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## I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

## RESOLUTIONS

## COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

## 133RD COR PLENARY SESSION, 6.2.2019-7.2.2019

**Resolution of the European Committee of the Regions on Combatting Hate Speech and Hate Crime**

(2019/C 168/01)

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (CoR)

- being profoundly shocked and saddened by the murder of the Mayor of Gdańsk and CoR member Paweł Adamowicz, a true European promoting and defending the values of freedom, solidarity, democracy, social inclusion and dignity;
- having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights;
- having regard to the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- having regard to its opinion of 6 February 2019 on 'Tackling online disinformation: a European approach';
- having regard to its opinion of 15 June 2016 on 'Combatting radicalisation and violent extremism: prevention mechanisms at local and regional level';
- having regard to the European Parliament debate of 30 January 2019 on 'Combatting the climate of hatred and physical violence against democratically elected mandate holders';
- having regard to the work of the EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance;
- having regard to the need to deepen the dialogue with the people, including in view of the ongoing and future elections at the local, regional, national and European level;

1. is deeply concerned by the increase in hate speech and hate crime and the degeneration of public discourse which is generating all kinds of violence, extremism, propaganda and intolerance in the European Union (EU) and challenging the very foundation of the European project. It is worrying that elected representatives in different countries are exposed to undue influence when exercising their democratic mandate. Populism and undemocratic forces pose a challenge for democracy and may ultimately weaken the way it functions;

2. points out that the EU is founded on a common set of fundamental values, which includes human dignity and non-discrimination, as stipulated in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, as well as freedom of expression as stipulated in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and in Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU;

3. expects European, national, regional and local levels of governance, the media, civil society organisations, economic actors and individual citizens to respect these values, as they form the basis for mutual trust and understanding and are a cornerstone of open and democratic societies;

4. points out that hateful rhetoric divides our society, induces fear and radicalisation, it defames and dehumanises individuals and can result in grievous acts. It destroys the goal we all share – a strong Europe, united in diversity, peace and common values;

5. calls on all levels of governance to adopt measures to prevent and protect citizens from violence, harassment, hate speech and hate crime; in addition, demands that all political parties, as foundations for effective democracy, refrain from using hate speech and propaganda as a method to gain political advantage;

6. points out that as they are close to citizens, regional and local politicians, especially mayors and local councillors, are more often the victims of hatred and physical violence;

7. points out that together with numerous local and regional initiatives and civil society players, they are on the frontline in the fight against intolerance and at the same time they have an obligation as well as a responsibility to combat violent behaviour and hateful speech;

8. calls on all EU Member States and all levels of government to invest in education and to raise awareness among citizens regarding the need for mutual respect and the serious risks arising from hate speech and hate crime for individuals, society and democracy;

9. calls to promote responsible internet usage and media literacy, in order to equip citizens, especially our young people, with the knowledge and ability to identify hate speech and hate crime and counteract it online and offline;

10. calls on all social media and internet platforms to take collective responsibility to promote and facilitate freedom of expression, but at the same time to tackle hate speech and hate crime in line with the Code of Conduct on countering illegal hate speech online, agreed by Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft and YouTube with the European Commission in May 2016, calls also for effective instruments to end anonymity and stop fake accounts as well as to monitor the dark web, which is often used as a means of disseminating radical content;

11. takes note of the fourth evaluation on the EU Code of Conduct on Countering illegal hate speech online presented by the European Commission on 4 February 2019. Notes that in 72 % of the cases, the participating IT companies did respond to hate speech notifications by deleting content. Regrets at the same time that the feedback rate to users has dropped to 65,4 %. Advocates therefore considering complementing the voluntary approach of the Code with regulatory action at EU level;

12. encourages better cooperation and collaborative communication between all levels of governance, police, prosecution and judicial authorities as well as civil society organisations so as to identify hate speech and hate crime at an early stage, implement appropriate measures to prevent and combat it and ensure proper investigation, prosecution, conviction and sentencing;

13. considers it essential for an alert system to be set up in each Member State, in cooperation with the EU, and regional and local authorities, for support and guidance, so that acquaintances or family can quickly and easily seek help if a person starts showing an inclination towards violent extremism and hate crime;

14. calls for support for and solidarity with all victims and witnesses of hate speech and hate crime and encourage them to report such behaviour to the relevant authorities, which must ensure that victims and witnesses are protected; calls for measures and mechanisms to be put in place to facilitate criminal justice authorities to liaise more effectively with victims, civil society and community based organisations in tackling this issue;

15. points out that the existing instruments have not secured full protection of human rights and human dignity and therefore calls on the Member States to work together with local and regional authorities as well as with the EU to develop effective legislation and instruments to fight the dissemination of hate speech and incitement to hate crime, in line with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality<sup>(1)</sup>;

16. instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the European Parliament, the Council, the President of the European Council, the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the EU and political families of the EU.

Brussels, 7 February 2019.

*The President*  
*of the European Committee of the Regions*  
Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

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<sup>(1)</sup> In line with the guidelines of the EU High Level Group on combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance.

## OPINIONS

## COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

## 133RD COR PLENARY SESSION, 6.2.2019-7.2.2019

**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on ‘A renewed European agenda for research and innovation — Europe’s chance to shape its future’**

(2019/C 168/02)

<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Birgitta SACRÉDEUS (SE/EPP), Member of Dalarna County Council
<b>Reference document:</b>	A renewed European Agenda for Research and Innovation – Europe’s chance to shape its future  COM(2018) 306 final

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

## THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. welcomes the fact that the Commission has made it clear that research and innovation will continue to be a priority for the EU, and is proposing to put more of an emphasis on this area in the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework, but also points out that governments at all levels – EU, national, regional and local – need to work together to achieve the agenda’s goals. The Committee agrees with the Commission’s conclusion that the challenges Europe is facing mean that we need to develop a new approach to research and innovation, which in turn requires a joint approach between regions, Member States and the Commission;
2. stresses that local and regional authorities are key players in the creation of effective regional ecosystems and innovation hubs, for example in the development of regional smart specialisation strategies (RIS 3s). It is important for the new agenda, as well as programmes supporting research and innovation, to highlight the public sector and its role not just as recipients of research and innovation but also as R&I stakeholders that themselves undertake such activities;
3. highlights the need for broader definitions and understandings of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs, including in establishing the network of European Digital Innovation hubs, that explicitly acknowledge and include national, local and regional authorities, business, the non-state public sector, universities and higher education institutions, civil society and the not-for-profit sector, the public and end-users of research and innovation, in order to gain a real understanding of these location-specific, integrated and embedded ecosystems;
4. points out that there is a direct correlation between less developed regions and low rates of investment in innovation and research. As R&I outcomes are inextricably linked to research infrastructure, this needs to be boosted, directing part of EU funds, such as the Structural Funds or Horizon Europe, towards EU regions with greater socioeconomic development needs owing to unemployment, the outermost regions, and regions with serious and permanent natural or demographic handicaps, such as island, cross-border and mountain regions;
5. urges for the inclusion in the legislative texts that will finally be adopted of a precise definition of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs allowing these ecosystems to be effectively taken into account in the implementation of all strands of the future Framework Programme;

6. believes that innovation is a key factor in growth and sustainable development, and that future EU research and innovation funding needs to cover the entire R&I process in a balanced way, from basic research to research, development and innovation that are driven by needs identified in advance by agreement between different players in the system, as well as dissemination and exploitation of the results;
7. believes that State aid rules need to be further simplified so as to make it easier to combine different EU programmes, which is essential in order to overcome regional disparities in participation and opportunities to undertake successful research and innovation work; considers in this context that programmes or actions co-financed by different funds, and based on the tools and modalities of the Framework Programme, must be able to be implemented under the legal framework of the Framework Programme;
8. considers that the Horizon Europe programme needs to focus on funding areas with a clear European added value such as sustainable development objectives, and that research and innovation projects based on cooperation between several complementary stakeholders should therefore be prioritised, as they are uniquely suited for this purpose;
9. emphasises that societal challenges, especially the attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), can only be resolved by setting higher ambition targets at over-arching European level, and by mobilising coordinated efforts of all stakeholders, including cities and regions, on a larger scale than single research projects; also stresses that such work needs to take a longer-term perspective than was the case under the Horizon 2020 programme, which in turn will require the programme structure to be designed such that long-term financing can be obtained;

*Europe's chance to invest in the future*

10. agrees that Europe is in a strong position as regards high-quality research, but that more and stronger efforts are needed in order to turn the results into innovations and applications that can drive sustainable development and growth, and that research, innovation and development should be given great prominence in the Horizon Europe programme while ensuring that all stages of the innovation process are strengthened in a balanced way;
11. urges, in the light of the conclusions of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, for the full participation of local and regional authorities in the strategic planning exercise and in other governance bodies that will guide the implementation of Horizon Europe, and for regional smart specialisation strategies to be taken into account in this context. Considers by the same token that territorial impacts should be recognised as integral components of the impact concept when it comes to evaluating the programme and projects <sup>(1)</sup>;
12. emphasises that research and innovation are carried out in the public sector, with local and regional funding, as well as by business. It is to be welcomed that the renewed agenda includes concrete actions to support the contribution made by the public sector;
13. agrees that one of the keys to achieving a robust research and innovation capacity within the EU is to improve and more effectively coordinate the use of existing instruments, as the Committee has previously pointed out, and that it is particularly important for cohesion policy to be coordinated with research and innovation policy, while giving the Member States the necessary flexibility to shape their priorities in keeping with their needs. To this effect, measures should be adopted to prevent and in any event mitigate the rise in inequality between cities and regions that benefit hugely from the framework programme for research and innovation, and whose budgets will increase, and the others, who will suffer the consequences of the fall in cohesion policy budgets <sup>(2)</sup>;

<sup>(1)</sup> COR 2017-00854-00-01 Opinion on Local and Regional Dimension of the Horizon 2020 Programme and the New Framework Programme or Research and Innovation.

<sup>(2)</sup> COR 2017-00854-00-01 Opinion on Local and Regional Dimension of the Horizon 2020 Programme and the New Framework Programme or Research and Innovation.

14. notes that the full benefits from investing in digital technologies and platforms need to be scaled up throughout Europe. In this the Digital Europe Programme has a crucial role as a robust investment and development programme to capitalise the opportunities needed and created to achieve a fully-functioning Digital Single Market. The CoR emphasises the importance of establishing the network of Digital Innovation Hubs with sufficient coverage for all regions <sup>(3)</sup>;

15. welcomes a wide-ranging discussion concerning the relationship between research and innovation and society, and all interactions between them, on the basis of empirical analysis and reasoning concerning global changes and what they mean both for the academic community and for society at large, and what new roles they entail for all stakeholders in the research and innovation ecosystem at all levels;

16. wishes to highlight the absolutely crucial importance of the role of Europe's regions for industry, and to draw attention to the CoR's position on industrial policy <sup>(4)</sup>;

*A renewed agenda for a stronger European research and innovation ecosystem*

17. agrees with the approach of viewing research and innovation as activities within an ecosystem in which different stakeholders come together and cooperate to create a vibrant and dynamic environment, but one in which it is also crucial to take account of local and regional diversity in order to formulate successful strategies. With this in mind, the involvement of local and regional authorities is of a clear added value;

18. stresses that it is essential throughout the EU policy to integrate digitalisation, research and innovation into all major EU programmes and into partnerships of regional ecosystems;

19. agrees that it is essential to make use of the specific features of European regional ecosystems and innovation hubs to optimise their functionality, but also feels that the importance of local and regional stakeholders, such as municipalities and regions both as producers, drivers and end-users of innovation, in these ecosystems needs to be acknowledged and taken into account when developing European research and innovation policy <sup>(5)</sup>;

20. believes that local and regional authorities should be involved in designing and managing research and innovation programmes <sup>(6)</sup>. The importance of research and innovation in all policy areas and across different sectors of society can hardly be overstated, but it is important in all circumstances also to take account of the bottom-up drivers in these systems, not just the top-down ones, in order to fully achieve the goals of the renewed agenda and genuinely strengthen these ecosystems. This, in turn, will ensure that the agenda covers and promotes not just 'open science' but also 'open innovation';

21. takes the view that making more strategic use of local and regional innovation ecosystems, and putting more emphasis on and taking more advantage of the complex collaborative research and innovation processes developed through quadruple and quintuple helix structures within those ecosystems, is the key to success when it comes both to knowledge development in general and to knowledge transfer and the implementation of the results of research and innovation, as are strong synergies between the various funding instruments and the combination of different policy areas such as cohesion policy and research and innovation policy;

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<sup>(3)</sup> COR-2018-03951-00-01 Opinion on Digital Europe programme (2021-2027).

<sup>(4)</sup> COR 2017-03214-00-00 Opinion on A European strategy for industry: the role and perspective of regional authorities.

<sup>(5)</sup> COR 2017-04757-00-00 Opinion on Strengthening Innovation in Europe's Regions: strategies for resilient, inclusive and sustainable growth.

<sup>(6)</sup> COR 2017-00854-00-01 Opinion on Local and Regional Dimension of the Horizon 2020 Programme and the New Framework Programme or Research and Innovation.



*Safeguarding basic public investment and encouraging private investment*

22. welcomes the increase in investment in research and innovation through the allocation of around EUR 100 billion to the Horizon Europe programme and other programmes in the multiannual financial framework, but stresses that, for this investment to produce good results, it is vital to review and simplify State aid rules in order to achieve innovation-friendly regulations that allow the combination of different types of financing;

23. strongly supports the European partnership approach mentioned in Horizon Europe as an important tool to support bottom-up projects set up by consortia of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs, and financed by combined funds from Horizon Europe, other EU programmes, as well as national, regional or local public and private funds;

24. points out that local and regional authorities finance research and innovation, and thus part of public investment, but agrees that it is a positive move to encourage Member States to be more ambitious in their efforts to reach the goal of investing 3 % of GDP in research and innovation by 2020, and to improve the conditions for private investment and encourage further effort from business;

25. notes that the European Commission's Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation states that specific measures for the EU's outermost regions are justifiable with regard to their access to EU horizontal programmes, taking into account their structural, social and economic situation. The CoR regrets that the proposed text does not do the same, which will make it hard for the programme to take into account the specific needs of these regions and their unique assets as test beds for research and innovation in areas such as bioeconomics, climate change, in accordance with their smart specialisation strategies;

26. particularly wishes to highlight that, by participating in European consortia, local and regional authorities have made significant investments in European research and innovation infrastructure. This is another example of the extent to which research and innovation are location-specific and embedded in a local and regional context, and shows that more needs to be done to ensure that more users from across the EU and the regions have access to these consortia;

27. stresses that it is a good thing that the European Structural and Social Funds are being used to help the regions to participate in innovation-driven economic and social development and sustainable growth, and considers it to be particularly important to develop synergies between the Horizon Europe programme, the InvestEU fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Erasmus+ programme, the Digital Europe programme, the common agricultural policy and the space programme. Such synergies should foster coherence, complementarity and compatibility between funds, while favouring a co-construction-based approach and strengthening territorial connections;

28. welcomes the measures to secure access to venture capital for innovation by scaling up the VentureEU initiative to become a European fund, and also welcomes the revision of existing regulations by means of the Capital Markets Union initiative;

29. strongly opposes, however, that the option of transferring a share of cohesion policy funds to the Horizon Europe programme should be systematically decided by the Member States; strongly urges that this option should be exercised by the relevant managing authority and that the arrangements for harnessing these funds should be decided on by agreement between that authority and the Commission, ensuring that these funds are returned to the geographical area concerned (7);

30. notes the growing importance of the role played by the European Investment Bank in supporting R&I via financial instruments. This development ensures that grants are increasingly complemented by other financial instruments;

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(7) COR 2017-00854-00-01 Opinion on Local and Regional Dimension of the Horizon 2020 Programme and the New Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

*Adapting regulatory frameworks to stimulate innovation*

31. agrees that the rules and legislation at European and national level need to be analysed, based on an assessment of their impact on innovation. It is a very positive move to establish, as a concrete pro-innovation measure, a collection of examples specifically targeted at the public sector – specifically local and regional authorities – with the aim of facilitating innovative procurement and public-private partnerships, thus enhancing their ability to act as trailblazers;

32. welcomes the Commission's initiative to simplify State aid rules, along with other supporting measures, for example in the form of common qualitative assessment criteria for research and innovation projects;

33. points out that consistent guidance concerning regulations on research ethics would be a particularly important factor in facilitating collaborative research and innovation as practised in healthcare, education and social work, and interdisciplinary research focusing on people and behaviour. This would facilitate cross-border clinical and practical research and innovation involving cooperation between multiple stakeholders in situations where national regulations and requirements currently vary, which for example makes it difficult to synchronise national, regional and local research ethics review for all participants;

34. welcomes the option of using the 'Seal of Excellence' label for Horizon Europe projects to allow for funding through the Structural Funds, but stresses that it must always be a voluntary undertaking for Member States and regions to allocate Structural Funds resources to projects originating under Horizon Europe, and that it must be the relevant regional authorities that decide on such undertakings;

*Making Europe a frontrunner in market-creating innovation*

35. welcomes the initiative of creating a European Innovation Council;

36. stresses that the council's scope must also give emphasis or sufficient support to boosting early-stage innovation and to collaborative projects, as well as including social and societal innovations including service innovations, which to a large extent take place in municipalities and regions: it is there that new services, business opportunities and jobs are created that respond to the basic needs of society in a broad sense, and the digitalisation of public services in itself constitutes an opening for breakthrough innovations <sup>(8)</sup>;

37. points out that there is huge potential for breakthrough innovation not just in business but also, to at least the same degree, in regions, municipalities and the public sector <sup>(9)</sup>;

38. highlights, as an example, research and innovation conducted in municipalities and regions that act as 'living labs' and testbeds for e.g. healthcare, town planning and general improvements in prosperity, and the way in which innovations with significant benefits for end-users/the public can be implemented directly in this kind of location-specific context;

39. in this regard, opportunities arising from demographic change should be highlighted, such as those created by the 'silver economy' for businesses and bodies that design and market innovative products and services for older people. It is in regions affected by demographic change that the potential of this sphere of social innovation and innovation in relation to services could best be harnessed;

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<sup>(8)</sup> COR 2016-02882-00-01 Opinion on eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020.

<sup>(9)</sup> COR 2017-03529-00-00 Opinion on Local and regional perspective on promoting public sector innovation via digital solutions.

40. takes the view that local and regional authorities must be involved in the European Innovation Council alongside representatives from academia and business, including small and medium-sized enterprises, in order to focus its work clearly on issues of relevance to society, and that local and regional stakeholders must be covered by its activities;

41. believes that the council should make it possible for regional authorities to be involved in the development of investment aid;

#### *Setting EU-wide research and innovation missions*

42. supports the idea of organising interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary research and innovation around well-defined missions with clearly established goals that are of concern to the whole EU and have clear European added value, and of creating synergies in this way with research and innovation strategies at national, regional and local level, especially smart specialisation strategies. One example of this is bioeconomy <sup>(10)</sup>;

43. stresses that these missions must have clear relevance to society, and aim to deliver tangible benefits for the public, who should also be involved in developing the mission; also stresses, however, that it would be a good idea for the programme structure to provide scope for bottom-up driven research and innovation selected via open calls for tender, and for exploratory research and innovation;

44. reminds the need to involve local and regional authorities in the definition and implementation of the missions; believes that the missions should be linked to the sustainable development goals set out in the UN's Agenda 2030 and stresses the essential role of cities and regions in implementing the UN SDGs;

#### *Supporting rapid dissemination and uptake of innovation throughout the Union*

45. welcomes the opening up of the European Structural and Investment Funds to include all regions more effectively in an innovation-driven economy by boosting smart specialisation strategies (S3s) and interregional innovation aid. At the same time, the form this should take in practice should be determined at local and regional level, where the best knowledge is available concerning needs;

46. draws attention to the analysis <sup>(11)</sup> undertaken into the different ways in which regions address the challenges they meet when developing interregional cooperation at various levels, and feels that this must be taken into account in the design of all financial instruments used to support research and innovation in local and regional research and innovation ecosystems;

47. considers that the European Commission and the Member States involved in macroregional strategies must continue to develop and deepen the scientific and academic cooperation between their universities, including with regard to the goal of establishing European universities by 2024 <sup>(12)</sup>;

#### *Investing in skills at all levels and making European universities more entrepreneurial and interdisciplinary*

48. agrees that an innovative and learning society also requires changes in both higher education and basic education institutions, and that universities and higher education institutions need to cooperate more both with business and with society to create an education system that can respond quickly and flexibly to their changing skills needs and to the skills acquisition and training needs of individual citizens, regulated professions and trades;

<sup>(10)</sup> COR 2017-00044-00-01 Opinion on The Local and regional dimension of bioeconomy and the role of regions and cities.

