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126TH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS BUREAU

– 30 NOVEMBER 2010 –

ITEM 5B

FIRST COR MONITORING REPORT ON EUROPE 2020

FOR DEBATE

MEMO FOR CoR BUREAU MEMBERS

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First CoR monitoring report on Europe 2020

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1. Introduction: Making the most of Europe 2020 through territorial pacts and partnership contracts between all relevant government levels

1.1 Time to act in partnership

The new Europe 2020 strategy¹, aimed at the ambitious goals of overcoming the economic and financial crisis and setting the bases for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, has entered a crucial phase where ambitions must be translated into practice.

It is the view of the Committee of the Regions, shared by the main EU institutions – the European Commission², the Council of the European Union³ and the European Parliament⁴ – that Europe 2020 will deliver its promises only if implemented by the European, national, regional and local levels in partnership. The rationale for this is twofold.

- On the one hand, the new strategy will deliver only if all relevant government levels do their job not in isolation from each other, but in a coordinated, integrated and synchronised manner, while fully respecting the subsidiarity principle. This is needed to unleash the synergies and systemic effects needed to achieve the EU headline targets and fulfil the Europe 2020 goals.
- On the other hand, the EU will be put on a path of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth only if Europe 2020 is given a territorial dimension, to ensure that it takes into account the different starting points as a precondition to achieving territorial cohesion. All territories could and should increase their competitiveness and their citizens' quality of life through place-based policies encompassing the three pillars of the strategy (smart, sustainable and inclusive growth), underpinned by territorial indicators and targets (also of the "Beyond GDP" type).

The CoR also thinks that Europe 2020 should be developed in a context in which EU cohesion policy remains available to all EU territories⁵. While contributing to the Europe 2020 goals, cohesion policy should be endowed with enough financial resources to concentrate in an effective way on the less developed areas of the Union, thus fulfilling its Treaty-based solidarity obligation.

In addition, the *territorial impact* of policy measures related to Europe 2020 should be assessed in a much more systematic way⁶: to be more credible than the Lisbon strategy, Europe 2020 should be more evidence-based.

1 Official documents on Europe 2020 can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

2 "Governance, tools and policy cycle of Europe 2020", sent to Member States in July 2010.

3 Recommendation of the Economic and Financial Affairs Council of the EU on 7 July 2010

4 "Report on the contribution of the Cohesion policy to the achievement of Lisbon and the EU2020 objectives" (Cortes-Lastra Report), as adopted by the plenary session, and a contribution of the Conference of Committee Chairs (May 2010).

5 As stated in the CoR Opinion on the Contribution of cohesion policy to the Europe 2020 Strategy, adopted on 5 October 2010.

6 A study promoted by the CoR shows that in the case of several legislative and non-legislative EU drafts, on which the CoR had to issue an opinion between July 2007 and December 2009, territorial impact assessments were either lacking – even if they did not require one – or unsatisfactory. ("Impact Assessment at the CoR - Methodology and its implementation", to be published in autumn 2010).

Last, but not least, the new strategy should be taken as an opportunity for drastic *administrative simplification* of all the policy instruments and funding channels and procedures involved. This overhaul should be aimed *not only at reducing the administrative burden*, in line with the EU Smart Regulation objectives. Rather, it should also be seen as an opportunity *to align the actions taken under the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives with existing policy actions and procedures*, to ensure transparency and avoid duplications.

1.2 Territorial pacts to give Europe 2020 a territorial dimension

As a tool to implement the new strategy in partnership, the Committee of the Regions has proposed that territorial pacts⁷ between national, regional and local governments are established in all EU countries.

As stressed by the CoR in its decision⁸, pacts "cannot have a one-size-fits-all format, as each country has its starting points, in socio-economic and territorial terms as well as in terms of constitutional structure and distribution of competencies between levels of government".

Therefore, in the light of the subsidiarity principle enshrined in the Treaty, as recently revised, "the content of a territorial pact will be decided by each Member State involving its national, regional and local administrations".

Whatever the difference between the solutions to be adopted by Member States, it is essential that – for potentially relevant government levels not to pursue their agendas in isolation – there be a moment in which binding coordination agreements are taken to "line up the EU, national, local and regional agendas, and related policy instruments and financial resources, on Europe 2020's goals and headline targets". The Committee of the Regions has recommended that the pacts fulfil the following requirements:

- They should be set up with a sense of urgency, as a tool to finalise each country's National Reform Programme for Europe 2020;
- They should set up a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, to accompany the whole Europe 2020 policy cycle and adjust it when appropriate;
- They should contain *contractual agreements*, when appropriate and only on a voluntary basis, to make them binding, with full respect of the national legislative framework.

⁷ "Territorial pacts to achieve the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy", document adopted by the CoR Bureau on 4 October 2010.

⁸ *ibidem*.

1.3 **A converging approach: the European Commission's proposal of Development and Investment Partnership Contracts**

The Committee of the Regions has welcomed the Commission's Communication on the EU Budget Review⁹, which contains two proposals which tie in with the approach underlying the CoR's proposal on territorial pacts:

- a Development and Investment Partnership Contract between the Commission and each Member State, reflecting the commitment of partners at national and regional level to support the implementation of the Europe 2020 National Reform Programmes;
- a common strategic framework to boost the consistency of EU policies as regards the delivery of the Europe 2020 goals, replacing the current approach of separate sets of strategic guidelines for the Structural Funds, while at the same time identifying linkages and coordination mechanisms with other EU financial instruments.

1.4 **Next steps: promoting and monitoring territorial pacts**

By the end of 2010, the European Commission will have published the seven flagship initiatives intended to coordinate different policy tools to achieve the Europe 2020 goals and headline targets. In the meantime, Member States are preparing the first draft of their National Reform Programmes, whose final versions will have to be submitted by April 2011¹⁰.

