultimately generate impactful results for our citizens and business.
9. **We emphasise the need to capitalise on the current and uniquely apt context with its historic focus on the Future of Europe and the future-proofing of our socio-economic model by transitioning to more circular, sustainable and digital means of production and consumption, given that the EU's political and policy focus is now rightly shifting from strategy to delivery.**
10. Let us build on our respective strengths, use them to our advantage when tackling asymmetric challenges that know no administrative border between the European, national, regional and local levels.

We appeal to all actors to realise that by fostering partnerships with and amongst local and regional authorities, which consistently show exemplary cases of innovative tools of governance, we can better build and implement policies with added-value.

We reaffirm our commitment to the rule of law but reiterate that local and regional authorities must not be penalised for the misgivings of national governments.