<sup>(11)</sup> COR 2017.04757-00-00 Opinion on Strengthening Innovation in Europe's Regions: strategies for resilient, inclusive and sustainable growth.

<sup>(12)</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Strengthening European identity through education and culture – The European Commission's contribution to the Leaders' meeting in Gothenburg, 17 November 2017 (COM(2017) 673 final).

49. takes the view that open science, as a guiding principle for universities, higher education institutions and research institutions, is a good way of increasing the dissemination of knowledge in society in general, but would also urge the Commission to do all it can to support a swift transition towards it, including access to the results of research and innovation, which in itself offers opportunities for open innovation and broader civic engagement with research and innovation;

50. agrees that the New Skills Agenda for Europe <sup>(13)</sup> is of value in determining what links are needed between education and innovation ecosystems, as are the principles set out in the Digital Education Action Plan and the Digital Skills Strategy, and points out that it is vital, when it comes to lifelong learning, for universities and other higher education institutions to be able to develop support for open learning.

Brussels, 6 February 2019.

*The President*  
*of the European Committee of the Regions*  
Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

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<sup>(13)</sup> COR 2016-04094-00-01 Opinion on A New Skills Agenda for Europe.

**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on ‘Artificial Intelligence for Europe’**

(2019/C 168/03)

<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Jan TREI (EE/EPP), Mayor of Viimsi Rural Municipality
<b>Reference document:</b>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Artificial Intelligence for Europe  COM(2018) 237 final

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

**General comments**

1. welcomes the Artificial intelligence for Europe communication and fully supports the aim of working out a common approach in order to boost investment, prepare for socioeconomic changes, increase legal certainty for artificial intelligence (AI) operations and draft ethical guidelines; regrets, however, the very short time granted by the European Commission for the consultation on these draft guidelines <sup>(1)</sup>;
2. shares the Commission’s view regarding the remarkable, unprecedented change brought about by the advent of artificial intelligence; stresses the key role that AI can play in making the European Union more competitive, more inclusive and more sustainable and thereby contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to enhancing Europeans’ quality of life;
3. encourages the EU to seize the opportunity to use machines and artificial intelligence (AI) to automate procedures and recurring tasks, which they can do on a far greater scale and far more quickly than humans would be able to. At the same time, warns against the dangers of unsupervised machine learning and automated decision-making, which undermine the human dimension and the added value people provide;
4. stresses that AI is now triggering a major transformation in Europe’s economy and society – a development that will continue – and shares the view that a clear European framework is needed for AI;
5. agrees that political leaders must make sure an AI environment is put in place and ethical guidelines drafted for the AI ecosystem. Notes, however, that legislative proposals at European level are urgently needed;
6. notes the joint efforts of public (European, national, regional and local) and private stakeholders to incrementally raise the total volume of investment up to 2020 and beyond;
7. underscores the importance of better meshing the European Union’s various policies and programmes (including the EFSI, European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon Europe, Digital Europe and Erasmus) in order to advance artificial intelligence;

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<sup>(1)</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/draft-ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai>

8. takes the view that local and regional authorities should contribute to setting the conditions and a favourable environment for an increase in investment in AI in the years ahead and that these measures should be coordinated at national and European level in order to empower Europeans to become both producers and consumers of innovations;

9. notes that investment in artificial intelligence must go hand in hand with an adapted legal framework, a definition of its interaction with public services and a regulatory approach towards the use of data and its use in public space as well as training of the general public, workers, entrepreneurs, administrations and the young generations;

10. draws attention to the commitments in the Tallinn declaration on eGovernment<sup>(?)</sup> and points out that the use of AI in eGovernment throughout the EU can improve the efficiency and transparency of public services and access to them;

11. stresses the importance of increasing research investment in the automation of industry using AI and substantially raising productivity in all of Europe's regions;

12. notes that artificial intelligence and related investments in breakthrough innovation must be taken seriously at the highest political echelons in order to help improve Europe's competitiveness and the well-being of its people;

13. recognises the efforts to boost investment in AI both during the current period and in the proposals for the next Multiannual Financial Framework, but voices concern that the amount proposed will not be enough to tackle the challenges ahead and to react to the policies of other countries in the world;

14. regrets that the proposed strategy is not binding on the Member States, despite AI being very important for economic growth. If Europe is serious about getting to grips with artificial intelligence, there has to be a real political and financial commitment at various levels;

15. stresses in particular that the EU's various policy measures and programmes (such as the EFSI, European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon Europe, Digital Europe and Erasmus) must be better dovetailed in order to advance artificial intelligence, and calls for a clear vision to this effect;

16. insists that more flexible mechanisms for the deployment of artificial intelligence and for funding relevant innovations must be devised, since the sector is growing rapidly and drawn-out funding mechanisms are not flexible enough to keep pace with these changes;

17. agrees that interoperability and making the most of digital capacity – including AI – are of critical importance to the public sector and areas of public interest;

18. notes that the communication focuses on joint efforts by the (national and European) public and private sectors to foster the EU's technological and industrial capacity and the use of artificial intelligence in all sectors;

19. points out that the stated measures do not cover the public sector at local and regional level and believes that these two levels of governance and administration should not be overlooked, since they have an important role in investing in AI and in the promotion of investment and the AI ecosystem in their areas;

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<sup>(?)</sup> The Tallinn Declaration on eGovernment was signed on 6 October 2017 at the ministerial meeting held during the Estonian Presidency of the Council of the EU.

20. stresses in this connection the need to bolster interregional cooperation through smart specialisation strategies. This means intra- and interregional collaboration founded on cooperation and decision-making by stakeholders from industry, research and innovation that facilitates demand-led innovation and collective solutions that can, among other things, pave the way for artificial intelligence in both public and private sectors;
21. believes in this respect that the creation of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs can make a significant contribution towards establishing effective territorial connections and boost the EU's competitiveness and cohesion;
22. endorses the idea of setting up a broad multi-stakeholder platform – a European AI alliance – that addresses artificial intelligence in the round, and points out that regional and local stakeholders should be enlisted in this work;
23. is in favour of encouraging collaboration between the European AI alliance and the European Parliament, the Member States, the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions;
24. welcomes the planned support for the establishment of testing and experimentation infrastructures that can be used by companies of all sizes across all regions;
25. backs the proposed establishment of an AI-on-demand platform to which digital innovation hubs afford easier access;
26. believes that digital innovation hubs can play a crucial part in education and digital skills development in both the private and public sectors;
27. notes that the Digitising European Industry initiative aims to ensure that every region has a digital innovation hub by 2020. However, many regions are still under-represented in the existing network;
28. calls for swift action to effect a needs-based improvement in the public's digital skills and knowledge in both the public and private sectors in order to avoid inequality between people, regions and sectors in the EU;
29. stresses the need to reinforce public-sector pilot projects in the regions in order to promote the use of AI in the living environment of the future (including demand-led transport, social services and smart cities) and to empower people to accept AI and use it to their own advantage;
30. points out that AI can support sustainable growth through economies of scale, but also that huge added value is created through the new goods, services and innovations it makes possible;
31. stresses that local and regional authorities must be given retraining opportunities and financial resources so that retraining can be organised in relation to those jobs that will be transformed or cease to exist because of artificial intelligence;
32. is adamant that substantial financial resources should be provided for the development of AI (including for the Digital Europe programme for the 2021-2027 period) in the EU's next Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027);
33. stresses that the interface between urban growth, technology, infrastructure and capital requirements presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges for cities and regions, generating demand for multi-level governance and investment in physical, digital and social infrastructure. Underlines the importance of working with the private sector in order to ensure that the legislation in this area is fit for purpose;

34. emphasises that AI is not an end in itself and that in future AI must be adapted to eGovernment and to public services;
35. considers it vitally important that privacy and the rights of the individual be guaranteed as AI develops;
36. highlights the importance of artificial intelligence and the links to extended Reality (XR), VR, AR, 3D technologies and robotics, which will form a new basis for global business, the platform economy and learning platforms. This can help deliver equal access to a variety of educational and cultural content and create innovative knowledge transfer platforms for retraining workers;
37. points out that developing capacity related to artificial intelligence is a driver for the digital transformation of industry and also of the public sector;
38. stresses that, to successfully build a Digital Europe, the EU needs in particular labour markets, training and education systems fit for the digital age. Advanced digital technologies such as high performance computing, cybersecurity and artificial intelligence are now sufficiently mature to move beyond the research arena and be deployed, implemented and scaled-up at EU level.

Brussels, 6 February 2019.

*The President*  
*of the European Committee of the Regions*  
Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

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**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on 'Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach'**

(2019/C 168/04)

<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Olgierd GEBLEWICZ (PL/EPP), Marshal of the Zachodniopomorskie region
<b>Reference document:</b>	COM(2018) 236 final

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

*Comments*

1. notes that recent years have seen major and rapid changes in the global media ecosystem. It is hard to overstate the impact of these changes on social and political life: over the course of a few years, the role of social media – platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram – has expanded, becoming a priority channel for communication between people and transforming the way information and opinions are disseminated while traditional media has seen its influence and authority and creation of opinion making decreased;
2. emphasises the fact that, in the near future, the vast majority of information will be disseminated through online channels and social media might be the main medium used to convey such information to people, particularly in western countries: it is already the case that more than half of all Europeans use social networks every day or two or three times a week;
3. notes that the distinctive feature of social media is that they provide the opportunity for 'many-to-many' communication unseen in the past and in other forms of media: any user of a given platform can – potentially, at least – get their message across to the millions of other users, without the intermediation of any moderators; this has both positive and negative consequences;
4. points to another hallmark of social media: whereas with 'traditional' media (the press, radio and television), a distinct group of creators (journalists, editors and administrators) determine what is published and can directly bear various types of responsibility for their decisions, in the case of social media this is often far more difficult, because for instance creators and distribution channels must first be identified. At the same time social media also allow information, including false information, to be disseminated rapidly to a large audience, or 'go viral';
5. emphasises the fact that this lack of accountability, characteristic of social media, is due to current legal provisions, as well as widespread anonymity, which all social platforms tolerate;
6. notes with concern that the combination of massification, the lack of accountability, and anonymity on social media platforms has led to the practices, principles, legal safeguards and customs that have so far been meant to ensure the credibility of information, are being infringed;

7. notes with particular concern that social media have become a way to spread disinformation and a tool for political, economic and social manipulation exploited by both domestic and external actors. It is difficult to quantify the manipulation currently taking place on social media: available research shows that, in 2018 alone, organised manipulation and disinformation campaigns on social media took place in 48 countries, while various political groups (parties, governments, etc.) around the world have spent over half a billion dollars to carry out psychological operations or to manipulate public opinion on social media;

8. also stresses that this disinformation is often used to disseminate views that are incompatible with the ‘indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity’ enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights;

9. points out that the effectiveness of these disinformation campaigns is vastly increased through access to detailed personal information on social media users, obtained through or bought from social media, that can be used to personalise the disinformation shown, thus maximizing its effect;

10. warns that social media’s current operating mechanisms, more than those used by any other information channel, are conducive to the spreading of falsehoods: various academic studies have shown that false information appearing on Twitter, for example, is as much as 70 % more likely to be shared by the user (‘retweeted’) than accurate information;

11. also emphasises the fact that studies have identified other worrying phenomena: social media users have fundamental problems with distinguishing whether information disseminated by a given platform is well-founded and reliable;

12. is concerned by the state of preparedness of the European Union and its Member States to counter the new wave of disinformation that artificial intelligence could unleash; disinformation is already considered one of the most threatening instruments in future warfare;

13. supports the European Parliament’s messaging <sup>(1)</sup> regarding the importance for the EU and Member States cooperating with social media service providers to counter propaganda being spread through social media channels that could threaten social cohesion of our territories leading to the radicalisation of citizens, especially our youth;

14. notes with satisfaction the progress of the debate on ‘fake news’/disinformation that is underway at European level. The European Commission communication on ‘Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach’ is a key point of reference in the ongoing debate on how to halt online disinformation;

15. underlines the fact that the European Commission’s communication identifies four main elements in the strategy to counteract online disinformation:

— increasing transparency (knowledge about the origin of the disinformation, to whom it is addressed and how, and who is paying for it to be produced and distributed);

— promoting the diversity of information sources, especially those that encourage citizens to use their own critical judgement, thanks to the high quality guaranteed by good journalism;

— developing a system for assessing the reliability of information sources;

— implementing civic education programmes;

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(1) European Parliament 2016/2030 (INI).

16. notes with interest the report produced by the Commission's High Level Expert Group on Fake News and Online Disinformation, which should be considered as an essential complement to the Commission's communication. The expert group identified areas where previous efforts have failed, such as the opacity of the algorithms used by social platforms to rank and order how content is displayed to users;

17. highlights the useful work done by East StratCom, a specific unit within the European External Action Service that focuses on exposing Russian propaganda and disinformation;

18. also notes the discussion held in the European Parliament regarding online disinformation: although the Parliament did not reach a unified position on how to tackle disinformation (the political groups presented different positions), during the discussion particular emphasis was laid on the fact that the impact of Russian propaganda sources) on public opinion in EU countries should be a significant cause for concern;

#### *Priorities*

19. stresses that the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union guarantees all residents of the European Union the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. The European institutions must aim to ensure that the right to be informed is effectively upheld;

20. points out that the risk of disinformation affects democratic societies and institutions at all levels; the targeted dissemination of online fake news can have just as damaging an effect on the local community (and political processes including European, national and local elections) as on countries as a whole; countering disinformation must therefore be a priority ahead of the European elections both for European institutions and social media networks to ensure free and fair elections;

21. also points out that disinformation is detrimental to communities in a variety of ways: it not only results in political decisions that are based on false assumptions, but can also incite hatred and aggression, expose citizens to (material) losses, and lead to threats to human life and health. In the long-run, disinformation is also going to undermine the trust of citizens in any source of information and in institutions, authorities and democracy;

22. stresses, meanwhile, that the fight against online disinformation must not come at the price of freedom of speech or the right to the protection of personal data, which must at all times remain the inalienable property of the individual user, who alone can authorise, cancel and audit access to all or part of data, and other fundamental values of the European community. Any form of censorship is unacceptable. The solutions adopted must be proportionate;

23. notes that the main players on the social media market – with the support of the European institutions – are currently focusing their efforts on combating disinformation by means of the 'self-regulation' of social media platforms and their voluntary cooperation with external bodies (e.g. fact-checking organisations) and state institutions; social media platforms must invest greater efforts in countering fake news, including flagging, fact-checking, and actions to close fake accounts, dedicating sufficient resources to monitoring information flows in different languages in all EU Member States. In addition, social media platforms should promote the concept of 'verifying' user accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or YouTube, so as to guarantee that they are trustworthy and ethical sources;

24. points out that if current efforts (e.g. the voluntary Code of Practice on Disinformation, voluntarily adopted in 2018 by Facebook, Twitter and other platforms) turn out to be insufficient and the problem of disinformation continues to grow, it may be necessary to resort to legal tools, requiring the bodies that control social media to take specific action;

*Role of local and regional authorities in the fight against disinformation*

25. points out that since one effect of disinformation is on local political and social processes, disinformation can also affect social conditions in local communities, and hence also citizens' quality of life;

26. underlines the fact that the Committee of the Regions, as the treaty-based representative of the European Union's local and regional authorities, is particularly well suited to take part in discussions on the threat of disinformation, and to initiate and coordinate measures to tackle this problem taken by local and regional authorities in Europe, in line with the widely accepted principle that the fight against disinformation must be rooted in cooperation among many different institutions;

27. identifies three main areas where the Committee of the Regions and local and regional authorities can show initiative and effectively support efforts to counteract current online disinformation: civic education, support for non-governmental organisations and civil society, and support for ethical local media;

*Civic education*

28. agrees with the conclusion of, for example, the report of the High Level Expert Group on Fake News and Online Disinformation, that educating and teaching citizens about responsible and informed use of online media, particularly social media, is the best long-term way to combat disinformation;

29. notes with interest the European Commission's proposal for a new 2021-2027 'Digital Europe' programme, and encourages the European Parliament to propose that the European Social Fund for 2021-2027 include a priority on creating an informed society, resilient against propaganda and with the necessary competences to be able to verify information that is disseminated via the internet;

30. points out that local and regional authorities, as the level of governance closest to citizens – and often responsible for primary and secondary education – are best able to launch educational programmes that teach how to make responsible use of online information sources and how to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources;

31. encourages local and regional authorities to take the appropriate steps to ensure that lessons on how to make proper use of online media will become part of school curricula, starting in primary school;

32. at the same time points out that the curricula brought in must be designed so that they can be easily modified and supplemented, given the ever changing nature of online media, and social media in particular;

33. also points out that teaching about how to make informed use of online media must take into account the fact that social media content often plays on emotions, which users sometimes perceive only subconsciously. Consequently, educators should be trained so they can provide users (participants in educational programmes) with age- and education-appropriate tools to avoid the trap of appeals to the emotions, as well as the trap of cognitive bias – considering only information and opinions that confirm one's own prior convictions to be correct;

34. notes that training and tools for educators should be a prerequisite because of the difficulty involved in teaching emotional intelligence and critical thinking. In general, educators have not received training in this area and are not necessarily aware of its importance or even of its existence. The difficulty of teaching such an important skill, when the teacher does not possess it, should be offset through tools and processes that are commensurate with the importance of these skills, not only with a view to tackling disinformation but to personal development as citizens and professional development;

35. points to the need to raise awareness among users that the essence of some social media and – to a certain extent – some traditional media can lead to the creation of ‘information bubbles’ or echo-chambers where users only encounter views and information that they like, which may in some cases also include false information, the corrected version of which does not reach them. Moreover, the mechanisms of social media often seem to impede objective dialogue on different opinions and perspectives and agreement on compromises, which is the essence of democracy;

36. encourages local authorities and bodies responsible for education to constantly make consumers (especially younger ones) aware that it is in their best interests to guard against online disinformation. For disinformation is not restricted solely to politics and social issues: it very often occurs in a commercial context, in the area of financial services, online sales and health advice. Basing important decisions on disinformation may have tragic consequences;

37. declares its willingness to support local and regional authorities in this area, including by gathering experience from all EU Member States and by launching the development of codes of good practice;

#### *Support for non-governmental organisations*

38. encourages local authorities and communities to create a framework to support third sector organisations engaged in combating disinformation (e.g. by means of fact checking or civic education);

39. emphasises the fact that such support is necessary, since the cost of checking information is an order of magnitude greater than the cost of creating disinformation; independent fact-checking organisations, as well as those that aim to teach citizens how to recognise falsehoods, should be able to count on material assistance;

40. points out that it is precisely local and regional authorities that have the capacity to provide such support in various forms: competitions for grants, preferential lets of premises and other forms of aid;

41. draws attention to the potential of the Committee of the Regions to play a coordinating role, define best practices and facilitate the exchange of experiences;

#### *Support for local media*

42. draws attention to the fact that a very large proportion of the disinformation spread online is local in nature, and local and regional media can play an important role in correcting this disinformation, by following specific protocols and with adequate support. For these and other reasons the CoR notes the importance of quality local and regional media, comprising dynamic local and regional channels, among which public service bodies also play a role. This is especially important during the current transition which media consumption and production are undergoing;

43. points out, due to its diversity, the local media guarantees protection for the plurality of political views and information in any territory or region and that the protection of this plurality should be a priority objective. The local media are, currently, in a difficult situation in many EU Member States; the entry of social media into the market, together with their technical possibilities (ability to reach individuals and to precisely target content to specific people), has undercut the financial basis for local media’s operations, i.e. classified advertisements, together, in some cases, by conscious attempts at the political level to weaken media pluralism. Materially weakened local media are, of course, less able to actively counteract lies that are circulated online;

44. calls, therefore, for a pan-European debate on ways to support the local media. The discussion should focus on two non-contradictory themes: support for the media to develop viable business models and the aid that local and regional authorities (local communities, as well as institutions at central or European level) can give to the local media, for instance through subsidies for certain media, so as to ensure a healthy mixture of opinions while at the same time continuing to comply with the principles of the EU single market, in particular the rules on State aid. Meanwhile, recommends that local and regional institutions put in place provisional measures to support the local press in order to ensure its survival.