In January 2011, the Commission will publish its first Annual Growth Survey, summarising developments and setting guidelines for the future. On this basis, the Spring European Council will give political guidance to Member States on how to finalise their NRPs, whose final versions will then have to be endorsed by the European Council in June 2011.

The Committee of the Regions will continue to monitor how the new strategy is implemented on the ground through its Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform¹¹. Since June 2010, CoR members Christine Chapman (Member of the National Assembly for Wales) and Nichi Vendola (President of the Puglia region) have headed this up as political coordinators of the platform. The outcome of these monitoring activities will be summarised in the annual CoR Monitoring report on Europe 2020, which will be published in early December every year, ahead of the Commission's Annual Growth Survey. Shortly before the Spring European Council, the CoR's territorial dialogue will provide the European institutions and the local and regional authorities with an opportunity to assess the progress of Europe 2020 and of the territorial pacts.

⁹ "The EU Budget Review", COM(2010)700 fin.

¹⁰ The deadline for a draft version was on 12 November 2010.

¹¹ More on the activities of the Platform, complemented by other relevant information on Europe 2020 as seen by the local and regional authorities, can be read at: <http://www.cor.europa.eu/europe2020>

This 1st CoR Monitoring report on Europe 2020 addresses the main issues at stake in the 2nd half of 2010 and early 2011. It includes: (a) an executive summary; (b) a background section introducing the CoR proposal on territorial pacts (section 1), followed by a picture of the ongoing process, based on preliminary information provided by a vast majority (18) of the CoR National Delegations (section 2); (c) a closer look at the main ongoing thematic issues, based on some of the most recent CoR opinions as well as on four surveys carried out in 2010 by the CoR Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform (sections 3, 4 and 5); (d) an outline of the key "horizontal issues" relevant to Europe 2020 goals (section 6). A list of contributors to this year's surveys and consultations carried out by the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform is appended, together with an updated list of the Platform's members.

2. **Preparing the National Reform Programmes in partnership: encouraging signs and a lot still to do**

2.1 **The Europe 2020 ongoing agenda and the CoR's monitoring activity**

The Commission's blueprint for the new strategy was published on 3 March 2010¹². After the Spring European Council agreed on its approach (on 25-26 March 2010) and the European Commission published the draft Integrated Guidelines (27 April 2010), the European Council gave its final approval on 17 June 2010¹³, including the 5 EU-level headline targets.

The latter decision opened the kick-off phase of the new strategy, whose main policy documents and related deadlines are¹⁴:

- the seven EU *flagship initiatives*, setting the political framework within which the EU and the member countries will focus their energies and financial resources on the achievement of the targets. They are published in the form of communications, each of them announcing a series of legislative and non-legislative proposals;
- the *National Reform Programmes*, which include all actions taken by each Member State – possibly by its national as well as regional and local government levels - to achieve the Europe 2020 goals. Together with the *Stability and convergence programmes*, devoted to public finances and fiscal policy, the NRPs are the key documents that EU governments must submit every year under the *European semester*, the new EU tool for economic policy coordination. These documents will have to be integrated within the national budgetary procedures; together, they cover the fiscal, macro-economic and structural aspects EU national governments must deal with to move towards the Europe 2020 targets.

¹² The text of the Europe 2020 Strategy as proposed by the European Commission is available here: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>

¹³ The conclusions of the June 2010 European Council are here: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/115346.pdf

¹⁴ All documents and practical information on Europe 2020 can be found here: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

While publication of the flagship initiatives is ongoing and will be completed in the months to come, Member States have been requested to submit initial ideas for their National Reform Programmes by 12 November 2010.

Following the approach outlined in the previous section, the Committee of the Regions sees the preparation of the National Reform Programmes as a crucial test of the willingness of the national governments to design and implement the partnership principle.

Therefore, the first, urgent monitoring task in 2010 was to check how the NRPs were being prepared and, in particular, if and to what extent the local and regional authorities were involved in this process, as requested by the Commission, the Council, the Parliament and the Committee of the Regions.

To this end, it was decided to launch a request for cooperation to the CoR national delegations, by means of a short questionnaire asking:

1. if and how the local and regional authorities had been involved in drafting the NRP,
2. what issues were shared between the LRAs and the national government (country contribution to the EU targets, country-specific Europe 2020 objectives, possible regional objectives, additional indicators, financial means, etc.),
3. whether any of those issues translated into joint documents, and the nature and status of the latter, and
4. whether there were plans to implement and monitor Europe 2020 in partnership in the months and year to come.

The eighteen CoR national delegations that answered¹⁵ the questionnaire provided a meaningful, although incomplete, picture of the ongoing processes.

2.2 The debate has started, looking at April deadline

The picture provided by the CoR national delegations participating in the survey can be summarised as follows:

- *to date*, local and regional authorities in 9 Member States have *already been involved* in a number of ways, in the preparation of the draft National Reform Programme due on 12 November 2010. This has happened in different ways:
 - in some cases, they were informed (AT) as observers;
 - some of them had been requested to make a written contribution (CY, CZ, IT, SK);

¹⁵ Those of Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden.

In Italy, a timetable for working together was agreed between the national government and a representative of the regions. A draft NRP was sent to the regions in mid October with the end of October as a deadline for the Conference of Regions to approve a regional contribution. It is envisaged that this contribution might be added to the draft NRP to be submitted in November to the European Commission.