Brussels, 6 February 2019.

*The President*  
*of the European Committee of the Regions*  
Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

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**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on 'Digitalisation in the health sector'**

(2019/C 168/05)

<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Fernando López MIRAS (ES/EPP), President of the Region of Murcia
<b>Reference document:</b>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on enabling the digital transformation of health and care in the Digital Single Market; empowering citizens and building a healthier society  (COM(2018) 233)

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

*General comments*

1. welcomes the Commission's initiative to promote cooperation among EU countries in order to speed up the digital transformation of the health sector, with the aim of achieving more effective healthcare in Europe, advancing research, improving disease prevention and personalised care and healthcare, as well as providing citizens with equal access to high-quality care services, bearing in mind at all times that the organisation of healthcare systems is a competence of the Member States;
2. is aware of the challenge faced by decentralised levels of government all over the European Union: the ageing of the population and the consequent increase in chronic disease and multimorbidity, resulting in growing demand for resources and a new approach to the care model;
3. points to the large volumes of health data currently stored in separate systems and argues that more efficient use of them, through interconnectedness and big data analysis, could improve healthcare and social systems in addition to making them sustainable;
4. underlines the need for a digital transformation in health and care to address the challenges facing Europe;
5. considers that the adoption of digital solutions for health and care continues to be slow and varies considerably between Member States and regions. Moreover, there is a risk that metropolitan areas and more developed regions will reap most of the benefits of the information society. This would sideline the more remote regions, rural areas or areas with low population density and islands, whereas the latter should be priority recipients since these solutions could make them less isolated;
6. recognises that, despite the efforts made so far, mutually incompatible formats and standards in electronic medical records systems still persist across the EU;
7. considers secure access and cross-border exchange of genomic and other health data to be needed in order to advance research and to allow more accurate diagnoses and more personalised treatment of illnesses, thus making progress in the area of personalised medicine;

8. welcomes the Commission's initiatives on rolling out eHealth in the regions as a tool to address the challenge of ageing and frameworks for cooperation such as the European Innovation Partnership in Active and Healthy Ageing, the designation of AHA Reference Sites or support for the Blueprint for Digital Transformation of Health and Care for the Ageing Society;

9. welcomes the new funding proposals for the period 2021-2027, in which digitalisation of health has a prominent place; in particular, welcomes the draft Regulation on the Digital Europe programme for the period 2021-2027 and insists on the need to ensure that the public sector and areas of public interests, such as health and care, education, etc. can deploy and access state-of-the-art digital technologies, in particular high performance computing, artificial intelligence, information security and cybersecurity;

*European electronic medical records and cross-border health: secure access for citizens to their health-related data*

10. welcomes the fact that the Commission's proposals consider the principle of data protection to be a key element, while at the same time taking into account the opportunities offered by the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for making progress in terms of secure access to health data;

11. points out that it is necessary to improve capacity for self-care and the health literacy of citizens both because of the impact on health and in order to improve the sustainability of healthcare systems. ICTs are a key support in this regard. Also takes the view that health authorities must provide proper guidance to counteract the overload of scientifically-unsubstantiated information on the internet regarding health issues;

12. notes that most citizens do not know about the potential implications linked to personal data exposure or about the complex rules governing access to them;

13. regrets, therefore, that the Commission's proposals lack concrete measures to raise public awareness and to ensure that citizens and patients fully understand the legislative framework protecting the privacy of health data and recommends that the Commission support communication campaigns across the EU to explain how the privacy of health data will be protected under the new legal framework;

14. urges the Commission to continue to promote initiatives for eliminating obstacles to the interoperability of eHealth systems, resulting in more efficient systems, as the lack of interoperability has real and measurable costs;

15. supports the adoption of a Commission Recommendation on the technical specifications for a European form of exchange of electronic medical records and the further development of eHealth digital service infrastructure to enable citizens and patients to access and use their personal health data for public health and research purposes, as well as to facilitate the free movement of people, which is currently discouraged where complex diseases are involved;

16. calls on Member States to avoid localising services centrally on the basis of the misconception that localised services are more secure, and to archive data decentrally using technologies that make this possible, such as block chain technologies. It is also important to promote the use of international and open standards to avoid solutions that create dependency on a specific provider;

17. insists that patients' data should be protected and properly secured so that their information is not misused. Similarly, stresses that the opportunities stemming from the increased access to patient data must in no way contribute to a development that is detrimental to the rights of patients, but rather of benefit to them. In this respect, urges the Commission to look at measures to protect patients from the potential imbalances of power — between them and health professionals — that may be created through this increased access to health data;



18. notes that digital medical records can improve coordination of care at national and regional level as it allows the real time exchange of health data between health providers, particularly in the case of patients with complex multi-systemic and rare diseases;

19. at the same time notes that in some Member States, the public authorities have invested very significant amounts in developing electronic health records and digital platforms that give people access to all or part of their own health data. It is essential to take these substantial investments into account, to learn from these Member States' experiences and to avoid saddling national, regional and local bodies with additional, unnecessary expenses in this area;

20. suggests that the Commission should go further than developing a European format for the exchange of electronic medical records and promote, together with this form, a fully-fledged European electronic health record. While secure access to medical records would be provided, the patient would be the owner of the data, authorising access to it and subsequently auditing this access;

21. notes at the same time that the public authorities in some Member States have either built, or are in the process of building, digital governance structures and systems for consent statements, log information, etc. regarding patient data and access to it. It is important for work on the EEHR to take account of national, regional and local experience in this area;

*Better databases to promote prevention, research and personalised medicine*

22. believes that exchange of personal health data is crucial for public health research and clinical research, so that Member States are able to transform data into knowledge that benefits citizens, without breaching the fundamental right to data protection;

23. considers that better coordination between existing national and regional initiatives is needed in order to pool genomic and other health data in the areas of research and personalised medicine and urges Member States to sign the declaration 'Towards access to at least 1 million sequenced genomes in the EU by 2022';

24. urges the Commission to assess the possibility of assigning a unique identification to genetic studies carried out on European citizens for clinical reasons, which would allow the information to be used for preventative, diagnostic or therapeutic measures that the individual may need throughout the course of their life. This would always require their consent as the patient remains at all times the owner of the data. 'Blockchain' is currently a secure protocol that ensures the availability of data, keeping them confidential and under the individual's control;

25. calls on the Commission to take secure measures that guarantee anonymity in order to drive forward the implementation of technology relating to the use of health data, taking into account the potential of key technologies such as artificial intelligence or high-performance computing, by promoting better coordination between different stakeholders in the system, which includes regions, the public and private sectors (including eHealth SMEs), research bodies and other players involved;

26. welcomes the Commission's intention to support the development of technical specifications to facilitate secure access to and cross-border exchange of genomic and health information for research, along with the practical implementation of pilot projects to coordinate programmes, initiatives and relevant actors at national and EU levels, while at the same time pointing out the need to adopt better guarantees concerning the use of the genomic data;

27. considers the Commission's intention to establish a voluntary coordination mechanism between EU national authorities for the sharing of genomic and other health data to be suitable in terms of advancing in the areas of prevention and research on population health and personalised medicine;

28. calls on the Commission to ensure coordination between measures it adopts in relation with access to and reuse of data held by public administrations and its other initiatives, such as the Commission Communication Towards a common European data space (COM(2018) 232);

29. asks the Commission to take on board the possibilities offered by the European Reference Networks within the framework of the Directive on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, in order to help facilitate the implementation of translational cross-sectoral research, including, where appropriate, into personalised medicine for patients suffering from rare, low-prevalence or complex diseases;

30. encourages the Commission to initiate a European level discussion on the ethical, legal and social implications of the use of genomic and health data in public health and research; believes that the implications of the use of genomic and health information in these fields should be included in the regulatory approach taken by the Commission and the Member States, an approach that should also take into account the role of ethics and expert committees, not to mention the autonomy of health service users;

31. encourages Member States to strengthen, and where necessary expand, existing capacity so as to ensure ongoing and regular collection of health-related data, as this will contribute to the quality of international data available in organisations such as WHO and the OECD;

32. encourages the Member States to pool data in order to implement open access policies, in line with the objectives of open science and the creation of a European Open Science Cloud;

*Digital tools for empowering patients and patient-centred care: integration of care, ageing, integration of care, chronicity, multimorbidity*

33. points out that the ageing of the population and the consequent increase in chronic disease and multimorbidity, and therefore care costs, require a multidisciplinary and integrated approach to care. eHealth services and the electronic exchange of data between patients, their carers and their caregivers and care providers facilitates patient-centred care and the transition from institutional to community-based care;

34. notes that education is a key element in enabling citizens to participate actively in the digital transformation and therefore calls on the Commission and Member States to place greater emphasis on improving the digital literacy of citizens and patients by developing appropriate education programmes; recalls equally that there are still groups of European citizens who do not have internet access or sufficient digital skills to use digital services, and that proactive efforts need to be made to improve digital inclusion;

35. notes that the success of the digital transformation in healthcare will not be possible without adapting education, training and continuous professional development for health professionals;

36. stresses that digital technology can enable or improve access to health services, especially for persons with reduced mobility. It is crucial to take account of the territorial focus, in order to make it easier for more people in remote, sparsely populated or disadvantaged regions, who might be excluded or underserved by health systems, to have access to high-quality information and preventative health measures, as well as to easily accessible medical treatment and monitoring;

37. underlines that it is important to ensure that the digitalisation of health reduces social inequalities and promotes accessibility for persons with disabilities and the elderly;
38. points out that there are still marked differences between regions in access to ICT services, and therefore calls on the Commission to continue promoting policies to facilitate access in disadvantaged areas;
39. stresses that mHealth is a key factor in efforts to empower the public, as well as being necessary for the sustainability of care systems, and considers the use of digital solutions that are effective in terms of costs and health outcomes as a means of moving towards sustainable social and healthcare systems;
40. considers it essential to create appropriate tools guaranteeing a dynamic balance between supply and demand and to promote co-creation processes relating to digital solutions, drawing on the experience that some regions have in this field <sup>(1)</sup>;
41. calls on the Commission to provide new instruments to promote the public procurement of innovation (PPI) in addition to current pre-commercial procurements (PCPs) and PPIs, which are complex to implement and depend heavily on ad hoc funding, by combining, for example, European funding programmes and the Structural Funds;
42. welcomes the fact that the proposal for a regulation on Health Technology Assessment extends the scope of action to medical technologies and devices, while also considering it desirable for EU legislation to facilitate the procedures for authorising medical devices and make progress in order to ensure that procedures raise the existing standards for approval;
43. considers that, in order to make progress towards sustainable systems, the scope of the regulation should be extended to all stages of technological development, including the impact assessment;
44. stresses that as new applications and devices for patients and health professionals (applications, external measuring devices or on mobile phones, etc.) emerge, this should lead to a process of accreditation, certification or marking valid at European level, to determine those that are really considered useful or that may even be subject to prescription by a health professional. This would reduce red tape so that solutions approved in one Member State could easily be marketed in another, and therefore urges the Commission to act in this regard;
45. insists that devices and applications for patients and health professionals should be simple and easy to use and should complement rather than adding to those already in place in Member States;
46. notes the difficulties of rolling out and adopting on a large scale technological solutions that have been tested and validated by pilot studies, and therefore requests that the Commission support the regions and promote cooperation between them in order to complete the roll-out of these technological solutions;
47. suggests, moreover, examining whether it is appropriate to include in project proposals for European funding a commitment to implement the project if it is successful, ensuring that it is mainstreamed throughout the population in the interest of equity, and providing consistency at the end of the innovation process by scaling up;

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<sup>(1)</sup> <https://www.indemandhealth.eu/>;

The inDEMAND project: promotes innovation by combining two factors: demand, which identifies what is needed and the development of the solution as the result of a co-creation process between healthcare professionals and technology companies.

*Funding*

48. welcomes the redefinition of the scope of the new Connecting Europe Facility and the proposal for the Digital Europe 2021-2027 programme to accelerate the digital transformation of healthcare in Europe;

49. calls on the Commission to promote the necessary alignment between European, national and regional digital plans and strategies, along with, for the next programming period 2021-2027, sufficient complementarity between the different European funding programmes and public and private funding, in order to complete the large-scale roll out of integrated, digital and people-centred care services;

50. notes that often the technology exists and is operational, but red tape prevents or delays the adoption of solutions; therefore calls on the Commission to promote new reimbursement models for adopting digital innovation, geared, for example, to delivering payment in accordance with health outcomes, so as to support the business models of eHealth and mHealth companies offering high-quality services supported by digital technology;

51. notes that for the next period, 2021-2027, the current health programme will be part of the ESF+, with a reduced allocation; therefore calls on the EU co-legislators to increase the proposed budget allocations for the digital transformation in Europe in the EU Multiannual Financial Framework for the 2021-2027 period;

*Subsidiarity*

52. urges the European Commission, when implementing the action plan, to take into account not only the Member States, but also the local and regional authorities that play a key role in communicating with and informing patients, in education and training for professionals, and in the development of eHealth.

Brussels, 7 February 2019.

*The President*

*of the European Committee of the Regions*

Karl Heinz LAMBERTZ

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**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on ‘Towards an eighth Environment Action Programme (EAP)’**

(2019/C 168/06)

<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Cor LAMERS (NL/EPP), Mayor of Schiedam
<b>Reference document:</b>	Own-initiative opinion

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

**A. *Introductory comments***

1. Points out that the EU must show a higher ambition in all relevant policy domains, especially on climate, biodiversity and environment, to achieve the aims of the Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
2. Notes that insufficient implementation of EU environment, biodiversity and climate policies and legislation constitutes a risk to the long-term sustainability of our way of life, poses severe health threats and reduces the quality of life of EU citizens;
3. Points out that a growing world population demands more food, energy and resources. The consequences – climate change, large-scale loss of nature reserves and decreasing biodiversity – are often disastrous;
4. In this context it strongly believes the EU Environment Action Programmes (EAPs) provides strategic guidance, long-term visions and opportunities for ensuring consistency between environment and climate objectives, thereby providing added value;
5. Underlines that much has been achieved under the EAPs as pollution in general has slowly started to decrease, nature is being better protected and the transfer to a low-carbon and circular economy has increased, but much more remains to be done;
6. Points out that although the 7th EAP has identified better implementation as a key priority, insufficient implementation of environment policies and legislation – due to weak policy integration for example – remains a significant problem;
7. Calls therefore on the European Commission, the Council and the Parliament to develop an 8th EAP in line with the objectives set out in this opinion;

**B. *Assessment of the 7th EAP***

8. Supports the conclusions of the European Parliament’s ‘Implementation of the 7th EAP report’ of 17 April 2018 <sup>(1)</sup>, and the findings of the European Parliamentary Research Service study of November 2017 <sup>(2)</sup>, and reiterates – based on the previous CoR opinions <sup>(3)</sup> – challenges such as the lack of policy integration, available funding and information about good practices;

<sup>(1)</sup> ref.: P8\_TA(2018)0100

<sup>(2)</sup> On the ‘Mid-term review of the implementation of the 7th Environment Action Programme (2014-2020)’.

<sup>(3)</sup> The following CoR opinions: ENVE-V-044 (OJ C 271, 19.8.2014, p. 25); ENVE-V-045 (OJ C 271, 19.8.2014, p. 45); ENVE-V-046 (OJ C 415, 20.11.2014, p. 23); ENVE-VI/001 (OJ C 260, 7.8.2015, p. 6); ENVE-VI/005 (OJ C 51, 10.2.2016, p. 48); ENVE-VI/008 (OJ C 240, 1.7.2016, p. 15); ENVE-VI/011 (OJ C 88, 21.3.2017, p. 83); ENVE-VI/013 (OJ C 88, 21.3.2017, p. 43); ENVE-VI/014 (OJ C 207, 30.6.2017, p. 45); ENVE-VI/015 (OJ C 207, 30.6.2017, p. 51); ENVE-VI/021 (OJ C 54, 13.2.2018, p. 21); ENVE-VI-024 (OJ C 54, 13.2.2018, p. 9); ENVE-VI-028 (OJ C 361, 5.10.2018, p. 46); ENVE-VI-029 (OJ C 461, 21.12.2018, p. 30); and ENVE-VI-030 (OJ C 387, 25.10.2018, p. 42).

9. Notes nevertheless that the results on the core themes of the 7th EAP are uneven and insufficient:
- a) the objectives of priority 1 (protection of natural capital) will not be met by 2020;
  - b) progress has been made on various sub-targets of priority 2 (low-carbon economy and resource efficiency), in particular on climate- and energy-related targets but also to some extent on waste/circular economy goals;
  - c) it is uncertain to what extent goals under priority objective 3, linked to environment-related pressures and risks to human health, will be achieved;
  - d) progress towards goals under objective 8 (sustainable cities) shows an uneven picture for energy efficiency, sustainable transport and mobility, sustainable urban planning and urban design, urban biodiversity and sustainable buildings;
10. Identifies four main causes for the shortcomings in implementation:
- a) a lack of integration of environmental concerns into other policy areas, especially the common agricultural policy (CAP), the common fisheries policy (CFP), and cohesion policy;
  - b) insufficient funding and insufficiently tailor-made funding schemes: while a number of EU-funded projects have delivered improvements, not all EU funds have clearly defined sustainability criteria. Also, within the Member States there are insufficient funds available in this respect;
  - c) insufficient knowledge-sharing: while there is sufficient expert knowledge available, this does not always find its way to the policymakers;
  - d) poor involvement and engagement of local communities and stakeholders <sup>(4)</sup>;
11. Concludes that the 7th EAP has demonstrated its added value and has had a positive influence on EU environmental policy, citizens, the environment and the economy. Its long-term vision is key in providing a stable environment for sustainable investment and growth, within the planet's ecological limits;
12. Highlights that the 7th EAP was comprehensive and very complex, with many sub-targets and detailed descriptions. Also, as the 7th EAP set targets for a given period (rather static), it was not easy to respond to new technology developments, changing circumstances and new international strategies;
13. Points out that the 7th EAP outlined actions for improving the sustainability of cities, but neglected other types of communities, such as rural, coastal, mountain, island, archipelagic and outermost areas. While cities are important hubs for achieving the objectives, they do not exist in isolation from their surroundings. More attention should be given to the interrelations between cities and their hinterland;
14. Supports the conclusion of the European Environment Agency (EEA) report, which flagged six causes for sub-optimal implementation of EU environmental legislation: ineffective coordination among local, regional and national authorities, lack of administrative capacity and insufficient funding, lack of knowledge and data, insufficient compliance assurance mechanisms and lack of policy integration <sup>(5)</sup>;

<sup>(4)</sup> CoR study: 'Towards an 8th Environment Action Programme- Local and regional dimension'.