In Slovakia¹⁶, the government instructed the Deputy Prime Ministers, the Minister for Education, the Minister for Labour, Social Affairs and the Family, the Minister for Finance, the Minister for the Economy, the Minister for Transport, Post and Telecommunications and the Minister for the Environment to work with local and regional authorities in the preparation, implementation and promotion of the Europe 2020 strategy and in translating Slovakia's National Reform Programme post 2010 into local and regional strategies. In turn, it recommended that the presidents of the regions, the President of the Association of Slovak Towns and Municipalities and the President of the Union of Slovak Towns participate in the preparation, implementation and promotion of the Europe 2020 strategy and in translating Slovakia's National Reform Programme post 2010 into the local and regional strategies.

- a) some other delegations stated that they took part in a general/public consultation (RO, LT), sometimes giving specific comments on elements of the NRP (SK) and/or participating in specific events (CY, RO, SE);
- b) some participated in working groups or specific meetings (IT, FR);
- c) other delegations admitted that it was either too early to comment on the involvement of LRAs in the process due to political and/or timing reasons (BE, EL, SE, EE) or that NRPs were seen so far as purely national level documents (PL, PT);
- d) in several countries there have been initiatives on the ground aimed at more structured dialogue with national governments on Europe 2020 (PT, SE, IE);

In Portugal, it is proposed to establish within the framework of the National Association of Portuguese Municipalities, a working party to internally debate how to contribute to the strategy.

In Sweden, the Swedish social partners along with the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) have launched an initiative to set up a reference group with the Prime Minister's Office with a view to influencing Sweden's national targets and national reform programme (the group has not yet been established).

- e) information available also suggests that, *to date*, involvement has gone beyond mere consultation only in some cases (AT, BE, DE, IT, ES), where constitutional and/or political procedures already exist or are being set up;

¹⁶ Resolution No 386 of the Slovak Government of 9 June 2010 on the draft position of the Slovak Republic regarding the national targets of the Europe 2020 Strategy

- f) only in some countries is a discussion on regional targets foreseen (PL, IT, BE);
- g) the discussion involving the local and regional authorities was sometimes interlaced with a debate on regional policy (as in CZ, PL) highlighting the need for coherence between cohesion policy goals and Europe 2020 ones.

In Poland, a network of regional observatories is currently being set up at regional level. This ties in with the government's plans for a single system for monitoring the country's development, which will also include indicators for measuring implementation of the Europe 2020 targets.

- h) *between October 2010 and the deadline for the NRPs (April 2011)*, in many countries the local and regional authorities expect to be increasingly involved in the preparation of the final National Reform Programmes in a more structured manner, which is often set either by constitutions or by existing political procedures. This is not only true in federal countries (AT, BE, DE), as one would expect, but in also in others, quite often through associations of regions and cities (CZ, EL, ES, FR, IT, PT);

Overall, information available when this report was finalised shows that work on the National Reform Programmes has started, but that a lot remains to do to ensure that this work is done in partnership between all government levels.

The 2nd CoR Monitoring Report (to be published in December 2011) will provide an overview of the extent to which local and regional authorities are involved in the preparation of *final* National Reform Programmes (April 2011).

3. Smart growth

All three flagship initiatives related to smart growth have been already presented by the European Commission: "*A Digital Agenda for Europe*", "*Youth on the Move*" and "*Innovation Union*".

3.1 Flagship Initiative – A Digital Agenda for Europe

On 6 October 2010, the Committee of the Regions adopted an **opinion on "A Digital Agenda for Europe"**¹⁷, which was the first flagship initiative to be published in its final version on August 2010¹⁸. The CoR has welcomed this flagship initiative, stressing its overall aim to deliver sustainable economic and social benefits from a digital single market based on fast and ultra-fast internet and interoperable applications. It notes that, local and regional authorities being the main recipients of the agenda's recommendations can play a key role in its implementation.

¹⁷ "Digital agenda for Europe"; CdR 104/2010, adopted on 6 October 2010.

¹⁸ "A digital agenda for Europe"; COM 245/2 /2010, version published on 26 August 2010.

Local and regional authorities have a key role to play in several actions listed in the Communication which can improve the quality of life and social and economic activities of citizens, in that they make it possible to deliver more efficient and personalised public services as well as local businesses, e.g. providing access to high-quality broadband at an affordable price; creating an e-skills exchange mechanism; this can help to re-skill additional groups currently not addressed by academic or commercial facilities. In addition, the CoR has commented on the need for a radical transformation of the education system, throughout a full integration of ICT in education and training.

The CoR underlines the need for a digital single market and draws attention to the fact that the lack of common European standards for electronic messages in e-commerce, especially invoicing, is one of the biggest technical obstacles. Therefore the revision of eSignature Directive, with a view to providing a legal framework for cross-border recognition and interoperability of a secure e-Authentication system is needed. On the other hand, the CoR calls for security requirements and a guarantee of privacy, in both building internet infrastructures and protecting personal data. More broadly, the CoR calls for an improvement of the interoperability of public administrations and the effectiveness of public service delivery. Moreover, in the field of culture, the CoR welcomes the decision to make Europe's cultural and scientific heritage accessible to all, through the realisation of Europe's online library, museum and archive.

3.2 **Flagship initiative – *Innovation Union***

Outcome of a Quick Survey by the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform

The Committee of the Regions is currently exploring the possibility of an **opinion on the "Innovation Union" flagship initiative**, which could be adopted in 2011. In October 2010 the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform launched a **quick survey** on this flagship initiative to gather an initial assessment of the Commission' proposal from its members. Seventeen questionnaires were submitted from local and regional authorities in 11 EU Member States.

3.2.1 "Innovation Union": perceived opportunities

The survey results confirm regions' and cities' focus on the Commission commitment to maximise social and regional benefits and to strengthen the knowledge base in the context of innovation. Among the actions envisaged by the European Commission in its Communication on Innovation Union¹⁹, respondent regions and cities considered improving the use of existing Structural funds for research and innovation projects as providing the most relevant opportunity for their territories. By using smart specialisation and finding synergies between financial instruments, LRAs can improve R&D activities and involve a large number of stakeholders sharing knowledge and experience.

¹⁹ "Innovation Union"; COM 546/2010 published on 6 October 2010

Funding opportunities for research and SMEs

A multitude of national and regional programmes – mostly funded by the EU – are aimed at fostering research-industry collaboration, technology transfer and harnessing best practices (i.e. Stockholm and Łódź Universities). Many initiatives are examples of horizontal cooperation among local/regional authorities, chambers of commerce, SME associations, universities (i.e. Liberec Region, Apulia Region and Gipuzkoa province). Indeed, they contribute to reaching targets geared to supporting university-industry cooperation and delivering the right framework for smart growth.

The launch of a European Social Innovation Pilot and the opportunity to provide social innovation and expertise for social entrepreneurs and the public and third sectors through the implementation of the European Social Fund were identified as being of great interest.

The Commission's commitment to simplifying future EU research and innovation programmes, enabling easier access to funding and greater involvement of SMEs, were also stressed as important.

Actions for putting in place financial instruments to attract private finance for investments in research and innovation are strongly recommended.

LRAs promoting innovative culture

Regions and cities coordinate ongoing projects with similar objectives to the actions foreseen in the Innovation Union, frequently in partnership with other LRAs, sometimes from foreign countries, and geared towards promoting innovative culture with the objective of fostering research-industry collaboration, technology transfer and application of best practices.

Moreover, the idea of setting up a European Design Leadership Board, to enhance the role of design in innovation policy and to establish a European Creative Industry Alliance, to develop new forms of support for these industries and to promote the wider use of creativity by other sectors has been warmly welcomed.

Educational policies

There are already regional and local initiatives envisaged to strengthen the knowledge base in respect of the Regional Innovation Strategy (e.g. PhD student grant programmes, networks of public laboratories, industrial liaison offices in regional universities). This strong interest in university cooperation ties in with the assertion that "business should also be more involved in curricula development and doctoral training so that skills better match industry needs" (i.e. Malmö, Łódź, Gipuzkoa, and Preston). Educational policies are often put in place to exploit the region's capacities for R&D, to start up collaborations and knowledge transfer between higher education institutes and business. However the lack of communication between these two sectors remains an issue in some regions.

3.2.2 "Innovation Union": perceived challenges

The importance of innovation is widely recognised by all contributors; nevertheless they underline common difficulties in translating the goals set in the Communication into specific and effective actions for change. Respondents perceive the biggest challenge lying in the alignment of policies, actors and instruments, both horizontally and vertically, in a true multi-level governance spirit. In particular they underline the difficulties faced by cities and regions in playing a role as active players in the management and funding of actions.

Barriers to cooperation between science and business as well as public-private partnership are significant challenges on which LRAs want to focus their attention. To this end they suggest the need to reduce the administrative burden and simplify EU programmes. In border regions, the cross-border setting is sometimes considered an obstacle to integrated and functional research projects.

More effective use of Structural funds in the smart growth domain is considered as a priority but also a challenge in many territories. As the money flow will follow the policy priorities, the most efficient and effective policy choices are crucial in times of budget constraints.

Contributors are aware of innovation being a dynamic and wide-reaching concept yet they note that "managers and policy makers tend to use old tools and paradigms for addressing new problems and objectives", as put by one of the respondents. Some contributors mention that innovation policy still focuses too much on big companies (innovation in SMEs, services and creative sectors to be boosted) or on big cities and there should be more effort to foster an entrepreneurial spirit among young people (entrepreneurship to be included in curricula). Attracting and retaining talents is constrained by a shortage of housing for students and guest researchers.

3.3 **Flagship Initiative – *Youth on the Move***

Outcome of a Quick Survey by the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform

The Committee of the Regions is currently preparing an opinion on the "Youth on the Move" flagship initiative whose final adoption is envisaged for January 2011. The Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform launched a quick survey in September 2010 on this flagship initiative to gather from its members an initial assessment of the Commission' proposal. Seventeen questionnaires were submitted from local and regional authorities in eight EU member states.

3.3.1 "Youth on the Move": perceived opportunities

Respondents see many actions envisaged in this flagship initiative as relevant for their work on the ground. With one of the contributors underlining that the goal is to "treat young people not only as an economic resource, but as an engine of citizenship education and democratic coexistence", most respondents still recognised the relevance of the Commission's initiatives aimed at matching demand and supply on the labour market. Respondents see reform of the higher education system as also very important, aiming at strengthening the link between business and education and giving young people the opportunity to enter the labour market while improving innovation capabilities of companies.

Regions and cities already working towards EU headline targets

There are already regional and local initiatives envisaged in respect of the Youth on the Move flagship initiative (e.g. local, regional youth cards, regional support programmes for young entrepreneurs, websites dedicated to youth). Indeed, many regions and cities are already contributing to reaching EU headline targets, e.g. a strong focus on initiatives aimed at bringing early school leavers back to education and/or to help them to get a job). It is important in this context that local and regional authorities find synergies between their ongoing practices and possibilities offered by this flagship initiative.

Furthermore, most contributors appreciated all initiatives related to the enhancement of young people's mobility: the "European Vacancy Monitor", "European skill passport", "Youth on the move card", "Your first EURES job". These initiatives can attract the attention of a great number of young people as there are still too many barriers to moving around, with "bad stories shaping the debate on moving across borders" as coined by one of the respondents. In addition, funding is of extreme importance to supporting young people in search of a job or for education.