<sup>(5)</sup> EEA, Environmental indicator report 2017. In support of the monitoring of the Seventh Environment Action Programme (EEA report 21/2017); EEA, 2015. The European Environment: State and Outlook 2015: Synthesis report. European Environment Agency, Copenhagen.

C. ***The main principles for developing an 8th EAP***

**The changed context of European environment policy and its regional and local impact**

15. Stresses that unity and diversity are two important characteristics of the EU. These two concepts are fundamental to the very essence of the EU, especially when setting policy targets or developing new legislation;

16. Points out that the strongest symbol of unity is the *acquis*. The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) therefore considers it to be the foundation of the 8th EAP. Its legislation, standards and values remain important tools for ensuring the environment is protected, addressing safety and risk issues and guaranteeing quality of life. The *acquis* also gives European people equal rights and a fair level playing field for trade and industry;

17. Underlines there is also a clear EU obligation to respect political, social, economic, geographical and biocultural diversity between Member States, regions and cities. The extensive efforts of the EU have not always led to the desired outcome. Since big transitions are emerging, the 8th EAP should move away from top-down and one-size-fits-all solutions and create a bridge between unity and diversity by finding a balance between setting harmonised standards and providing space for the development of tailor-made solutions in line with the local context. It is therefore important that EU as well as national policies and legislation allow enough leeway for a local and regional approach;

18. Stresses that the 8th EAP should support effective implementation of the current *acquis*, with the traditional role for the European Commission as guardian of the *acquis*;

19. Points out in this regard that although traditional environment policy has been successful for over 40 years, it is no longer sufficient. Even when limit values are achieved, insufficient air quality, soil quality and water quality can still have negative impacts on human health and nature. Also implementation problems cannot be solved by more legislation alone. Support mechanisms, new approaches and innovation (in addition to the *acquis*) are also needed to meet target values and standards;

20. In this context, highlights the problem that various Member States have introduced national legislation whereby fines arising from EU infringement procedures may be recovered from municipalities and regions. Such a 'decentralization' of the responsibility for complying with EU legislation is problematic because national authorities often focus only on the legal implementation, i.e. transposition into national legislation, but regional and local authorities are not given the necessary instruments to implement the *acquis* in fact and in practice. It is in most cases the European and national levels of government which have the appropriate financial, legal and administrative resources and should therefore bear the responsibility for paying fines for non-compliance;

21. Strongly believes the EU should look for new ambition in transitions such as the transition to a circular economy, and transitions to a more sustainable energy, mobility and food production and consumption. It should also encourage Member States, regions and cities, who act as frontrunners, to reach an environmental quality, which goes beyond EU standards. This requires the European Commission to stimulate them into further action;

22. Calls to recognise the efforts of regions who are pioneers in the circular economy, and also sustainable food production and consumption, as well as the reduction of air, noise and light pollution, and therefore to support them and facilitate the replication of best practices throughout Europe;

23. Points out that the context in which environment policy was drafted and is now being implemented has changed, requiring a new balance between old and new approaches, including the following reasons:

- a) Today's policies are more interconnected. In addition to the sectoral division of EU legislation into areas such as air, water, noise and energy, today's challenges demand further integration of sustainability issues, both in people's daily behaviour and the day-to-day running of businesses and on the socioeconomic front. Therefore the EU should see its regions as complex economic, social, environmental and biocultural systems;
- b) Innovation and transitions bring about the greatest improvements. Learning from each other is also important, requiring an open mind and awareness of both good and bad examples. Current legislation focuses on standards and limit values, whereas innovation and transitions require space for experimentation. The EU needs both;
- c) The EU follows a linear policy cycle (proposal, decision, implementation, evaluation), but the speed of innovation requires a more circular and flexible approach;

24. Stresses that this new context requires a different line of thinking and should focus on the interdependence of all five components of the causal framework as adopted by the EEA, namely drivers, pressures, states, impacts and responses. Classical environment policies focus on states and impacts. However, to tackle present and future pollution, EU and national policies should also focus on drivers and pressures. This is the core of the circular economy and other transitions: to tackle the issue directly at the source;

#### **Policy integration**

25. Strongly believes the 8th EAP should ensure policy integration;

26. Underlines that an integrated approach avoids mismatches and connects different aspects, such as:

- a) the ambition, timelines, implementation procedures and tools of different environment and climate policies;
- b) environment and climate policies as well as other policies, such as the CAP, the CFP, economic and social policies;
- c) the ambition and timelines of limit values of EU environment legislation (emissions policy) and those of source-based policies (emissions policies) <sup>(6)</sup>;
- d) EU, national, regional and local policies, in order to align priorities, avoid duplication and minimise contradictory or disconnected processes, as well as to close gaps in existing policy and the ensuing legislation;

27. Underlines that the key question is how the EU and other levels of government can efficiently integrate policies, especially how to reconcile environmental, social and economic objectives;

28. Points out that since policy integration requires another mind-set, the 8th EAP should:

- a) see policy integration as an approach (instead of a priority) of combining and strengthening separate objectives;
- b) encourage EU, national, regional and local authorities to put environment policies at the heart of all other policies (instead of only mainstreaming, environment goals should be at the basis of other policies) and to take environment policies as the main benchmark for implementation of all activities;
- c) take a holistic approach: the 7th EAP initiated a more integrated approach than the previous EAPs; the 8th EAP should go further and look at the environmental, economic and social contexts as a whole;

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<sup>(6)</sup> CoR opinion: ENVE-V-046.



### **Funding and investments**

29. Stresses that environmental, climate and transition challenges require significant green and blue investment and innovation;
30. Stresses that more synergies between various funding sources at the EU, national and regional levels are needed, as well as stronger links between public and private financing to increase the effectiveness of the 8th EAP;
31. Points out that LRA investment possibilities are limited and under pressure. On the one hand, social issues such as unemployment, population ageing and education are often major cost items on local and regional budgets. On the other transitions, such as the energy transition, require considerable investment. To achieve significant progress in the transitions, a critical mass has to be achieved and LRAs need additional funds for this;
32. Welcomes the proposal to set up the InvestEU programme and its focus on sustainability, as well as the Commission proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) post 2020, with its focus on sustainable development and integrating environment policy into all the budget headings. However, the CoR would like to see over 30 % of the budget reserved for climate policy mainstreaming. It also calls for a Just Energy Transition Fund at the EU level to address environmental, economic and social challenges of regions undergoing energy transition as well as a sufficient support for waste management and mobility transitions in all regions, that is additional to and compatible with the cohesion funds;
33. Strongly welcomes the horizontal principles of the Commission proposal for the MFF post 2020: fostering integrated social, economic, cultural and environmental development and security in urban, rural and coastal areas;

### **A place-based or area-oriented approach**

34. Believes that a tailor-made approach is essential, because regions and local administrations:
- a) are important spatial entities in which people live, work and move around, resulting in a significant amount of emissions;
  - b) vary significantly in terms of the type and amount of pollution and emissions;
  - c) vary in their implementation of EU legislation;
  - d) vary significantly in the economic, social, geographical and environmental opportunities they offer and challenges they present;
  - e) vary in their administrative powers, capacity and approach to implementing environment and climate policies;
  - f) are in the privileged position of working directly with people and businesses to promote measures such as green public procurement, building and transport policies, education, research and awareness-raising programmes. This allows them to come up with viable solutions and function as living labs for new ideas and knowledge;
35. Advocates a holistic place-based or area-oriented approach as the best way of making healthy living a reality in line with the specific features of the place or area in question;

36. Recommends, with due regard to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality as well as the government structure and culture of the different Member States, that the 8th EAP develop a number of area-oriented strategies, such as healthy and prosperous urban and metropolitan areas, a healthy vibrant countryside, and safe and attractive coastal, island, archipelagic and outermost areas. The urban strategy could focus on specific urban aspects, such as mobility and urban planning, while the rural strategy could focus on nature, innovation in agriculture and demographic change. The purpose of the recommended strategies would be to support the different transitions while taking into account human health and nature, the economy and the need for a good living environment, in the spirit of the SDGs. In this respect the 8th EAP reflects the horizontal principles of the Commission proposal for the MFF post 2020;

### **A multi-level approach**

37. Calls therefore for a well-functioning multi-level governance framework. Radical and lasting lifestyle changes, necessary for creating an equitable, sustainable and low-carbon society, require bottom-up as well as top-down approaches. The CoR therefore believes the 8th EAP should have a clearer link to the strategies and plans developed at the EU, national, regional and local levels;

38. Calls therefore on all levels of government to do their utmost to encourage cross-administrative cooperation, including cross-vertical government cooperation, interregional, intermunicipal and cross-border cooperation. In the same vein, the 8th EAP should further encourage – with respect to government structures and geographical situation within Member States – cities, municipalities and regional authorities to work with each other and across the EU;

39. Supports EU initiatives such as the EU Urban Agenda Partnerships. The CoR recommends utilising the existing partnerships for sustainable land use, energy transition, climate adaptation, urban mobility, air quality and circular economy and actively considering setting up new cross-cutting environment and climate partnerships to support implementation of the *acquis*;

40. Stresses that translating EU-level targets to concrete local targets is difficult but essential to achieve results and obtain citizens' trust. Therefore believes that incentives for over-performing should be provided. Award programmes, such as the European Green Capital Award and Green Leaf, should be expanded to smaller towns and villages. Moreover, voluntary actions such as the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and the Urban Mobility Observatory should be further promoted;

41. Recommends that Member States work more closely with local and regional authorities and encourage cities and regions to get more involved in developing and implementing national strategies and plans;

42. Calls therefore on Member States to create appropriate institutional structures or platforms for closer cooperation and continuous consultation, such as vertical cross-governmental teams, whereby experts from different levels of government jointly draw up national plans and strategies;

43. Stresses that coordination between different levels of government alone is not sufficient for effective governance. The CoR therefore calls on regions and cities to forge close links with civil society, the private sector and knowledge institutes, in and beyond their territories, and to support interregional cooperation in these areas, because such long-term partnerships will contribute to good policy-making;

44. Points out that this would promote dialogue and discussion among actors with different interests, backgrounds and constraints, resulting in better decision-making;

45. Encourages EU Member States to define and fund holistic, solution oriented transdisciplinary research projects, within their national research funds;

D. ***A proposal for an 8th EAP***

**A new approach for the 8th EAP**

46. Points out that in the new context of environment policy the 8th EAP should:
- a) be more strategic and integrated and focus on major themes;
  - b) boost innovation;
  - c) allow the transfer and scaling up of innovative solutions;
  - d) be guided by challenges and solutions, unlike the 7th EAP was guided by limits and problems;
  - e) be flexible, to respond to new technological developments and new international strategies, unlike the rather static 7th EAP;
  - f) be flexible regarding the social, cultural, economic and environmental contexts of the regions;
47. Calls on the UK and EU, in the context of the Withdrawal Agreement and its implementation, to develop joint arrangements that ensure high environmental standards and reciprocity remain, including the high of ambition in the next Environmental Action Programme;
48. Stresses that future EAPs should be agenda-setting and lead to the integration of sustainability criteria into other EU policies, macroeconomic priorities and financial instruments. Environmental factors are also an indicator of how sustainable our economic development is. The CoR therefore advocates synergy between the 8th EAP, and the MFF and the European Semester;
49. Regrets in this regard the mismatch between the adoption of an 8th EAP and the MFF post-2020. The decision-making process of future EAPs should be aligned with the timeframe of the MFF so that the proposed MFF reflects well EAP objectives;
50. Proposes the 8th EAP be the environmental and climate pillar of the new Europe post 2020 Strategy;

**Proposed themes for the 8th EAP**

51. Considers the healthy urban and rural living approach a practical and integrated approach. This approach, based on quality of life, integrates the three pillars of sustainable development – economic, environmental and sociocultural aspects – and places human health and nature in the wider context of sustainability. It also ties in with the implementation of the SDGs;
52. Proposes that the 8th EAP present an EU strategy to promote healthy living for all, bringing together the concepts of:
- a) human health, including a high quality of life;
  - b) a healthy planet where resources are used responsibly and efficiently, protecting biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystems;
  - c) a healthy economy based on the circular economy, with sufficient growth, sustainable development, jobs, sustainable investment and a sustainable business environment;

d) a healthy society with opportunities for all;

53. Calls on the EU to take the healthy living approach as the basis for all EU policies, its macroeconomic priorities and financial instruments. This approach should also be promoted and implemented at national, regional and local levels. The CoR proposes the EU work more closely with healthy living networks, such as the WHO healthy cities network;

54. Stresses the 8th EAP should address transition challenges, such as the energy transition, the circular economy, the mobility transition, the transition in food production and consumption and the transition from grey to green and blue infrastructure. Production, consumption and transport practices are key air, water, soil and noise pollution factors. These transitions are in line with source-based policies and therefore will support the implementation of current EU legislation. They are linked to transitions in quality of life: to healthy living in urban areas and better quality of life and vitality in rural areas. The 8th EAP should facilitate these transitions and set out implementation timetables;

55. Proposes the continuation of the core themes of the 7th EAP – to protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, to turn the EU into a resource-efficient, green and competitive carbon-neutral economy, including providing a framework for accessible, sustainable transport of people and goods, ensuring green mobility in urban as well as rural areas; to shield EU citizens from persistent environmental pressures and improve health and wellbeing – as these themes are still very relevant (with possible additional subjects);

56. Underlines that the 8th EAP should meet the Paris Agreement requirements and incorporate the 17 SDGs. It should be flexible enough to take new international developments and agreements into account;

### **Proposed structure of the 8th EAP**

57. Proposes a lean clean 8th EAP, with five main chapters: implementation, the transitions, innovation, wider global challenges and communication;

58. Proposes that these chapters be implemented through EU action agendas with measurable objectives, targeted actions, funding, investments, tools and a clear monitoring mechanism for example via the Environmental Implementation Review process. With these agendas, the EU can create cross-overs between the five chapters of the 8th EAP, develop tailor-made area-oriented solutions and adequately respond to new developments and innovative practices. The EU action agendas in turn can inspire national, regional and local action plans;

59. Believes that – with due regard to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality as well as the government structure and culture of the different Member States – the 8th EAP should encourage the adoption of national and/or regional action plans. It is up to the Member States to decide whether to have one national or several regional plans or both, as these decisions are closely linked to national and regional government structures. The next EAP should outline the guiding principles for LRAs to take action and urge the adoption of voluntary local objectives and plans. This would help implement the EAP while allowing some flexibility to take local needs and local capacity, knowledge and expertise into account in solving local problems;

60. Proposes the first chapter of the 8th EAP consist of the core themes of the 7th EAP. These themes require efficient implementation;

61. Stresses that the first chapter requires EU implementation action agendas, which include actions outlined in the European Implementation Review <sup>(7)</sup> and the supporting objectives of the 7th EAP; such as:

- a) better policy integration, more effective source based policies, targeted EU-funding;
- b) research into different implementation challenges;
- c) implementation tools: at the moment environment and climate legislation have their own set of tools and guidance materials. To avoid confusion and ensure greater coherence, the CoR proposes a more unified method with capacity building instruments (e.g. tools and programmes, workshops, webinars, guidance materials, etc.);
- d) collection of knowledge and best practices in a single, publicly accessible and easily searchable database which contains the appropriate features that help identify best practices;
- e) actions to promote, expand and finance existing and new initiatives that support knowledge and best practice sharing by European, national, regional and local networks and city-to-city cooperation such as peer-reviews and mutual learning activities, site visits, green twinning, partner-to-partner mentoring and coaching;
- f) monitoring via the Environmental Implementation Review process;

62. Calls on the 8th EAP to further enhance the Technical Platform for Cooperation on the Environment established by the ENVE Commission and DG Environment to foster a dialogue, and gather information on local and regional challenges and solutions in the application of the EU environment law; proposes to establish a network of ambassadors within the Platform to promote the implementation of the environment legislation at all levels of governance, complementing in this way the EIR and TAIEX;

63. Proposes to focus more on the implementation aspects/challenges in the EU environment policies via CoR opinions as well as the work of the future regional hubs <sup>(8)</sup> in order to address the gaps and find tailor-made solutions;

64. Proposes the second chapter address the main transitions (the energy transition, the circular economy, the mobility transition, the transition in food production and consumption and the transition from grey to green and blue infrastructure) and propose the necessary legislative and financial framework to facilitate these transitions in a just way to further stimulate innovation in pioneering regions and support carbon-intensive regions undergoing costly energy transitions;

65. Underlines that the second chapter requires implementation through EU transition agendas with actions and funding to facilitate each transition and the further implementation of innovation on the ground. This involves concrete actions at the regional and local level. The 8th EAP should stimulate the development of national and regional transition agendas. These agendas, which identify challenges, joint actions and appropriate policy responses, could be produced by means of co-creation;

66. Proposes the third chapter boost green innovation and investment. Further innovation is of the utmost importance, to face environmental and climate challenges. This chapter should give research a more prominent role in formulating appropriate policy response;

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<sup>(7)</sup> CoR opinion: ENVE-VI/021.

<sup>(8)</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/files/report-task-force-subsidiarity-proportionality-and-doing-less-more-efficiently\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/files/report-task-force-subsidiarity-proportionality-and-doing-less-more-efficiently_en)

67. Stresses that the third chapter requires implementation through an EU green innovation agenda: an agenda towards healthy living, a sustainable society and a circular economy. The agenda should support research and development. It should be a co-production between policy-makers (EU, national, regional and local), industry and academia and should identify challenges, policy responses and joint problem-solving approaches. Such an agenda would encourage the European Commission, Member States, cities and regions to apply systemic innovative approaches and set up or facilitate partnerships in green innovation projects and address the role of governments as 'launching facilitators';

68. Proposes the fourth chapter address wider global challenges. International developments and strategies, such as the Paris Agreement, the SDGs, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Urban Agenda, heavily influence environment and climate policies. On top of that, many of the priority objectives in the 8th EAP can only be achieved in cooperation with partner countries or as a part of an overall approach, therefore improving the capacity of Regional and Local Governments to be involved in decentralised cooperation can be of significant benefit. Tackling pollution caused by industry, tourism and household activity, and dealing with environmental crime requires international commitment followed by concerted action;

69. Emphasises that the fourth chapter requires implementation via an international environment and climate agenda for the EU to help the Union address these challenges as well as to play a leading role at the international arena by using economic and trade policies to benefit the global environment and climate;

70. Proposes that the fifth chapter deals with communication and focuses on raising awareness about the importance and benefits of a sound implementation of the 8th EAP, as well as the added value of the 8th EAP to the citizens, businesses and environment. The implementation of the EAP would be greatly facilitated by an improved understanding among the citizens and the other stakeholders of the EU environmental priorities, actions to be taken, and the concrete results they could bring.

Brussels, 7 February 2019.