The creation of a website on scholarships, funding and job opportunities and communicating with young people is the action most frequently planned by local and regional authorities. Finally, respondents see the EU benchmark systems for learning mobility and the higher education performance benchmark as a chance to exploit their (sometimes leading) position in these areas.

3.3.2 "Youth on the Move": perceived challenges

The most difficult target for regions and cities is to ensure that all young people find a job or get work experience within four months of leaving school and to reduce drop outs from the school system.

Another big challenge is the lack of coordination among institutional actors, social partners and educational institutions. Tight coupling of strategies and actions among all stakeholders is needed to ensure a good impact from programming and funding.

Cooperation and partnership for more effective youth policies

Local and regional authorities are involved in various forms of territorial cooperation to implement their projects: cross-border networks (e.g. Euroregion Baltic Youth Board), twinning cities agreements (Porta Futuro between Rome and Barcelona) or partnerships with third country actors (e.g. Rome cooperating with Chisinau, Moldova to support the latter city in setting up public employment services and implementing a mobility scheme for highly skilled young people). Many initiatives are based on vertical cooperation (between local/regional authorities, chambers of commerce, SME associations, universities) or realised in partnership between all levels of government.

Public spending constraints (sometimes due to recent cuts of national resources dedicated to education and youth policies) and subsequent insufficient financial resources are also stressed as a big obstacle.

In the view of one contributor, the Commission's document gives hardly any insight on how the proposed actions should be financed. Thus it is important that proposed initiatives are included in the design of the next generation of EU education, training and youth programmes post-2013 and supported by the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework.

Funding opportunities for regions and cities

Local and regional authorities widely use funding opportunities provided by their respective national governments. However with many of them coming to an end, there are concerns about the continuity of the projects and launch of the new ideas. Regions and cities often turn to the EU for financial support for their innovative initiatives.

How to communicate all available opportunities to young people so that they can find them amid the maze of online information is another big challenge. Strengthening dialogue between young people and regional/local administrations (e.g. via more interactive communication channels), showing how implementing actions from this flagship initiative will affect people on the ground, rebuilding trust in the institutions and providing interesting teaching programmes for schools about the opportunities that the EU offers are some of the solutions offered by respondents.

According to some respondents, the success of the envisaged initiatives also requires a shift of perception in some areas, in order to grasp the opportunities available to study across the European Union, to make lifelong learning familiar and user-friendly for everybody, to consider foreign languages as an investment rather than an obligation or to acknowledge the value of apprenticeship.

Finally, the diversity of regional or national education systems may hinder the implementation of some actions such as a European student lending facility or ambitious mobility initiatives (i.e. in some countries an unemployed person cannot be sent by employment services for training abroad).

4. Sustainable growth

The two flagship initiatives under the pillar of sustainable growth are "*An Integrated Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era*"²⁰ which was published on 28 October and will be assessed in the 2nd CoR Report in 2011, and "*Resource efficient Europe*" which will be composed of several communications whose publication is expected to be completed in spring 2011.

4.1 Flagship initiative – An industrial policy for the globalisation era

In its **Resolution** on the Stronger involvement of Local and Regional Authorities in the Europe 2020 strategy, the CoR considered that the added-value of regional and local authorities in "An industrial policy for the globalisation era" flagship initiative could relate to "improving the legislative framework on public-private partnerships, simplifying public procurement legislation, including the use of e-procurement; reconciliation of work and family life through a better quality of public

²⁰

"An Integrated Industrial Policy for the Globalised Era"; COM(2010) 614 published on 28 October 2010.

services; cutting red tape; support to small and medium-sized enterprises: information, better access to credit and funding, training and advice to SMEs"²¹. As for the link between this flagship initiative and cohesion policy, the Committee stressed that the latter has a valuable contribution to make in improving competitiveness by boosting the potential for industrial development of weaker regions in particular, supporting cluster initiatives, supporting SMEs, developing business-related infrastructure and fostering industrial diversification"²².

4.2 **Flagship Initiative – Resource efficient Europe**

Although this FI had not yet been published when this report was being finalised, a series of monitoring results as well as CoR political statements have become available in 2010.

In the policy field of climate change and energy efficiency, the CoR expressed its position in 2010 with a **Resolution**²³ on the Cancún climate summit. The CoR has stated, inter alia, that Europe 2020 supports the EU objective of an ambitious global climate change agreement at the Rio + 20 Earth Summit in 2012. It considered that climate adaptation and mitigation must be mainstreamed into all existing EU policy frameworks. It also emphasised that "territorial pacts", as proposed by the CoR, could be a very important tool in the fight against climate change, as this can be achieved in an effective way only via a close partnership between the European, national, regional and local levels of government based on the principle of subsidiarity. To stimulate local and regional activities geared towards the ambitious objectives of the EU 2020 strategy, the CoR has suggested the creation of new instruments as priority lines in the Structural Funds or as a separate Energy Investment Fund; it has also recommended strategic public private partnerships such as alliances between small and medium-sized enterprises and local and regional authorities with a view to further developing and applying low carbon technologies, also inviting regions and cities to conclude local climate action pacts between public and private partners. A substantial proportion of the revenue from the European emissions trading scheme should be made available to local and regional authorities for putting climate change mitigation and adaptation measures into effect at local level.