*The President*

*of the European Committee of the Regions*

Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

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## III

(Preparatory acts)

## EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

## COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

133RD COR PLENARY SESSION, 6.2.2019-7.2.2019

**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on ‘Creative Europe and A New European Agenda for Culture’**

(2019/C 168/07)

<b>Rapporteur:</b>	János Ádám KARÁCSONY (HU/EPP), Local councillor, Tahitótfalu village
<b>Reference documents:</b>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 COM(2018) 366 final Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A New European Agenda for Culture COM(2018) 267 final

## I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

**Amendment 1**

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021-2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 Preamble, recital 6

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The Programme should take into account the dual nature of the cultural and creative sectors, recognising, on the one hand, the intrinsic and artistic value of culture and, on the other, the economic value of those sectors, <b>including</b> their broader contribution to <b>growth and</b> competitiveness, creativity and innovation. This requires strong European cultural and creative sectors, in particular a vibrant European audiovisual industry, taking into account its capacity to reach large audiences and its economic importance, including for other creative sectors as well as cultural tourism [...]	The Programme should take into account the dual nature of the cultural and creative sectors, recognising, on the one hand, the intrinsic and artistic value of culture and, on the other, the economic value of those sectors <b>and</b> their broader contribution to <b>strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion in the EU, as well as</b> competitiveness, creativity and innovation. This requires strong European cultural and creative sectors, in particular a vibrant European audiovisual industry, taking into account its capacity to reach large audiences and its economic importance, including for other creative sectors, <b>territorial development</b> as well as <b>its links with the Smart Specialisation Strategy and</b> cultural tourism [...]

**Reason**

Regional and European Territorial Cooperation create growth and jobs and promote Europe as a destination, including via macro-regional cultural routes. There is scope to build on these experiences in order to ensure that the impact of culture on local areas is in keeping with the principles laid down in Article 174 TFEU and to enhance its role in innovation-led territorial development. As indicated in the blueprint for a New European Agenda for Culture, the Commission intends to ‘continue to support regions implementing Smart Specialisation and macro-regional strategies focused on culture and promote sustainable cultural tourism’.

**Amendment 2**

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021-2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 Preamble, recital 20

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Reflecting the importance of tackling climate change in line with the Union's commitments to implement the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, this Programme will contribute to mainstream climate actions and to the achievement of an overall target of <b>25 %</b> of the Union budget expenditures supporting climate objectives. Relevant actions will be identified during the Programme's preparation and implementation, and reassessed in the context of the relevant evaluations and review processes.</p>	<p>Reflecting the importance of tackling climate change in line with the Union's commitments to implement the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals <b>as a front-runner</b>, this Programme will contribute to mainstream climate actions and to the achievement of an overall target of <b>30 %</b> of the Union budget expenditures supporting climate objectives <b>as well as to the mainstreaming of the Sustainable Development Goals into all Union policies</b>. Relevant actions will be identified during the Programme's preparation and implementation, and reassessed in the context of the relevant evaluations and review processes.</p>

**Reason**

The amendment aims at highlighting the importance of SDGs and reflects the position of the CoR concerning their funding.

**Amendment 3**

Preamble, recital 22

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p><i>Since its creation, the European Film Academy has developed a unique expertise and is in a unique position to create a pan-European community of film creators and professionals, promoting and disseminating European films beyond their national borders and developing truly European audiences. Therefore, it should be eligible for direct Union support.</i></p>	

**Reason**

This provision amounts to inappropriate positive discrimination in favour of this body. There is insufficient justification for the need for direct EU support for this body and any direct support would not be transparent.

**Amendment 4**

Preamble, recital 23

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Since its creation, the European Union Youth Orchestra has developed a unique expertise in promoting intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding through culture. The particularity of the European Union Youth Orchestra lies in the fact that it is a European orchestra that transcends cultural boundaries and is composed of young musicians selected in accordance with demanding artistic criteria through a rigorous annual audition process in all Member States. Therefore, it should be eligible for direct Union support.</p>	<p>Since its creation, the European Union Youth Orchestra has developed a unique expertise in promoting intercultural dialogue, mutual respect and understanding through culture. The particularity of the European Union Youth Orchestra lies in the fact that it is a European orchestra that transcends cultural boundaries and is composed of young musicians selected in accordance with demanding artistic criteria through a rigorous annual audition process in all Member States. Therefore, <b>provided that all parties concerned fully comply with this Regulation</b>, it should be eligible for direct Union support.</p>

**Reason**

For the reasons set out above in the Commission's text, the youth orchestra should be eligible for direct support from the EU and the Creative Europe programme 2021-2027, provided that all funding rules are complied with.



**Amendment 5**

Preamble, recital 25

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
In order to ensure efficient allocation of funds from the general budget of the Union, it is necessary to ensure the European added value of all actions and activities carried out with the Programme, their complementarity to Member States' activities, while consistency, complementarity and synergies should be sought with funding programmes supporting policy areas with close links to each other as well as with horizontal policies such as Union competition policy.	In order to ensure efficient allocation of funds from the general budget of the Union, it is necessary to ensure the European added value of all actions and activities carried out with the Programme, their complementarity to Member States' <b>and regions'</b> activities, while consistency, complementarity and synergies should be sought with funding programmes supporting policy areas with close links to each other as well as with horizontal policies such as Union competition policy.

**Reason**

It is also important to consider complementarity with the regions' activities, since at regional level there are policies which are particular to specific regional features, especially in the outermost regions.

**Amendment 6**

Preamble, new recital after recital 34

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	In accordance with Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the programme should take account of the specific — structural, social and economic — situation of outermost regions. Measures shall be provided in all strands of the programme to increase the participation of these regions and to facilitate cultural exchange between them and the rest of the EU and the world. Moreover, such measures shall be subject to follow-up and evaluation.

**Reason**

The programme shall contain a reference to the specific situation of these regions because contrary to the great distance, they form part of certain EU Member States. Since they enrich European culture, their cultural relations with the Union should be enhanced even if the current programme does not contain any reference to them.

**Amendment 7**

Article 3(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(a) enhancing the economic, social and external dimension of European level cooperation to develop and promote European cultural diversity and Europe's cultural heritage and strengthening the competitiveness of the European cultural and creative sectors and reinforcing international cultural relations;	(a) enhancing the economic, social and external dimension of European level cooperation to develop and promote European cultural diversity and Europe's cultural heritage and strengthening the competitiveness of the European cultural and creative sectors, <b>with special attention to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)</b> and reinforcing international cultural relations;

**Reason**

The scope of the specific objectives of the programme should be broader and go below the CCS level by focusing on micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in order to accurately depict the reality of those working in the creative and cultural sectors.

## Amendment 8

## Article 4

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>In line with the objectives referred to in Article 3, the strand 'CULTURE' shall have the following priorities:</p> <p>(a) to strengthen the cross-border dimension and circulation of European cultural and creative operators and works;</p> <p>(b) to increase cultural participation across Europe;</p> <p>(c) to promote societal resilience and social inclusion through culture and cultural heritage;</p> <p>(d) to enhance the capacity of European cultural and creative sectors to prosper and to generate jobs and growth;</p> <p>(e) to strengthen European identity and values through cultural awareness, arts education and culture-based creativity in education;</p> <p>(f) to contribute to the Union 's global strategy for international relations through cultural diplomacy.</p>	<p>In line with the objectives referred to in Article 3, the strand 'CULTURE' shall have the following priorities:</p> <p>(a) to strengthen the cross-border dimension and circulation of European cultural and creative operators and works, <b>taking into special consideration those regions with specific geographic difficulties such as the outermost regions;</b></p> <p>(b) to increase cultural participation across Europe;</p> <p>(c) to promote societal resilience and social inclusion, <b>as well as innovation</b> through culture and cultural heritage;</p> <p>(d) to enhance the capacity of European cultural and creative sectors to prosper and to generate jobs and growth <b>and contribute to local and regional development;</b></p> <p>(e) to strengthen European identity and values through cultural awareness <b>and exchanges</b>, arts education and culture-based creativity in education;</p> <p>(f) to contribute to the Union 's global strategy for international relations through cultural diplomacy, <b>including the outermost regions (ORs) as key players..</b></p>

**Reason**

Remote areas with geographical difficulties require special attention and the specific situation of the outermost regions is recognised in Article 349 TFEU.

## Amendment 9

## Article 6

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>d) to set up and support programme desks to promote, the Programme in their country and to stimulate cross-border cooperation within the cultural and creative sectors.</p>	<p>d) to set up and support programme desks and <b>their networking</b> to promote the Programme <b>at national, regional and local level</b> in their country and to stimulate cross-border cooperation within the cultural and creative sectors.</p>

**Reason**

As underlined by the Mid-term evaluation Report of the Creative Europe programme (2014-2020), the programme reaches citizens through the supported works and activities, enriching their European identities. The overall success depends on the efficiency in disseminating information and raising awareness on opportunities and challenges at their level. Creative Europe Desks should be encouraged to develop their role, by sharing success stories not just from their own country but rather on a pan-European level, as well as in local and regional setups.

**Amendment 10**

## Article 7(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2021 – 2027 shall be EUR <b>1 850 000 000</b> in current prices.	The financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2021 – 2027 shall be EUR <b>2 000 000 000</b> in current prices.
The programme shall be implemented according to the following indicative financial distribution:	The programme shall be implemented according to the following indicative financial distribution:
— up to EUR <b>609 000 000</b> for the objective referred to in Article 3(2)(a) (strand CULTURE);	— up to EUR <b>759 000 000</b> for the objective referred to in Article 3(2)(a) (strand CULTURE);
— up to EUR 1 081 000 000 for the objective referred to in Article 3(2)(b) (strand MEDIA);	— up to EUR 1 081 000 000 for the objective referred to in Article 3(2)(b) (strand MEDIA);
— up to EUR 160 000 000 for the activities referred to in Article 3(2)(c) (CROSS SECTORAL strand).	— up to EUR 160 000 000 for the activities referred to in Article 3(2)(c) (CROSS SECTORAL strand).

**Reason**

Culture and cultural heritage should be better incorporated into the priorities of the next MFF both through mainstreaming and setting a budgetary target of over EUR 2 bn. for the programme 'Creative Europe'. Nearly 78 % more funding is planned for the MEDIA sub-programme than for the CULTURE sub-programme, despite the fact that the CULTURE sub-programme covers more art sectors; we therefore suggest that the proposed increase of EUR 1 50 000 000 be allocated to the CULTURE sub-programme.

**Amendment 11**

## Article 7(4)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Resources allocated to Member States under shared management may, at their request, be transferred to the Programme. The Commission shall implement those resources directly in accordance with [(Article 62(1)(a)] of the Financial Regulation or indirectly in accordance with [(Article 62(1)(c)] of that Regulation. <b>Where possible those resources</b> shall be used for the benefit of the Member State concerned.	Resources allocated to Member States under shared management may, at their request, be transferred to the Programme. The Commission shall implement those resources directly in accordance with [(Article 62(1)(a)] of the Financial Regulation or indirectly in accordance with [(Article 62(1)(c)] of that Regulation. <b>Resources shall be used</b> for the benefit of the Member State concerned.

**Reason**

In Article 7(4) of the proposal, where a Member State transfers part of its jointly managed resources to the Creative Europe programme raises certain concerns. In this case, the Member State does not get sufficient guarantees that these resources will be allocated for the benefit of the Member State concerned. Therefore, the proposal should be drafted in such a way that these resources are certain to be used for the benefit of the Member State concerned.

**Amendment 12**

For a new Article 13

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<p><b>Committee procedure</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. The Commission shall be assisted by a committee (the 'Creative Europe Committee'). That committee shall be a committee within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011.</b></li> <li><b>2. The Creative Europe Committee may meet in specific configurations to deal with concrete issues relating to the Sub-programmes and the Cross-sectoral Strand.</b></li> <li><b>3. Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.</b></li> <li><b>4. Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.</b></li> </ol>

**Reason**

The principles of subsidiarity and proportionality will be fully achieved only if the 'Committee Procedure' is restored in the proposal to ensure appropriate Member State-scrutiny concerning the management of the programme.

**Amendment 13**

Article 15

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, shall ensure the overall consistency and complementarity of the Programme with the relevant policies and programmes, in particular those relating to gender balance, education, youth and solidarity, employment and social inclusion, research and innovation, industry and enterprise, agriculture and rural development, environment and climate action, cohesion, regional and urban policy, State aid and international cooperation and development.</p>	<p>The Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, shall ensure the overall consistency and complementarity of the Programme with the relevant policies and programmes, in particular those relating to gender balance, education, youth and solidarity, <b>the protection of minorities and in particular the preservation of the heritage of indigenous national, ethnic and linguistic minorities</b>, employment and social inclusion, research and innovation, <b>sustainable tourism</b>, industry and enterprise, agriculture and rural development, environment and climate action, cohesion, regional and urban policy, State aid and international cooperation and development.</p>

**Reason**

Cultural Heritage Tourism is a key component and contributor to the attractiveness of Europe, its regions, cities and rural areas in terms of private sector inward investment, developing cultural creative quarters and attracting talents and footloose businesses – thereby enhancing regional and national competitiveness both within Europe and globally. Moreover, given that the citizenship of many EU citizens (around 50 million people) does not correspond to their mother tongue and nationality, the EU legislative process must take their interests into consideration as well.

**Amendment 14**

Article 18(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The interim evaluation of the Programme shall be performed once there is sufficient information available about the implementation of the Programme, but no later than four years after the start of the programme implementation.</p>	<p>The interim evaluation of the Programme shall be performed once there is sufficient information available about the implementation of the Programme, but <b>the mid-term evaluation report shall be communicated</b> no later than four years after the start of the programme implementation.</p>

**Reason**

The mid-term evaluation report is instrumental in drafting the next framework programme, so it needs to be ready and available in time for the next planning period.

**Amendment 15**

## Annex 1 Culture Strand

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p><b>Sectorial actions:</b></p> <p>(a) Support to the music sector: promoting diversity, creativity and innovation in the field of music, in particular the distribution of musical repertoire in Europe and beyond, training actions and audience development for European repertoire, as well as support for data gathering and analysis;</p> <p>(b) Support to the book and publishing sector: targeted actions promoting diversity, creativity and innovation, in particular the translation and promotion of European literature across borders in Europe and beyond, training and exchanges for sector professionals, authors and translators as well as transnational projects for collaboration, innovation and development in the sector;</p> <p>(c) Support to architecture and cultural heritage sectors: targeted actions for the mobility of operators, capacity-building, audience development and internationalization of the cultural heritage and architecture sectors, promotion of 'Baukultur', support to the safeguarding, conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage and its values through awareness-raising, networking and peer-to-peer learning activities;</p> <p>(d) Support to other sectors: targeted actions in favour of the development of the creative aspects of the design and fashion sectors and cultural tourism as well as to their promotion and representation outside the European Union.</p>	<p><b>Sectorial actions:</b></p> <p>(a) Support to the music sector: promoting diversity, creativity and innovation in the field of music, in particular the distribution of musical repertoire in Europe and beyond, training actions and audience development for European repertoire, as well as support for data gathering and analysis;</p> <p>(b) Support to the book and publishing sector: targeted actions promoting diversity, creativity and innovation, in particular the translation and promotion of European literature across borders in Europe and beyond, training and exchanges for sector professionals, authors and translators as well as transnational projects for collaboration, innovation and development in the sector;</p> <p>(c) Support to architecture and cultural heritage sectors: targeted actions for the mobility of operators, capacity-building, audience development and internationalization of the cultural heritage and architecture sectors, promotion of 'Baukultur', support to the safeguarding, conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage, <b>including traditional folk culture</b>, and its values through awareness-raising, networking and peer-to-peer learning activities;</p> <p>(d) Support to other sectors: targeted actions in favour of the development of the creative aspects of the design and fashion sectors and cultural tourism as well as to their promotion and representation outside the European Union.</p>

**Reason**

Traditional folk culture in its various forms (crafts, music, dance ...) is a significant source of vitality for rural settlements in particular, of local and regional development and of European cultural exchange. It is also an instrument for strengthening European cultural identity and preserving the principle of 'unity in diversity'.

**II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

**Creative Europe**

1. welcomes the Commission's proposal on the continuation of the current Creative Europe programme as a stand-alone programme, worthy of all actors of the cultural sector. An autonomous financial framework is the best way to ensure the continuity of the achievements of the 2014-2020 period as well as to produce a credible evaluation for the future;

2. recalls that the Creative Europe programme forms part of a larger proposal on the next Multiannual Financial Framework (published on 2 May 2018), therefore the outcome of the negotiations on the budget proposal has a great impact on the final form and content of the programme. The Creative Europe programme is very important for developing the cultural sector and making it more international, and an increase in the programme's allocation is therefore positive. It is vital to avoid reducing its share of the EU budget, not least in view of the challenges facing European cooperation;
3. raises awareness of the expansion of culture as a policy area: the number of cross-sectoral projects involving culture is growing, addressing areas such as urban regeneration, the empowerment of young people, health, wellbeing and social inclusion. The Committee welcomes the fact that the proposal reflects this phenomenon;
4. regarding the role of art and culture in shaping identity and creating cohesion, draws attention to the importance of artistic freedom and freedom of expression, which must be guaranteed in accordance with the universal values of human dignity, equality and solidarity, as well as the principles of democracy and the rule of law;
5. moreover, considers it vital for the development of a 'civic European identity' to direct measures and resources towards disseminating common elements shared by all Europeans, in areas such as history, culture and heritage. In this regard, an extended Creative Europe programme and the European Agenda for Culture are particularly important;
6. is pleased that the proposal reflects the social, economic and external dimensions as well as cultural heritage and digital as the two cross-cutting actions of the New European Agenda for Culture by assigning actions to them;
7. welcomes the reinforced international dimension of the proposal but draws attention to the challenges lying in the reconciliation of priorities within and beyond the EU;
8. welcomes the references to the synergies with – among others – regional, urban and rural policies throughout the programme, which 'are instrumental in promoting the restoration of cultural heritage and supporting cultural and creative industries' <sup>(1)</sup>;
9. proposes further strengthening the reference to the key role of local and regional authorities in promoting and celebrating the artistic and cultural life of their communities and calls for enhancing the participation of regional and local authorities in the programme. In this context, underlines the need to ensure the right balance between the allocation of resources for major, large-scale projects and financing measures and activities focused at local and regional level, including by SMEs;
10. reiterates that creative and cultural industries are often micro-enterprises, small and medium-sized businesses and enterprises of self-employed workers, which require initiative and organisation at a local level. This feature of localisation is a positive aspect for regions because it boosts local economies but also because it helps retain talent and the corresponding jobs at local level. Attention should therefore be given to the particular situation of cultural workers and entrepreneurs, including those operating in regions with permanent structural constraints <sup>(2)</sup>;
11. expresses concern that the European Union Youth Orchestra (EUYO) is explicitly mentioned in the preamble of the proposal as an entity that 'should be eligible for direct Union support', despite the fact that the amendment to the current Regulation agreed by the Member States clearly states that '[f]inancing should be exceptionally granted to the EUYO until the end of the Creative Europe Programme on 31 December 2020'; in this regard the European Committee of the Regions would like to receive a guarantee that all relevant parties act in full compliance with the current regulation amended by Regulation (EU) 2018/596 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 April 2018;

<sup>(1)</sup> COM(2018) 366 final.

<sup>(2)</sup> CdR 401/2011 fin.