In its draft **Outlook opinion**²⁴ on the "European Energy Action Plan for 2011-2013" the Committee of the Regions has drawn attention to the close relationship which exists between the recovery plan and investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy in the context of the current economic and environmental crisis. The need for better involvement of the private sector has been stressed. To support energy companies in delivering major investment in new generation technologies and infrastructure allowing energy flowing and switching to low carbon energy, financial institutions will

21 CoR Resolution " Stronger involvement of Local and Regional Authorities in the Europe 2020 strategy", CdR 199/2010 adopted on 10 June, 2010, point 10.2.

22 CoR Opinion on "Contribution of Cohesion Policy to the Europe 2020 Strategy" CdR 223/2010, adopted 6 October 2010, point 53.

23 "Resolution on The Cancun Climate Summit"; CdR 284/2010 adopted on 6 October 2010.

24 "EU Energy Action Plan for 2011-2020"; CdR 244/2010, for adoption by CoR plenary on 1/2 December 2010.

require an innovative financial project underwritten by national government, the EU institutions or by an Energy Investment Fund.

Preliminary results of a **Survey**²⁵ on the territorial impact of the planned revision of the EU Biodiversity Strategy (due by end of 2010), show that respondent local and regional authorities (a) are usually at the forefront when setting the protection of biodiversity as a priority, (b) experience knowledge gaps which hinder the creation of a baseline for proper quantitative measuring, (c) that there is a clear need for more straightforward and substantial financing of the biodiversity programmes, (d) cross-border cooperation is a crucial element to be taken into account for any initiative and (e) the LRAs would welcome the exchange of best practices and checking mechanisms.

Survey on "Sustainable Energy Policies by EU Regions and Cities: Good Practices and Challenges"

A **Survey**²⁶ on "Sustainable Energy Policies by EU Regions and Cities: Good Practices and Challenges", carried out in the first half of 2010 by the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform with the support of the Covenant of Mayors, found that ongoing initiatives implemented by local and regional authorities, usually follow an *integrated approach* (as they are more likely to be part of a larger programme or policy action plan, such as a Local Agenda 21 or a Local Climate Strategy) and are *multi-sector, multi-action* and *multi-level* (as they involve on average five sectors each, the main ones being energy supply and distribution, public as well as residential buildings, horizontal measures such as policy planning, communication and awareness).

The integrated approach to Vienna's environmental protection programme

The environmental protection programme of the city of Vienna (Austria) includes more than 100 measures in the areas of energy, mobility, and urban structure, procurement, waste management, land and forest management and conservation.

Initiatives are *multi-action* because they include a variety of simultaneous actions, such as communication measures, public sector investment, investment in public premises and training.

Amsterdam, a comprehensive approach to electric city transport

The city of Amsterdam is aiming to encourage the transition to electric transport through a variety of measures, including the construction of charging stations, the provision of subsidies to companies wishing to buy electric cars, the facilitation of offers of electric cars by making agreements with car companies, the setting up of pilots for electric quick loading, etc.

²⁵ In Autumn 2010, the CoR carried out a consultation on the territorial impact of the EU's post 2010 Biodiversity Strategy, through the Subsidiarity Monitoring Network, the EU2020 Platform and the EGTC Platform. In accordance with the cooperation agreement linking the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions since 2005, the outcome of this survey is the CoR contribution to the Impact Assessment of the revised Biodiversity Strategy, in preparation by the European Commission services in charge.

²⁶ Report of the survey is available on: <http://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/Pages/welcome.aspx>

Multi-level governance appears as an essential element for initiatives, as the most comprehensive actions are those implemented by local and regional authorities in partnership with other levels of government.

Multi-level governance structure in Wallonia's initiative

The "Wood Energy and Rural Development Plan for Wallonia" (Belgium) is a regional initiative which brings together several ministries and their administrations in Wallonia, aimed at encouraging rural municipalities and other authorities to choose woodland by-products as fuel to heat their buildings.

In this context, the national level and the EU mainly provide funding and adopt legislation, while the regional level is more balanced and comprehensive – providing funding and other resources and adopting legislation and implementing actions – and local authorities are mostly focused on implementation actions.

The Interreg co-financed 'Cross-border plan of exploitation and evaluation of smooth geothermy in the Municipalities of Moudros and Geroskipou'

This plan was implemented in the framework of the EU Initiative INTERREG IIIA Greece-Cyprus 2000-2006 and specifically of Measure 3.2 "Protection, promotion and management of natural environment". The project budget was financed from both the European Regional Development Fund (75%) and national resources (25%)

Besides multi-level governance, horizontal partnership and cross-border agreements also play an important role.

The cross-border partnership of the ISLE-PACT project

The ISLE-PACT project is linked to the development of Local Sustainable Energy Action Plans, with the aim of achieving the Europe 20/20/20 goals. Twelve partners representing European islands are taking part in the project. The project coordinator is the Outer Hebrides of Scotland (Comhairle nan Eilean Siar - CnES) and the project is co-funded by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Energy.

Working in networks provides significant added value, above all for supporting small local authorities with limited resources in their endeavour to plan energy policy and actions. Here the supporting structures helping the Covenant of Mayors²⁷ can play an essential role.

While the success of these initiatives is directly linked to political leadership and public participation, the main obstacle underlined in the survey is related to the financial and human resources needed – as the economic crisis seems to have a substantially negative impact.

²⁷

<http://www.eumayors.eu/>

Most of the initiatives reported are essential for achieving the 20-20-20 headline target while showing a potential for improving competitiveness and growth and generating new jobs.

Millepiedibus, an initiative for children

Developed to raise awareness on sustainable lifestyles, the initiative, implemented in the municipality of Robbiate (Italy), aims at optimising children's daily journeys to school by setting up safe routes between home and school.

5. Inclusive growth

Both flagship initiatives supporting the Inclusive growth priority – "*An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs*" and the "*European Platform against Poverty*" are scheduled to be published after this report has been finalised. The Committee of the Regions has recently raised some political issues in these two policy areas.

5.1 Flagship Initiative – An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs

The **CoR Resolution** "on the Stronger involvement of Local and Regional Authorities in the Europe 2020 strategy"²⁸ recapped the added-value of regional and local authorities in the above two flagship initiatives. Concerning the labour market, local and regional authorities play a key role in delivering flexicurity policies, prepare people for integration into the labour market, improve the quality of education and training and develop the "Erasmus programme for local and regional civil servants and for elected representatives" to contribute to a better knowledge of the management of public affairs.

In turn, the **CoR opinion** on the "Contribution of Cohesion Policy to the Europe 2020 Strategy"²⁹ has welcomed the Commission's efforts to support the younger generation in the world of training and work and recommended promoting mobility for students and trainees and providing support to integrate young people in the labour market.

5.2 Flagship Initiative – European Platform against Poverty

As for the flagship initiative devoted to anti-poverty measures, as introduced in the CoR Resolution, regions and cities are *already* developing a territorialised social inclusion agenda, ensuring better complementarity between EU funds addressing social inclusion and the fight against poverty while using legal competences and programmes tailored to local needs, creating a new dimension for combating poverty by recognising the explicit needs of women in the workplace and as entrepreneurs, recognising the need to focus on young people and children and establishing regional observatories to monitor indicators and policies related to social inclusion. The CoR opinion reiterated that cohesion policy will contribute to combating poverty in the European Union by supporting local and regional inclusion and employment projects. In particular, cohesion policy will invest some EUR 19 billion to

²⁸ CdR 199/2010, adopted 10 June 2010.

²⁹ CdR 223/2010, adopted 6 October 2010, point 54.

help remove barriers to employment, in particular for women, young people and older and low-skilled workers³⁰.

In its **opinion** on Combating Homelessness³¹, the Committee of the Regions highlighted that homelessness is an extreme form of poverty and social exclusion, and should therefore be paid more attention in the EU's Social Protection and Inclusion Strategy. The year 2010 is a good moment to raise awareness of this persistent problem, which risks becoming worse in the context of the economic crisis. In addition, the Committee pointed to the key role of local and regional authorities when it comes to taking practical and vigorous action to combat homelessness. They bear the real responsibility, they have substantial experience and, in many cases, effective methods and programmes geared to both pre-emptive, emergency and long-term measures. This increases the need for a clearer division of responsibilities between the various authorities and levels of government.

In the context of the 'European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion', the Committee of the Regions invited local and regional authorities, organisations and EU institutions to exchange good practice and expertise in the fight against poverty and social exclusion at local level. 200 experts from regional authorities gathered to discuss a political framework and comment on 24 local projects, which had been selected and grouped according to three thematic strands: making local social services more accessible to all, preparing people for integration into the labour market and inclusive citizenship in urban and rural areas. Through this event, the Committee of the Regions "aimed at encouraging local and regional authorities, organisations and EU institutions to exchange good practices and expertise in the fight against poverty and social exclusion at local and regional levels, and at fostering networking between governmental and non-governmental actors in the endeavour of reducing poverty"³².

6. Horizontal Issues

Besides the flagship initiatives, "horizontal" actions are also needed to boost smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, including those aimed at identifying "missing links" and fixing "bottlenecks" – mainly in the fields of the internal market and infrastructure – as well as other actions aimed at making Europe 2020 more effective – such as smart regulation initiatives, adoption of new indicators beyond GDP and possible others. In each annual report, the CoR Monitoring Report will look at one or more of these actions.

³⁰ CdR 223/2010, point 38.

³¹ CdR 18/2010, adopted 6 October 2010, Rapporteur, Tore Hult (SE/PES).

³² Quotations from the introductory speech of Arnoldas Abramavičius, chairman of the Committee of the Regions' Commission for Economic and Social Policy. The agenda of the event and all speeches are available at: <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/EventTemplate.aspx?view=folder&id=727a3dfd-349b-47e6-b4dd-bd5c2c91e036&sm=727a3dfd-349b-47e6-b4dd-bd5c2c91e036>.

6.1 GDP and beyond

In an **opinion** on "*Measuring Progress - GDP and beyond*"³³, the Committee of the Regions stressed that GDP is not an accurate measure of the ability of a society to tackle issues such as climate change, resource efficiency, quality of life or social inclusion. Therefore, it proposed that the indicators selected to direct public policies comply with the priorities of the EU 2020 Strategy and has supported the initiatives being taken by the European Commission to develop such indicators.

Moreover, the CoR has proposed that after 2013 the application of the Structural Funds, including the Cohesion Fund, be not based solely on per capita GDP.

The CoR has also stressed that local and regional authorities should actively participate in measuring economic, social and environmental progress and would need support from the EU to develop the appropriate capacity and obtain the required resources.

Indeed, many of Europe's local and regional authorities are already developing indicators designed to measure societal progress and territorial cohesion. There are many examples of the application of environmental or social accounting at regional/local level, using indicators which are focused on specific sectors and issues³⁴.

Moreover, the CoR has in particular reiterated that the urban and rural aspect should be better highlighted across a broad range of EU policies, especially in the context of territorial cohesion, where the development of relevant economic, environmental and social indicators could enhance the quality of local and regional policies. Such indicators could help improve the criteria for impact assessment and better allocation of Structural Funds.

The CoR has maintained that new indicators to be developed in this respect should be robust, reliable and widely recognised in order to measure progress towards an environmentally efficient economy and should provide a foundation for building a framework of sustainable development indicators, i.e. in the social, economic and environmental spheres. The CoR has also held that the European Commission should provide support and resources for the creation of statistical databases at local and regional level, covering the entire European Union.