12. stresses, with regard to the special situation of cultural workers and cultural entrepreneurs, the importance of ensuring that people are informed of and encouraged to make use of the Guarantee Facility set up under the previous Creative Europe programming period, including where the Guarantee Facility is located elsewhere;

### **Culture strand**

13. expresses concern about the balance of horizontal and the new sectorial actions because a slightly increased budget does not automatically allow for a much greater number of priorities to be realised;

14. in the case of the sectorial actions:

— points out that highlighting architecture with respect of cultural heritage could hinder the achievements of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, whose aim was to experience and explore European cultural heritage by broadening people's horizons and moving beyond built heritage; in this regard, considers that a specific line should be established within the Creative Europe programme to support the dissemination of European cultural heritage beyond 2018;

— draws attention to the fact that areas mentioned under point (d) – design, fashion and cultural tourism – have a cross-sectorial nature, hence their support requires a certain level of coordination with other policy fields;

— expresses concern about the balance between the arts in the horizontal measures and the new sectorial actions;

15. proposes that the sections of the programme's culture strand dealing with European identity and values be more closely linked to Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) to ensure that the objective is met and that the programme is not misunderstood;

16. strongly encourages all cultural and audiovisual sectors – such as the music sector – to transfer their digital knowledge and skills to foster relations and create innovative collaborations at local and regional level as well;

### **Cross-sectoral strand**

17. welcomes the new priorities and the strengthening of this strand and so ensuring the synergies within the programme; at the same time, points out that compared to this proposal, there is a greater emphasis on data collection and statistics in the Creative Europe Programme for the period 2014-2020 in this strand, which should be included in the future programme as well;

### **Media strand**

18. acknowledges the change in paradigm the digital shift is bringing in how cultural goods are created, managed, disseminated, accessed, consumed and monetised. Digitisation provides new opportunities also for regions in Europe to connect as they exchange audiovisual works and explore new ways of creating links and exchanging content. This transition may also help them to attract new audiences, take advantage of alternative content, provide new services and give more visibility to content from various regions<sup>(?)</sup>. The digital transition will enable cultural stakeholders to become innovation actors by means of the new multi-directional and multi-channel digital communication tools, forging a loyal local base and themselves becoming active players for sustainable and smart cultural and economic growth;

19. in this context, would point to the considerable number of artists whose non-digital work and development are equally as important, as are the facilities that provide the public with educational opportunities and tools, such as libraries;

20. strongly encourages all cultural and audiovisual sectors – such as the music sector – to transfer their digital knowledge and skills to foster relations and create innovative collaborations at local and regional level as well;

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<sup>(?)</sup> CdR 293/2010 fin.

21. in this context, raises awareness that non-digital artistic creation and development persist and as such they should also have a worthy place in the communities of the 21st century;

### **Budget**

22. expresses concerns about the proposed budget of the new programme because of the following factors:

— the Commission's proposal does not seem to take inflation into account; in this regard, reminds the Commission that during the formulation of the previous proposal, it was part of the discourse that the budget devoted to cultural and creative sectors could go up to EUR 1,801 bn <sup>(4)</sup>;

— compared to the current period, the proposed budget of EUR 1,85 billion is allocated to a significantly higher number of priorities due to the new sectorial actions in the Culture strand;

— while understanding the Commission's intention to create efficiency by centralising the multitude of EU financial instruments currently available to support investments in the EU, expresses concern that the achievements of the Guarantee Facility to date could be weakened, as those responsible for this instrument in the cultural sector will not be granted the same insight as in the current period;

23. in this regard, proposes to set a budgetary target of over EUR 2 billion as well as underlines the need to better incorporate culture and cultural heritage into the priorities of the next MFF both through mainstreaming and synergies with other programmes and policies;

24. strongly emphasises that regional and local authorities should be systematically consulted in the conception, implementation and governance of the measures designed to provide financing for cultural and creative sectors across Europe with attention to a wide geographical coverage;

25. concerning the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, expresses hope that, building on the common achievements and cultural experiences to date, the EU and the United Kingdom will be able to continue and further develop mutually beneficial relations in the cultural field;

26. believes that the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality will be fully achieved only if the 'Committee Procedure' is restored in the proposal to ensure appropriate Member State-scrutiny concerning the management of the programme; similarly, local and regional levels should be regularly consulted on the directions and annual work programmes;

### **New European Agenda for Culture**

27. welcomes the New European Agenda for Culture as a remarkable and comprehensive policy basis to strengthen European identity through acknowledging the diversity of European cultures, to reinforce the European cultural and creative sectors and their relations with partners beyond Europe, as well as to enhance the links between culture, education and other policy areas;

28. welcomes the fact that the New European Agenda, by introducing the notion of 'cultural capacity' takes account of the challenge what changing expectations of audiences mean, requiring the greater involvement of local population in shaping cultural programmes from using their ideas to engaging them in the implementation;

<sup>(4)</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011AR0401&from=EN>.



29. is pleased that the communication explicitly mentions cities and regions as one of the three eco-systems to focus on; at the same time emphasises the importance of taking into account the crucial role of local and regional authorities in the practical execution of priorities;

30. at the same time, notes in this context that the Committee has already emphasised that local and regional authorities, through their proximity to citizens, are strategically better placed to respond to the specific needs and requests of different cultural groups within the European Union, which also entails a high level of responsibility <sup>(5)</sup>;

31. welcomes the fact that the New Agenda recognises the need for a paradigm shift from STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) to STEAM (including Arts) and the timeliness of extending creative and critical thinking to all levels of education and training as well as breaking away from the clear separation of sciences and humanities. Art is the ability to build new and useful ideas. The STEM curriculum will become even more attractive, creative and innovative by including art and creativity. Arts subjects foster the development of talent and of culture, and it is for this very reason that they need to be brought together with technology;

32. the culture of indigenous national, ethnic and linguistic minorities is a key building block in the European Union's cultural heritage. The local and regional level is responsible for preserving and supporting this culture and for ensuring that everyone has access to these individual cultures. Besides, the EU shall provide financial support this cause, including targeted resources that are earmarked for the tasks assigned to the regional level with regard to safeguarding the cultural background of minorities. Particular attention must be given to the use of innovative virtual instruments, and to promoting the various minority cultures throughout the EU;

33. calls for EU and national level governance to recognise CCS (cultural and creative sector) innovation as a driver for holistic local and regional development;

34. points out that local and regional authorities have successfully integrated cultural and creative sectors into their development strategies and that this has contributed to boosting local economies and to retaining the population in their local areas <sup>(6)</sup>;

35. however, insists that the integration of Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) into regional development strategies still poses a challenge and so regions would need the enhanced support of EU institutions in realising smart specialisation, considered as a regional policy framework for innovation-driven growth;

36. underlines that the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 has catalysed a resounding participation on the ground, with thousands of activities taking place across Europe, encouraging the sharing and appreciation of Europe's cultural heritage as a shared resource, raising awareness of history and common European values, and reinforcing a sense of belonging to a common European space;

37. requests that the impact and positive legacy of the Year be further valorised, supported and built upon and the partnerships and networks born during the Year continue afterwards as part of EU cultural cooperation. The European Committee of the Regions therefore welcomes the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage presented in December 2018, which includes five strands intended to bring about a real change in the way we appreciate, preserve and promote European cultural heritage;

38. approves of Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union and Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union as the chosen legal bases, acknowledges the relevance of Articles 173 and 208 TFEU, and supports the three strategic objectives (the social, economic and external dimensions) and the two cross-cutting actions (cultural heritage and digital);

39. recommends that in the social dimension, the passage '[p]rotect and promote Europe's cultural heritage as a shared resource, to raise awareness of our common history and values and reinforce a sense of common European identity' supports the protection and respect of Europe's religious heritage and promotes core values laid down under Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU);

<sup>(5)</sup> CdR 44/2006 fin.

<sup>(6)</sup> CdR 181/2010 fin.

40. regarding the third dimension (external relations), 'emphatically points to the need for stronger and deeper cooperation at local, regional and national level in initiating and developing strategies in support of international cultural relations and activities' (7) and believes that city diplomacy could be a way forward in promoting the European cultural identity throughout the world;

41. believes that mobility of cultural professionals would have been better placed among the cross-cutting actions given that it provides a substantial added value to all three dimensions;

42. reiterates the need for improvement in data collection and statistics on culture, which is a prerequisite to develop credible evidence-based policies in the future and calls for a strategic research approach facilitating knowledge transfer across currently dispersed initiatives, guaranteeing the coverage of all sectors in cooperation with cultural stakeholders.

Brussels, 6 February 2019.

*The President*  
*of the European Committee of the Regions*  
Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

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(7) COR-2016-05110-00-00-AC-TRA.

**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on ‘Erasmus programme for education, training, youth and sport’**

(2019/C 168/08)

<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Ulrike HILLER (DE/PES), Member of the Senate, Representative of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen to the Federal Government, with responsibility for European Affairs
<b>Reference document:</b>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing ‘Erasmus’: the Union programme for education, training, youth and sport and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013  COM(2018) 367 final

**I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS**

**Amendment 1**

Preamble, recital 1

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
In a context of rapid and profound changes induced by technological revolution and globalisation, investing in learning mobility, cooperation and innovative policy development in the fields of education, training, youth and sport is key to building inclusive, cohesive and resilient societies and sustaining the competitiveness of the Union, while contributing to strengthening European identity and to a more democratic Union.	In a context of rapid and profound changes induced by technological revolution and globalisation, investing in <b>the dissemination of knowledge and culture</b> , learning mobility, cooperation and innovative policy development in the fields of education, training, youth and sport is key to building inclusive, cohesive and resilient societies and sustaining the competitiveness of the Union, while contributing to strengthening European identity and to a more democratic Union.

**Amendment 2**

Preamble, recital 4

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The European Pillar of Social Rights, solemnly proclaimed and signed on 17 November 2017 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, lays down, as its first key principle, that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market.	The European Pillar of Social Rights, solemnly proclaimed and signed on 17 November 2017 by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, lays down, as its first key principle, that everyone has the right to quality and inclusive education, training and lifelong learning in order to maintain and acquire skills that enable them to participate fully in society and manage successfully transitions in the labour market. <b>This is particularly relevant for all young people in Europe who are currently unemployed. Equal access to education should be ensured regardless of gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, or geographical location and with due consideration given to the rights of linguistic minorities.</b>

**Reason**

The European Pillar of Social Rights does not acknowledge the education-related challenges facing people who live in remote areas or belong to a linguistic minority.

**Amendment 3**

Preamble, recital 8

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>In its Communication on 'A modern budget for a Union that protects, empowers and defends - the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027' adopted on 2 May 2018, the Commission called for a stronger 'youth' focus in the next financial framework, notably by more than doubling the size of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Programme, one of the Union's most visible success stories. The focus of the new Programme should be on inclusiveness, and to reach more young people with fewer opportunities. This should allow more young people to move to another country to learn or work.</p>	<p>In its Communication on 'A modern budget for a Union that protects, empowers and defends - the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027' adopted on 2 May 2018, the Commission called for a stronger 'youth' focus in the next financial framework, notably by more than doubling the size of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ Programme, one of the Union's most visible success stories. The focus of the new Programme should be on inclusiveness, and to reach more young people with fewer opportunities. This should allow more young people to move to another country to learn or work. <b><i>In order to ensure that the principle of 'no school or training certificate without participating in a European project' can be implemented as soon as possible, the Programme should also take into account the targeted engagement, motivation and training of staff providing education, including non-formal education, and training, so that they can motivate as many young people as possible.</i></b></p>

**Reason**

Since staff providing non-formal, general and vocational education serve as 'gatekeepers' for people with fewer opportunities, it is also vital to invest in their skills. At the same time, due consideration must be given to the brain drain phenomenon.

**Amendment 4**

Preamble, recital 9

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>In this context, it is necessary to establish the successor programme for education, training, youth and sport (the 'Programme') of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme established by Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council. The integrated nature of the 2014-2020 programme covering learning in all contexts - formal, non-formal and informal, and at all stages of life - should be maintained to boost flexible learning paths allowing individuals to develop those competences that are necessary to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.</p>	<p>In this context, it is necessary to establish the successor programme for education, training, youth and sport (the 'Programme') of the 2014-2020 Erasmus+ programme established by Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council. The integrated nature of the 2014-2020 programme covering learning in all contexts - formal, non-formal and informal, and at all stages of life - should be maintained to boost flexible learning paths allowing individuals <b><i>to have a learning experience that strengthens their European identity and understanding of European cultural diversity, and thereby</i></b> to develop those competences that are necessary to face the challenges of the twenty-first century.</p>

**Reason**

It should be clearly indicated that a learning experience in another European country significantly boosts the development of future-oriented vocational skills and is closely associated with the development of a European identity.

**Amendment 5**

Preamble, recital 10

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Programme should be equipped to become an even greater contributor to the implementation of the Union’s policy objectives and priorities in the field of education, training, youth and sport. A coherent lifelong learning approach is central to managing the different transitions that people will face over the course of their life cycle. In taking this approach forward, the next Programme should maintain a close relationship with the overall strategic framework for Union policy cooperation in the field of education, training and youth, including the policy agendas for schools, higher education, vocational education and training and adult learning, while reinforcing and developing new synergies with other related Union programmes and policy areas.</p>	<p>The Programme should be equipped to become an even greater contributor to the implementation of the Union’s policy objectives and priorities in the field of education, training, youth and sport. <b>With this in mind, the Programme should reinforce the teaching and acceptance of fundamental values that lie at the heart of the European Union: respect for human dignity, freedom (including freedom of expression), democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. These values are common to the Member States in a European society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men should prevail. Moreover, a</b> coherent lifelong learning approach is central to managing the different transitions that people will face over the course of their life cycle. In taking this approach forward, the next Programme should maintain a close relationship with the overall strategic framework for Union policy cooperation in the field of education, training and youth, including the policy agendas for schools, higher education, vocational education and training and adult learning, while reinforcing and developing new synergies with other related Union programmes and policy areas.</p>

**Reason**

The proposed insertion highlights – in the spirit of the Paris Declaration of education ministers on ‘Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education’ – the urgency of, and clarifies the goal of, the ‘Union’s policy objectives and priorities’.

**Amendment 6**

Preamble, recital 11

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Programme is a key component of building a European Education Area. It should be equipped to contribute to the successor of the strategic framework for cooperation in education and training and the Skills Agenda for Europe with a shared commitment to the strategic importance of skills and competences for sustaining jobs, growth and competitiveness. It should support Member States in reaching the goals of the Paris Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education.</p>	<p>The Programme is a key component of building a European Education Area. It should be equipped to contribute to the successor of the strategic framework for cooperation in education and training and the Skills Agenda for Europe with a shared commitment to the strategic importance of skills and competences for sustaining jobs, growth and competitiveness. It should support the Member States in reaching the goals of the Paris Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education, <b>so that young people also become active EU citizens who are aware of European values, know how to stand up for these values, and can exercise their rights. In doing so, the Programme highlights the strategic importance of skills and competences for ensuring jobs, growth and competitiveness.</b></p>

**Reason**

It should be clearly indicated that a learning experience in another European country significantly boosts the development of future-oriented vocational skills and is closely associated with the development of a European identity.

**Amendment 7**

Preamble, recital 12

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The Programme should be coherent with the new European Union youth strategy, the framework for European cooperation in the youth field for 2019-2027, based on the Commission's Communication of 22 May 2018 on 'Engaging, connecting and empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy'.	The Programme should be coherent with the new European Union youth strategy, the framework for European cooperation in the youth field for 2019-2027, based on the Commission's Communication of 22 May 2018 on 'Engaging, connecting and empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy', <b>and should take account of the EU Work Plan for Youth.</b>

**Reason**

The EU Work Plan for Youth should be taken into account, in order to improve policy coherence.

**Amendment 8**

Preamble, recital 14

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The Programme should contribute to strengthening the Union's innovation capacity notably by supporting mobility and cooperation activities that foster the development of competences in forward-looking study fields or disciplines such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics, climate change, the environment, clean energy, artificial intelligence, robotics, data analysis <b>and arts/design</b> , to help people develop knowledge, skills and competences needed for the future.	The Programme should contribute to strengthening the Union's innovation capacity notably by supporting mobility and cooperation activities that foster the development of competences in forward-looking study fields or disciplines such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics, climate change, the environment, clean energy, artificial intelligence, robotics, data analysis, design, <b>as well as in the arts and humanities</b> , to help people develop knowledge, skills and competences needed for the future. <b>This comprehensive education will promote a deeper understanding of democracy, boost critical analysis of contemporary realities and their interculturality and encourage the development of social skills such as intercultural teamwork, empathy, tolerance and the ability to learn through independent work, all of which are critically important.</b>

**Reason**

As the EU's innovation capacity depends not only on expertise in the relevant areas and disciplines, but also on competences pertaining to the arts and humanities, as well as on the development of the social skills of (future) staff and managers mentioned above, all these aspects should be duly taken into account in this Programme.

**Amendment 9**

Preamble, recital 15

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Synergies with Horizon Europe should ensure that combined resources from the Programme and the Horizon Europe Programme <sup>(1)</sup> are used to support activities dedicated to strengthening and modernising European higher education institutions. Horizon Europe will, where appropriate, complement the Programme's support for the European Universities initiative, in particular its research dimension as part of developing new joint and integrated long term and sustainable strategies on education, research and innovation. Synergies with Horizon Europe will help to foster the integration of education and research in higher education institutions.</p> <p><sup>(1)</sup> <i>COM(2018) []</i>.</p>	<p>Synergies with Horizon Europe should ensure that combined resources from the Programme and the Horizon Europe Programme are used to support activities dedicated to strengthening and modernising European higher education institutions, <b>with due consideration given to the challenges facing rural areas, the outermost regions of the Union, regions with serious and permanent natural or demographic handicaps, such as island, cross-border and mountain regions, and areas affected by natural disasters in the Member States.</b> Horizon Europe will, where appropriate, complement the Programme's support for the European Universities initiative, in particular its research dimension as part of developing new joint and integrated long term and sustainable strategies on education, research and innovation. Synergies with Horizon Europe will help to foster the integration of education and research in higher education institutions, <b>also to encourage convergence in this sector for lagging behind regions.</b></p>

**Reason**

Education and research are decisive drivers of socio-economic development and employability, therefore due attention must be paid also to peripheral and lagging behind regions of the EU.

**Amendment 10**

Preamble, recital 16

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Programme should be more inclusive by improving its outreach to those with fewer opportunities, including through more flexible learning mobility formats, and by fostering participation of small organisations, in particular newcomers and community-based grassroots organisations that work directly with disadvantaged learners of all ages. Virtual formats, such as virtual cooperation, blended and virtual mobility, should be promoted to reach more participants, in particular those with fewer opportunities and those for whom moving physically to a country other than their country of residence would be an obstacle.</p>	<p>The Programme should be more inclusive by improving its outreach to those with fewer opportunities, including through more flexible learning mobility formats, and by fostering participation of small organisations, in particular newcomers and community-based grassroots organisations – <b>including at local and regional level</b> – that work directly with disadvantaged learners of all ages.</p> <p><b>Facilities for education, including non-formal education, and training that focus on disadvantaged learners and that have never worked with the European programmes, or have not done so for a long time, should have greater opportunities to work together with an expert non-formal education facility at local and regional level when preparing a project.</b></p> <p>Virtual formats, such as virtual cooperation, blended and virtual mobility, should be promoted to reach more participants, in particular those with fewer opportunities and those for whom moving physically to a country other than their country of residence would be an obstacle. <b>The promotion of these virtual formats should take into account the need for high speed internet access for everybody throughout Europe and the necessity to respect common European rules on data protection.</b></p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<b><i>Every effort should be made to facilitate physical mobility for disadvantaged people, especially people with disabilities that are physical, sensory and cognitive.</i></b>

**Reason**

The active participation of grassroots organisations at local and regional level should be encouraged. Given that, according to recent studies, there is often considerable reluctance to embark on European projects, which are perceived as being too complicated, opportunities should be created to give staff concerned the chance to have 'on the job' training and to work together with a pedagogical institution.