The above opinion could also benefit from a **Quick Survey** carried out by the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform. Contributors to this survey, stressed, inter alia, (a) that an increase in regional and social disparities had a negative impact on the environment as less advantaged communities were forced to make short-term compromises between growth and environmental protection, and (b) the importance of using indicators on a regional basis despite the need to develop statistical resources that this implied. Additional indicators should take better account of the specific characteristics of a given

³³ CdR 163/2010, adopted on 5 October 2010.

³⁴ Examples can be found at <http://www.cor.europa.eu/europe2020>.

region and must meet the criteria of robustness, simplicity and comparability. Contributors also stressed the need for consensus on the new indicators as this would facilitate their adoption.

The close ties between the Europe 2020 flagship initiatives and existing priorities in the GDP and beyond strategy, were also confirmed by an Open Days workshop on regional innovation indicators³⁵, which showed, inter alia, that EU regions and cities have been firmly committed to playing a major role in supporting innovation for a long time, and that they need a solid knowledge-based foundation to better gauge the results and impact of their policies.

6.2 The Single Market Act

On 27 October 2010, the European Commission published two sets of proposals to boost the *Single Market Act*, removing the remaining hurdles for companies and consumers ("*Towards a Single Market Act*") and for citizens ("*The EU Citizenship Report*").

Regrettably, the Single Market Act does not specifically address the role that the local and regional authorities could play, especially in supporting infrastructure projects and cross-border cooperation.

With specific monitoring activities in this field forthcoming in 2011, it is already worth mentioning the following aspects that are potentially very relevant to the regions:

- better access to finance and improved access to public procurement contracts for SMEs,
- legal clarity and certainty of the rules governing the award of service concessions contracts³⁶,
- support to social entrepreneurship (also cross-border),
- full implementation of the Services Directive,
- implementation of a "professional ID card" to reduce red tape thus facilitating circulation of professionals between Member States,
- a more stable and transparent legal framework in the field of services of general economic interest and State aid at EU level, complying with the principle of subsidiarity,
- improving territorial impact assessment of EU legislation
- development of EU transport policies, in terms of infrastructure, the internal market, new traffic management technologies and clean cars, using both EU programmes and market instruments,
- promoting and supporting a more environmentally friendly transport sector.

³⁵ The workshop on "Regional innovation indicators – evidence-based policymaking for EUROPE 2020 and for the European Plan for Research and Innovation" took place on 5 October 2010. It was co-organised by the CoR's Europe2020 Monitoring Platform and the European Regions Research and Innovation Network (ERRIN).

³⁶ However, if service concessions are to be covered by the EU procurement directives, it is important that these rules be as simple and flexible as possible.

7. **Appendix**

**Quick Survey
GDP and beyond
List of contributors**

State	Institution
LT	ALAL Brussels Representative Lithuania
FR	Communauté urbaine de Dunkerque
UK	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA)
ES	Delegación del Gobierno de Navarra
BE	Flemish government - Environment, Nature and Energy Department - International Environmental Policy Division
HU	Hungarian Regional and Territorial Regional Development Association / Magyar Település- és Területfejlesztők Szövetsége
PT	Lisbon city
PL	Lodz City
PT	Madeira Autonomous Region
FR	Nord-Pas de Calais
UK	North West Health Brussels Office
UK	Northwest of England Regional Intelligence Unit
PL	Office of the Marshal of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship
UK	OFMDFM Northern Ireland
UK	Our Life
IT	Regione Umbria
MT	South Region - Malta

**Quick Survey
Youth on the Move
List of contributors**

State	Institution
IT	Apulia Region (Regione Puglia)
ES	Autonomous Community of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya)
IT	City of Bolzano
DK	Danish Regions
FR	IAU Ile-de-France
RU	Kaliningrad (Euroregion Baltic Youth Board)
SE	Kalmar (Euroregion Baltic Youth Board)
PL	Kujawsko-Pomorskie Voivodeship
NL	Lingewaard municipality

State	Institution
IT	Marche Regional Authority
PL	North East Mazovia Region Development Agency (Agencja Rozwoju Regionu Mazowsza Północno-Wschodniego) Ostrołęka
PL	Pomorskie
UK	Preston City Council
IT	Province of Rome (Provincia di Roma)
ES	Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa (Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa)
SE	Region Blekinge (Euroregion Baltic Youth Board)
SE	Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)

**Quick Survey
Innovation Union
List of contributors**

State	Organisation
IT	Apulia Region (Regione Puglia)
IT	ARCHES – Advanced Research Centre for Health, Environment and Space
ES	Basque Government – Industry, Innovation, Trade and Tourism Ministry
IE	Border, Midland and Western Regional Assembly
SE	City of Malmö (Malmö Stad)
BE	Flemish Government
CZ	Liberec Region (Krajský úřad Libereckého kraje)
NL	Lingewaard municipality
PL	Marshal's Office of the Lodz Voivodship
PL	Office of the Marshal of the Pomorskie Voivodeship, Poland
UK	Preston City Council
ES	Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa (Diputación Foral de Gipuzkoa)
SE	Region Västra Götaland, Sweden
IT	Regione Marche
IT, ES, FR	Secrétariat Permanent Arco Latino
SE	Solna City
EE	Tallinn

**Survey
Sustainable Energy Policies by EU Regions and Cities: Good Practices and Challenges**

A list of over 200 contributors to this survey can be accessed here: <http://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/news/Documents/Survey%20Sustainable%20energy%20May%202010/Energy%20Survey%20List%20contributors.pdf>

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Cyprus 
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