While virtual mobility can be a useful complement to physical mobility without, however, being an equivalent substitute, access to broadband throughout the EU and full compliance with data protection rules are a necessary prerequisite. Moreover, it must be ensured that all forms of mobility can be used by all, including by learners with disabilities both physical and cognitive, who often require targeted support.

**Amendment 11**

Preamble, recital 17

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>In its Communication on Strengthening European identity through education and culture, the Commission highlighted the pivotal role of education, culture and sport in promoting active citizenship and common values amongst the youngest generations. Strengthening European identity and fostering the active participation of individuals in the democratic processes is crucial for the future of Europe and our democratic societies. Going abroad to study, learn, train and work or to participate in youth and sport activities contributes to strengthening this European identity in all its diversity and the sense of being part of a cultural community as well as to fostering such active citizenship, among people of all ages. Those taking part in mobility activities should get involved in their local communities as well as engage in their host country local communities to share their experience. Activities linked to reinforcing all aspects of creativity in education, training and youth and enhancing individual key competencies should be supported.</p>	<p>In its Communication on Strengthening European identity through education and culture, the Commission highlighted the pivotal role of education, culture and sport in promoting active citizenship and common values amongst the youngest generations. Strengthening European identity and fostering the active participation of individuals in the democratic processes is crucial for the future of Europe and our democratic societies. Going abroad to study, learn, train and work, <b><i>to undertake a short-, medium- or long-term placement as a pupil in a training or educational establishment</i></b> or to participate in youth and sport activities contributes to strengthening this European identity in all its diversity and the sense of being part of a cultural community as well as to fostering such active citizenship, among people of all ages. Those taking part in mobility activities should get involved in their local communities as well as engage in their host country local communities to share their experience. <b><i>Organisations that establish and support contact between students and facilities for education, including non-formal education, and training, in particular those working with young people with fewer opportunities, should be aided in their work and supported within their local and European networks.</i></b> Activities linked to reinforcing all aspects of creativity in education, training and youth and enhancing individual key competencies should be supported.</p>

**Reason**

Given that placements in the area of vocational schools are already promoted under the current Erasmus+ programme and have since become very important, this option should be pursued and should be extended to the area of career guidance in schools.

The work of organisations that support contact between students and education and training facilities has shown that such intermediation is appropriate because it lends Erasmus students a deeper insight into the education system of the host country and gives pupils easy peer-to-peer access to Europe, which is likely to be especially important for young people with fewer opportunities.



**Amendment 12**

Preamble, recital 18

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The international dimension of the Programme should be boosted aiming at offering a greater number of opportunities for mobility, cooperation and policy dialogue with third countries not associated to the Programme. Building on the successful implementation of international higher education and youth activities under the predecessor programmes in the fields of education, training and youth, the international mobility activities should be extended to other sectors, such as in vocational education and training.	The international dimension of the Programme should be boosted aiming at offering a greater number of opportunities for mobility, cooperation and policy dialogue with third countries not associated to the Programme. Building on the successful implementation of international higher education and youth activities under the predecessor programmes in the fields of education, training and youth, the international mobility activities should be extended to other sectors, such as in vocational education and training, <b>while taking account of the socio-economic and geographical characteristics of the countries involved, which influence job creation and therefore entrepreneurship and the employability of young people and adults.</b>

**Reason**

The amendment aims to establish a stronger link between education and training on the one hand, and the specific economic and social situation of a region on the other, particularly with regard to peripheral, disadvantaged areas.

**Amendment 13**

Preamble, recital 19

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The basic architecture of the 2014-2020 programme in three chapters - education and training, youth and sport – structured around three key actions has proved successful and should be maintained. Improvements to streamline and rationalise the actions supported by the Programme should be introduced.	The basic architecture of the 2014-2020 programme in three chapters - education and training, youth and sport – structured around three key actions has proved successful and should be maintained. Improvements to streamline and rationalise the actions supported by the Programme should be introduced. <b>Sector-specific, extremely simplified application procedures should therefore be introduced, in order to achieve the desired rise in participant numbers as well as to increase the willingness of staff to submit applications. This requires intensive advice, assistance and support at local and regional level, where the needs on the ground are best known, as well as support to small-scale partnerships involving small, local organizations and with simple and light administrative formalities.</b>

**Reason**

The length of time required to submit an application – including by experienced practitioners – is estimated at 40 to 80 hours, depending on the type of project. Previous programmes did not entail a burden of this scale and it would therefore be helpful to aim towards similar standards. The issue concerns in particular the area of education, including non-formal education, and training, as, unlike universities, they usually do not have international offices; instead, this work has to be done in addition to regular work.

## Amendment 14

Preamble, recital 20

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Programme should reinforce existing learning mobility opportunities, notably <b>in those sectors where the Programme could have the biggest efficiency gains, to broaden its reach and meet the high unmet demand. This should be done notably</b> by increasing and facilitating mobility activities for higher education students, school pupils and learners in vocational education and training. Mobility of low-skilled adult learners should be embedded in partnerships for cooperation. Mobility opportunities for youth participating in non-formal learning activities should also be extended to reach more young people. Mobility of staff in education, training, youth and sport should also be reinforced, considering its leverage effect. In line with the vision of a true European Education Area, the Programme should also boost mobility and exchanges and promote student participation in educational and cultural activities by supporting digitalisation of processes, such as the European Student Card. This initiative can be an important step in making mobility for all a reality first by enabling higher education institutions to send and receive more exchange students while still enhancing quality in student mobility and also by facilitating students' access to various services (library, transport, accommodation) before arriving at the institution abroad.</p>	<p>The Programme should reinforce existing learning mobility opportunities, notably by increasing and facilitating mobility activities for higher education students, school pupils and learners in vocational education and training. Mobility of low-skilled adult learners should be embedded in partnerships for cooperation. Mobility opportunities for youth participating in non-formal learning activities should also be extended to reach more young people. Mobility of staff in education, training, youth and sport should also be reinforced, considering its leverage effect. In line with the vision of a true European Education Area, the Programme should also boost mobility and exchanges and promote student participation in educational and cultural activities by <b>supporting organisations that establish contact, in the host country, between students and youth organisations as well as facilities for education, including non-formal education, and training, in particular those working with young people with fewer opportunities, and by</b> supporting digitalisation of processes, such as the European Student Card. This initiative can be an important step in making mobility for all a reality first by enabling higher education institutions to send and receive more exchange students while still enhancing quality in student mobility and also by facilitating students' access to various services (library, transport, accommodation) before arriving at the institution abroad. <b>In order to encourage student mobility overall, relevant information should be provided systematically to help students prepare. Moreover, the systematic collection of good practices that are useful to students should also be supported.</b></p>

**Reason**

The work of organisations that support contact between students and education and training facilities has shown that they can help to give pupils in the host country easy peer-to-peer access to Europe, which is likely to be especially important for young people with fewer opportunities.

## Amendment 15

Preamble, recital 21

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Programme should encourage youth participation in Europe's democratic life, including by supporting participation projects for young people to engage and learn to participate in civic society, raising awareness about European common values including fundamental rights, bringing together young people and decision makers at local, national and Union level, as well as contributing to the European integration process.</p>	<p>The Programme should encourage youth participation in Europe's democratic life, including by supporting participation projects, <b>and by consolidating and expanding existing best practice and measures within the Erasmus programme,</b> for young people to engage and learn to participate in civic society, raising awareness about European common values including fundamental rights, bringing together young people and decision makers at local, <b>regional,</b> national and Union level, as well as contributing to the European integration process.</p>

**Reason**

Both the local and regional specificities need to be considered.

## Amendment 16

Preamble, recital 22

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Programme should offer young people more opportunities to discover Europe through learning experiences abroad. Eighteen year olds, in particular those with fewer opportunities, should be given the chance to have <b>a</b> first-time, short-term individual or group experience travelling throughout Europe in the frame of an informal educational activity aimed at fostering their sense of belonging to the European Union and discovering its cultural diversity. The Programme should identify bodies in charge of <b>reaching out and selecting the participants</b> and support activities to foster the learning dimension of the experience.</p>	<p>The Programme should offer young people more opportunities to discover Europe through learning experiences abroad. Eighteen year olds, in particular those with fewer opportunities, should be given the chance to have <b>their own</b> first-time, short-term individual or group experience travelling throughout Europe in the frame of an informal educational activity aimed at fostering their sense of belonging to the European Union and discovering its cultural diversity. <b>Participation in the Programme should be possible for all young people under the same conditions, regardless of where they live - including for those from the outermost regions and from less developed regions - and for learning experiences everywhere in Europe, so as to facilitate encounters between people from different backgrounds and from all parts of Europe. In addition to travel expenses it could be considered for young people with fewer opportunities to also receive bursaries for meals and accommodation and, where necessary, accompaniment. This Programme could also be a public-private-partnership project, for example with partners from the mobility and tourism sector, in order to achieve more, faster, in financial terms. Actively involving civil society groups in the above-mentioned partnerships and in innovative forms of cooperation, could also enable them to play a dynamic role, always with a view to making the Erasmus Programme more effective and broadening its scope.</b> The Programme should identify bodies <b>at local and regional level</b> in charge of <b>reaching out to the participants by disseminating information via suitable media and through relevant formal and non-formal education facilities</b>, and support activities to foster the learning dimension of the experience.</p>

## Reason

In order to genuinely reach, *inter alia*, unemployed young people or those with a physical disability with this offer of informal learning, it will not be enough to use the normal channels for disseminating information. It will also be helpful not only to finance the travel expenses themselves, but also to provide bursaries to cover additional costs arising in such cases. At the same time, less developed regions should also be considered as a destination for learning experiences abroad, so it is important to arouse young people's interest and enthusiasm towards these regions as well.

## Amendment 17

Preamble, recital 23

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Programme should also enhance the learning of languages, in particular through widened use of online tools, as e-learning offers additional advantages for language learning in terms of access and flexibility.</p>	<p>The Programme should also enhance the learning of languages, in particular through widened use of online tools, as e-learning offers additional advantages for language learning in terms of access and flexibility. <b>In this regard, the programme should pay due attention to regional and minority languages, pursuant to Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, concerning cultural, religious and linguistic diversity.</b></p>

**Reason**

The legislator should promote the cultural and identity aspect of regional and minority languages, in accordance with Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992), signed by 16 EU Member States.

**Amendment 18**

Preamble, recital 24

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Programme should support measures that enhance the cooperation between institutions and organisations active in education, training, <b>youth</b> and sport, recognising their fundamental role in equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills and competences needed in a changing world as well as to adequately fulfil the potential for innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship, <b>in particular within the digital economy.</b></p>	<p>The Programme should support measures that enhance the cooperation between institutions and organisations active in education, <b>including non-formal education</b>, training and sport, <b>within these education sectors as well as, under transparent conditions, across sectors at a grassroots level</b>, recognising their fundamental role in equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills and competences needed in a changing world as well as to adequately fulfil the potential for innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.</p>

**Reason**

As there are also creative and innovative education facilities outside the digital economy, the envisaged focus would lead to unjustified exclusion.

**Amendment 19**

Preamble, recital 32

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Reflecting the importance of tackling climate change in line with the Union's commitments to implement the Paris Agreement and achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, this Programme will contribute to mainstream climate action in the Union's policies and to the achievement of an overall target of 25% of the Union budget expenditures supporting climate objectives. Relevant actions will be identified during the Programme's preparation and implementation and reassessed in the context of the relevant evaluations and review process.</p>	<p>Reflecting the importance of tackling climate change in line with the Union's commitments to implement the Paris Agreement and achieve the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, this Programme will contribute to mainstream climate action in the Union's policies and to the achievement of an overall target of 25% of the Union budget expenditures supporting climate objectives. Relevant actions, <b>considering also climate change-related training and transfer of skills for young Europeans</b>, will be identified during the Programme's preparation and implementation and reassessed in the context of the relevant evaluations and review process.</p>

**Reason**

It is important to train young people in the field of prevention, mitigation and risk reduction related to climate change, including subsequent natural disasters.

**Amendment 20**

Preamble, recital 37

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Third countries which are members of the European Economic Area (EEA) may participate in the Programme in the framework of the cooperation established under the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement, which provides for the implementation of Union programmes by a decision under that agreement. Third countries may also participate on the basis of other legal instruments. This Regulation should grant the necessary rights for and access to the authorising officer responsible, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) as well as the European Court of Auditors to comprehensively exert their respective competences. The full participation of third countries in the Programme should be subject to the conditions laid down in specific agreements covering the participation of the third country concerned to the Programme. Full participation entails, moreover, the obligation to set up a national agency and managing some of the actions of the Programme at decentralised level. Individuals and entities from third countries that are not associated to the Programme should be able to participate in some of the actions of the Programme, as defined in the work programme and the calls for proposals published by the Commission. When implementing the Programme, specific arrangements could be taken into account with regard to individuals and entities from European microstates.</p>	<p>Third countries which are members of the European Economic Area (EEA) may participate in the Programme in the framework of the cooperation established under the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement, which provides for the implementation of Union programmes by a decision under that agreement. Third countries may also participate on the basis of other legal instruments <b>and through structured frameworks for cooperation such as the European Union’s macro-regional strategies</b>. This Regulation should grant the necessary rights for and access to the authorising officer responsible, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) as well as the European Court of Auditors to comprehensively exert their respective competences. The full participation of third countries in the Programme should be subject to the conditions laid down in specific agreements covering the participation of the third country concerned to the Programme. Full participation entails, moreover, the obligation to set up a national agency and managing some of the actions of the Programme at decentralised level. Individuals and entities from third countries that are not associated to the Programme should be able to participate in some of the actions of the Programme, as defined in the work programme and the calls for proposals published by the Commission. When implementing the Programme, specific arrangements could be taken into account with regard to individuals and entities from European microstates.</p>

**Reason**

The added text aims to highlight the macro-regional dimension of European policies, including the participation in the Erasmus programme of the third countries involved in the four existing macro-regional strategies.

**Amendment 21**

Preamble, recital 38

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>In line with the Commission’s communication on ‘A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the Union’s outermost regions’, the Programme should take into account the specific situation of these regions. Measures will be taken to increase the outermost regions’ participation in all actions. Mobility exchanges and cooperation between people and organisations from these regions and third countries, in particular their neighbours, should be fostered. Such measures will be monitored and evaluated regularly.</p>	<p>‘In line with <b>Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and</b> the Commission’s communication on “A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the Union’s outermost regions”, the Programme should take into account the specific situation of these regions. Measures will be taken to increase the outermost regions’ participation in all actions. Mobility exchanges and cooperation between people and organisations from these regions and third countries, in particular their neighbours, should be fostered. Such measures will be monitored and evaluated regularly’.</p>

**Reason**

The recital should include the legal basis, Article 349 TFEU, which is the real linchpin setting out the specificities of the outermost regions. We therefore propose this new wording.

**Amendment 22**

Preamble, recital 38

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<i>In any action it takes, the programme should also take into account the need to increase the involvement of regions with severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps, such as island, cross-border and mountain regions as referred to in the third paragraph of Article 174 TFEU.</i>

**Reason**

Self-explanatory.

**Amendment 23**

Preamble, recital 42

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Appropriate outreach, publicity and dissemination of the opportunities and results of the actions supported by the Programme should be ensured at European, national and local level. The outreach, publicity and dissemination activities should rely on all the implementing bodies of the Programme, including, when relevant, with the support of other key stakeholders.	Appropriate outreach, publicity and dissemination of the opportunities and results of the actions supported by the Programme should be ensured at European, national, <b>regional</b> and local level. The outreach, publicity and dissemination activities should rely on all the implementing bodies of the Programme, including, when relevant, with the support of other key stakeholders.

**Reason**

Both the local and regional specificities need to be considered.

**Amendment 24**

Preamble, recital 44

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
In order to ensure efficient and effective implementation of this Regulation, the Programme should make maximum use of delivery mechanisms already in place. The implementation of the Programme should therefore be entrusted to the Commission, and to national agencies. Where feasible, and in order to maximise efficiency, the national agencies should be the same as the one designated for the management of the predecessor programme. The scope of the ex-ante compliance assessment should be limited to the requirements that are new and specific to the Programme, unless justified, such as in case of serious shortcomings or underperformance on the part of the national agency concerned.	In order to ensure efficient and effective implementation of this Regulation, the Programme should make maximum use of delivery mechanisms already in place <b>and be expanded more intensively at the regional level</b> . The implementation of the Programme should therefore be entrusted to the Commission, and to national agencies <b>that cooperate more intensively at the regional level</b> . Where feasible, and in order to maximise efficiency, the national agencies, <b>working more closely with the regional level</b> , should be the same as the one designated for the management of the predecessor programme. <b>In order to further enhance the effectiveness and acceptance of the measures adopted by national agencies, the latter should, in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, set up advisory councils and ombudsmen at the local or regional level to help improve administrative procedures and decisions, and resolve any appeals and disputes between national agencies and users in a transparent, factual and neutral way.</b> The scope of the ex-ante compliance assessment should be limited to the requirements that are new and specific to the Programme, unless justified, such as in case of serious shortcomings or underperformance on the part of the national agency concerned.

**Reason**

The positive experiences that the German Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) has had with setting up a user advisory council should also be used by the other national agencies in order to enable those concerned to participate even more closely in the Programme, particularly its implementation.

Since in the past there have repeatedly been appeals against decisions by national agencies and it does not make sense for national agencies to decide on appeals against their own decisions, it is proposed, as is already the case in Austria, to set up relevant ombudsmen to boost transparency in the decision-making process and contribute to neutral, expert solutions.

**Amendment 25**

Preamble, recital 46

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Member States should <b>endeavour to</b> adopt all appropriate measures to remove legal and administrative obstacles to the proper functioning of the Programme. This includes resolving, where possible, and without prejudice to Union law on the entry and residence of third-country nationals issues that create difficulties in obtaining visas and residence permits. In line with Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council <sup>(1)</sup>, Member States are encouraged to establish fast-track admission procedures.</p> <hr/> <p><sup>(1)</sup> Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing (OJ L 132, 21.5.2016, p. 21).</p>	<p>Member States should adopt all appropriate measures to remove legal and administrative obstacles to the proper functioning of the Programme. This includes <b>exempting study grants from taxation, as well as</b> resolving, where possible, and without prejudice to Union law on the entry and residence of third-country nationals issues that create difficulties in obtaining visas and residence permits. In line with Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council <sup>(1)</sup>, Member States are encouraged to establish fast-track admission procedures.</p> <hr/> <p><sup>(1)</sup> Directive (EU) 2016/801 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of research, studies, training, voluntary service, pupil exchange schemes or educational projects and au pairing (OJ L 132, 21.5.2016, p. 21).</p>

**Reason**

This is consistent with recital 49.

**Amendment 26**

Preamble, recital 49

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>In order to simplify requirements for beneficiaries, simplified grants in the form of lump-sums, unit-costs and flat-rate funding should be used to the maximum possible extent. The simplified grants to support the mobility actions of the Programme, as defined by the Commission, should <b>take into account</b> the living and subsistence costs of the host country. The Commission and national agencies of the sending countries should have the possibility to adjust these simplified grants on the basis of objective criteria, in particular to ensure access to people with fewer opportunities. In accordance with national law, Member States should also <b>be encouraged to</b> exempt those grants from any taxes and social levies. The same exemption should apply to public or private entities awarding such financial support to the individuals concerned.</p>	<p>In order to simplify requirements for beneficiaries, simplified grants in the form of lump-sums, unit-costs and flat-rate funding should be used to the maximum possible extent. The simplified grants to support the mobility actions of the Programme, as defined by the Commission, should <b>be regularly reviewed and adjusted to</b> the living and subsistence costs of the host country <b>and region</b>. The Commission and national agencies of the sending countries should have the possibility to adjust these simplified grants on the basis of objective criteria, in particular to ensure access to people with fewer opportunities, <b>whose total cost of participation should be covered by such grants</b>. In accordance with national law, Member States should also exempt those grants from any taxes and social levies. The same exemption should apply to public or private entities awarding such financial support to the individuals concerned.</p>

**Reason**

Self-explanatory.

**Amendment 27**

Preamble, recital 51

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
It is necessary to ensure the complementarity of the actions carried out within the Programme with activities undertaken by the Member States and with other Union activities, in particular those in the fields of education, culture and the media, youth and solidarity, employment and social inclusion, research and innovation, industry and enterprise, agriculture and rural development with a focus on young farmers, cohesion, regional policy and international cooperation and development.	It is necessary to ensure the complementarity of the actions carried out within the Programme with activities undertaken by the Member States <b>and regions</b> and with other Union activities, in particular those in the fields of education, culture and the media, youth and solidarity, employment and social inclusion, research and innovation, industry and enterprise, agriculture and rural development with a focus on young farmers, cohesion, regional policy and international cooperation and development.

**Reason**

It is also important to take into account the complementary nature of measures carried out under the programme and activities by the regions.

**Amendment 28**

Preamble, recital 52

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
While the regulatory framework already allowed Member States and regions to establish synergies in the previous programming period between Erasmus+ and other Union instruments, such as the European structural and investment funds, which also support the qualitative development of education, training and youth systems in the Union, this potential has so far been underexploited, thus limiting the systemic effects of projects and impact on policy. Effective communication and cooperation should take place at national level between the national bodies in charge of managing these various instruments to maximise their respective impact. The programme should allow for active cooperation with these instruments.	While the regulatory framework already allowed Member States and regions to establish synergies in the previous programming period between Erasmus+ and other Union instruments, such as the European structural and investment funds, which also support the qualitative development of education, training and youth systems in the Union, this potential has so far been underexploited, thus limiting the systemic effects of projects and impact on policy. Effective communication and cooperation should take place at national <b>and regional</b> level between the national bodies in charge of managing these various instruments to maximise their respective impact. The programme should allow for active cooperation with these instruments.

**Reason**

It is also important to include cooperation with regional bodies, since at regional level there are authorities which manage other EU instruments, such as the European Structural and Investment Funds.

**Amendment 29**

Chapter I, Article 2, number 6 (Definitions)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
'grassroots sport' means organised sport practised at local level by amateur sports people, and sport for all;	'grassroots sport' means organised sport practised at local <b>or regional</b> level by amateur sports people, and sport for all;



**Reason**

Self-explanatory.

**Amendment 30**

Chapter I, Article 2, number 14 (Definitions)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
'partnership' means an agreement between a group of institutions and/or organisations to carry out joint activities and projects;	'partnership' means an agreement between a group of institutions and/or organisations to carry out joint activities and projects <b>as part of the Programme;</b>

**Reason**

It should be ensured that not every form of cooperation is declared to be a 'partnership' within the meaning of the Regulation.

**Amendment 31**

Chapter I, Article 2, number 25 (Definitions)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
'people with fewer opportunities' means people facing <b>obstacles</b> that prevent them from having effective access to opportunities under the Programme for economic, social, cultural, geographical or health reasons, a migrant background or for reasons such as <b>disability and educational difficulties;</b>	'people with fewer opportunities' means people facing <b>barriers</b> that prevent them from having effective access to opportunities under the Programme for economic, social, cultural, <b>linguistic</b> , geographical or health reasons, a migrant background or for reasons such as <b>physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities; creating accessibility is one of the Programme's primary goals and should take precedence over quantitative or financial aspects;</b>

**Reason**

Equal access to opportunities requires addressing obstacles such as language barriers or learning disabilities.

**Amendment 32**

Chapter I, Article 2, new number 28 (Definitions)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<b>'language' means any language other than the first language of the learner;</b>

**Reason**

The learning of new languages supported by this Programme should not be limited to the official languages of the EU.

**Amendment 33**

Chapter I, Article 2, new number 29 (Definitions)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<i>'persons with disabilities' means persons who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others;</i>

**Reason**

Definition of the term in line with Article 1, sentence 2 of the UN CRPD.

**Amendment 34**

Chapter II, Article 4, Key action 1 Learning mobility

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>In the field of <b>education and training</b>, the Programme shall support the following actions under key action 1:</p> <p>(a) the mobility of higher education students and staff;</p> <p>(b) the mobility of vocational education and training learners and staff;</p> <p>(c) the mobility of school pupils and staff;</p> <p>(d) the mobility of adult education staff;</p> <p>(e) language learning opportunities, including those supporting mobility activities.</p>	<p>In the field of <b>training and education</b>, the Programme shall support the following actions under key action 1, <b>which may also be carried out in combination with virtual exchange projects</b>:</p> <p>(a) the <b>short-, medium- and long-term</b> mobility of higher education students and staff;</p> <p>(b) the <b>short-, medium- and long-term</b> mobility of vocational education and training learners and staff, <b>particularly apprentices, employees and trainers in SMEs. Training courses tailored to preparing apprentices for linguistic and intercultural challenges, which can also be requested on several dates throughout the year, should be developed</b>;</p> <p>(c) the <b>short-, medium- and long-term</b> mobility of school pupils and staff, <b>including for work experience in the area of education</b>;</p> <p>(d) the <b>short-, medium- and long-term</b> mobility of adult education staff;</p> <p>(e) language learning opportunities, including those supporting mobility activities, <b>which should be geared towards the specific needs of different target groups</b>;</p> <p>(f) <b>the mobility of adults and older persons who are enrolled in the University of the Third Age or other lifelong learning initiatives</b>;</p> <p>(g) <b>the mobility of young people and youth workers for learning purposes in the area of non-formal education</b>.</p>

**Reason**

(a-e) Learning mobility should be made accessible, in particular for this group and area of education, and should allow for relevant preparation, in order to ensure high quality.

(f) To encourage and support lifelong learning and training initiatives for adults and older persons, with a view to improving their knowledge and skills, increasing their quality of life, encouraging inclusion and promoting European identity among all age groups.

(g) The amendment only mentions the area of more academic, formal education. It would be useful to include a point on the mobility of young people and youth workers under key action 1.

**Amendment 35**

Chapter II, Article 5, Key Action 2 Cooperation among organisations and institutions

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>In the field of education and training, the Programme shall support the following actions under key action 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) partnerships for cooperation and exchanges of practices, including small-scale partnerships to foster a wider and more inclusive access to the Programme;</li> <li>(b) partnerships for excellence, in particular European universities, Centres of vocational excellence and joint master degrees;</li> <li>(c) partnerships for innovation to strengthen Europe’s innovation capacity;</li> <li>(d) online platforms and tools for virtual cooperation, including the support services for eTwinning and for the electronic platform for adult learning in Europe.</li> </ul>	<p>In the field of education and training, the Programme shall support the following actions under key action 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) partnerships for cooperation and exchanges of practices, including small-scale partnerships <b>at a regional level</b> to foster a wider and more inclusive access to the Programme;</li> <li>(b) partnerships for excellence, in particular European universities, Centres of vocational excellence, <b>which should not only be located in European metropolises, should, with the involvement of the regional level, support stakeholders in their operational cooperation and develop</b> joint master degrees;</li> <li>(c) partnerships for innovation to strengthen Europe’s innovation capacity <b>and awards for ‘European firms and businesses’ that undertake special efforts concerning their apprentices’ European qualifications;</b></li> <li>(d) online platforms and tools for virtual cooperation, including the support services for eTwinning and for the electronic platform for adult learning in Europe.</li> </ul>

**Reason**

Centres of vocational excellence can only achieve their objective if they are based on existing structures and work with and not against stakeholders.

## Amendment 36

## Chapter II, Article 6, Key action 3 Support to policy development and cooperation

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p><i>Key action 3</i></p> <p>Support to policy development and cooperation</p> <p>In the field of education and training, the Programme shall support the following actions under key action 3:</p> <p>(a) the preparation and implementation of the Union general and sectoral policy agendas in education and training, including with the support of the Eurydice network or activities of other relevant organisations;</p> <p>(b) the support to Union tools and measures that foster the quality, transparency and recognition of competences, skills and qualifications <sup>(4)</sup>;</p> <p>(c) policy dialogue and cooperation with key stakeholders, including Union-wide networks, European non-governmental organisations and international organisations in the field of education and training;</p> <p>(d) measures that contribute to the qualitative and inclusive implementation of the Programme;</p> <p>(e) cooperation with other Union instruments and support to other Union policies;</p> <p>(f) dissemination and awareness-raising activities about European policy outcomes and priorities as well as on the Programme.</p>	<p><i>Key action 3</i></p> <p>Support to policy development and cooperation</p> <p>In the field of education and training, the Programme shall support the following actions under key action 3:</p> <p>(a) the preparation and implementation of the Union general and sectoral policy agendas in education and training, including with the support of the Eurydice network or activities of other relevant organisations;</p> <p>(b) the support to Union tools and measures that foster the quality, transparency and recognition of competences, skills and qualifications <sup>(5)</sup>;</p> <p>(c) policy dialogue and cooperation with key stakeholders, including Union-wide networks, European non-governmental organisations and international organisations in the field of education and training;</p> <p>(d) measures that contribute to the qualitative and inclusive implementation of the Programme;</p> <p>(e) cooperation with other Union instruments and support to other Union policies;</p> <p>(f) dissemination and awareness-raising activities about European policy outcomes and priorities as well as on the Programme;</p> <p>(g) <b>support for the implementation of EU macro-regional strategies.</b></p>
<p><sup>(4)</sup> In particular the single Union framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences; the European Qualifications Framework; the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training; the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training; the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System; the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education; the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education; the European Network of Information Centres in the European Region and National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union; and the Euroguidance networks.</p>	<p><sup>(5)</sup> In particular the single Union framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences; the European Qualifications Framework; the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training; the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training; the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System; the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education; the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education; the European Network of Information Centres in the European Region and National Academic Recognition Information Centres in the European Union; and the Euroguidance networks.</p>

**Reason**

The Erasmus programme should also be implemented at macro-regional level in order to support the related economic, social and territorial cooperation strategies between Member States and between Member States and third countries.

**Amendment 37**

## Chapter II, Article 7 Jean Monnet actions

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<i>Jean Monnet actions</i>	<i>Jean Monnet actions</i>
The Programme shall support teaching, learning, research and debates on European integration matters through the following actions:	The Programme shall support teaching, learning, research and debates on European integration matters through the following actions:
(a) Jean Monnet action in the field of higher education;	(a) Jean Monnet action in the field of higher education;
(b) Jean Monnet action in other fields of education and training;	(b) Jean Monnet action in other fields of education and training;
(c) support to the following institutions pursuing an aim of European interest: the European University Institute, Florence, including its School of Transnational Governance; the College of Europe (Bruges and Natolin campuses); the European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht; the Academy of European Law, Trier; the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense and the International Centre for European Training, Nice.	(c) support to the following institutions pursuing an aim of European interest: the European University Institute, Florence, including its School of Transnational Governance; the College of Europe (Bruges and Natolin campuses); the European Institute of Public Administration, Maastricht; the Academy of European Law, Trier; the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, Odense and the International Centre for European Training, Nice;
	(d) <b><i>Jean Monnet action in the field of training and research in environmental protection, the European sustainable development strategy and broader environment and climate change policy, including in the area of natural disasters, with particular regard to the prevention, mitigation and reduction of damage.</i></b>

**Reason**

The proposed addition to the text aims to boost the Jean Monnet actions provided for in the Programme.

**Amendment 38**

## Chapter IV, Article 11

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<b><i>The mobility of amateur sportsmen and -women participating in competitions, especially those from remote, island or outermost regions, will also be supported.</i></b>

**Reason**

It is essential to support the mobility of athletes who, due to their place of origin, have greater difficulties moving around for competitions. All athletes should have access to mobility on equal terms.

**Amendment 39**

## Chapter IV, Article 12

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(a) partnerships for cooperation and exchanges of practices, including small-scale partnerships to foster a wider and more inclusive access to the Programme;	(a) partnerships for cooperation and exchanges of practices, including small-scale partnerships to foster a wider and more inclusive access to the Programme; <b>to enable smaller local and regional operators to take part in this Programme as well, the minimum number of countries required to take part in a measure should be reduced to six;</b>

**Reason**

As many activities are organised by small local or regional operators, this reduction should be facilitated in order to ensure broader and more inclusive access.

**Amendment 40**

## Chapter IV, Article 14

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
6. [...]	6. [...] <b>7. The funds for the learning mobility of individuals referred to in Article 4 shall be adjusted to the regularly reviewed real cost of living in the host region.</b>

**Reason**

It is necessary to adjust the reimbursement of the cost of living in a host country in the light of updated real costs in the specific host region as national averages may be deceptive.

**Amendment 41**

## Chapter VIII, Article 22, number 1

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
National agencies referred to in Article 24 shall develop a consistent strategy with regard to the effective outreach as well as dissemination and exploitation of results of activities supported under the actions they manage within the Programme, shall assist the Commission in its general task of disseminating information concerning the Programme, including information in respect of actions and activities managed at national and Union level, and its results, and shall inform relevant target groups about the actions and activities undertaken in their country.	National agencies referred to in Article 24 shall develop a consistent strategy with regard to the effective outreach, <b>making the individual areas of the Programme visible</b> , as well as dissemination and exploitation of results of activities supported under the actions they manage within the Programme, shall assist the Commission in its general task of disseminating information concerning the Programme, including information in respect of actions and activities managed at national and Union level, and its results, and shall inform relevant target groups – <b>from pre-school to higher education and vocational education, via all relevant media and in agreement with stakeholders</b> – about the actions and activities undertaken in their country.

**Reason**

In order to achieve the targeted tripling of the number of potential participants, it will be necessary for both external and internal communication to duly take the Programme areas into account, so as to also generate multiplier effects.

**Amendment 42**

Chapter IX, Article 23, number 2

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The Member States shall take all necessary and appropriate measures to remove any legal and administrative obstacles to the proper functioning of the Programme, including, where possible, <b>measures aimed at</b> resolving issues that give rise to difficulties in obtaining visas.	The Member States shall take all necessary and appropriate measures to remove any legal and administrative obstacles to the proper functioning of the Programme, including <b>measures aimed at avoiding grants taxation, ensuring portability of rights among EU social systems, and</b> where possible, resolving issues that give rise to difficulties in obtaining visas.

**Reason**

Wording ensures coherence with previous recitals.

**Amendment 43**

Chapter IX, Article 25, new number 8

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<b><i>The European Commission will establish an advisory council, in which the key stakeholders – including local and regional stakeholders – advise the Commission on an ongoing basis regarding the implementation of the Programme and thereby improve the achievement of its objectives;</i></b>

**Reason**

The positive experiences that the German Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) has had with setting up a user advisory council should also be used by the European Commission in order to enable those concerned to participate even more closely in the Programme, particularly its implementation.

### Amendment 44

Chapter XI, Article 29, number 4

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Actions eligible under the Programme which have been assessed in a call for proposals under the Programme and which comply with the minimum quality requirements of that call for proposals, but which are not financed due to budgetary constraints, may be <b>selected</b> for funding <b>by</b> the European Structural and Investment (ESI) funds. In this case the co-financing rates and the eligibility rules based on this Regulation shall apply. These actions shall be implemented by the managing authority referred to in Article [65] of Regulation (EU)XX [CPR] in accordance with the rules set out in that Regulation and fund specific regulations, including rules on financial corrections.</p>	<p>Actions eligible under the Programme which have been assessed in a call for proposals under the Programme and which comply with the minimum quality requirements of that call for proposals, but which are not financed due to budgetary constraints, may be <b>provided with a Seal of Excellence to acknowledge their high quality. This might facilitate their application and eventual selection</b> for funding <b>from other sources, including</b> the European Structural and Investment (ESI) funds. In this case the co-financing rates and the eligibility rules based on this Regulation shall apply. These actions shall be implemented by the managing authority referred to in Article [65] of Regulation (EU)XX [CPR] in accordance with the rules set out in that Regulation and fund specific regulations, including rules on financial corrections.</p>

#### Reason

The Seal of Excellence is successfully applied to R&I projects. Therefore, expanding the scheme to Erasmus projects could be considered.

### Amendment 45

Chapter XII, Article 31(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The committee may meet in specific configurations to deal with sectoral issues. Where appropriate, in accordance with its rules of procedure and on an ad hoc basis, external experts, including representatives of the social partners, may be invited to participate in its meetings as observers.</p>	<p>The committee may meet in specific configurations to deal with sectoral issues. Where appropriate, in accordance with its rules of procedure and on an ad hoc basis, external experts, including representatives of the social partners <b>or relevant regional stakeholders</b>, may be invited to participate in its meetings as observers.</p>

#### Reason

Self-explanatory.

## II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

#### General comments

1. welcomes the general aim of supporting the personal, training and professional development of people in the areas of education, including non-formal education, and training and higher education in Europe and beyond, in order to contribute to sustainable growth, employment and social cohesion and a stronger European identity; this important task begins on the ground at the local and regional level and therefore needs to be closely linked to the European level;

2. welcomes the fact that the Commission proposes doubling the Programme's budget, but considers that the target of tripling the number of participants in the programme given the current conditions, and the aim of increased social inclusiveness, will be difficult to achieve. In future, it would also be desirable for the growing administrative burden of the Programme to be eliminated; recognises at the same time as good practice the role of the many local and regional authorities that contribute financially to boosting the grants for young people taking part in the Erasmus+ programme;



3. calls for a transparent, equitable distribution of resources over the entire seven-year period so that – in particular at the beginning of the programming period – funds can be increased and expectations of the Programme can be met. The budget should not only be allocated between the various educational sectors, including universities, but should also be broken down between the key actions, so that it is possible to pinpoint what share is managed centrally by the Commission and what share is managed in the Member States and the regions on a decentralised basis;
4. considers that, in order to boost participation in the Programme, study grants should be exempt from taxation, while the participation of those with fewer opportunities should be fully covered by grants;
5. strongly advocates that the application process, project management and documentation requirements be significantly simplified for all areas of the Programme; calls for the reintroduction of support for ‘preparatory missions’ for application planning; calls for the online work platform to be integrated and to share the features available on the platforms of other European programmes, such as Horizon 2020, so as to offer beneficiaries maximum effectiveness and transparency, both when drawing up and presenting proposals and when managing projects; moreover, the Seal of Excellence, which is successfully applied to R&I projects, could be awarded also to high quality actions eligible under the Programme but not financed due to budgetary constraints, in order to facilitate their application and eventual selection for funding from other EU financial instruments;
6. points out the significance of lifelong learning: therefore, all age groups and both formal and non-formal education should be supported equally by the Programme; underlines that education is not only about improving employability but should also have the broader goal of developing people, skills and competences as a whole;
7. endorses the Commission’s proposal to make the Programme accessible to organisations that have little or no relevant experience of applying or with smaller operational capacity; therefore welcomes the introduction of ‘small scale partnerships’;
8. agrees with the Commission that the proposed Erasmus programme is based on the objectives laid down in Articles 165 and 166 TFEU and should be implemented in line with the principle of subsidiarity. It is extremely important to involve municipal and regional authorities, and local and regional administrations and decision-makers, in designing, implementing and steering the measures presented here, as they are closer to the people concerned, have key competences in education and training policy, and play an important role in terms of youth and labour market policies. Acknowledges in this regard that the Commission’s proposal complies with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;
9. welcomes the fact that mobility activities, in particular, are being increased and facilitated and that young people taking part in non-formal learning, sporting, cultural and research activities are to be given more opportunities to participate; also welcomes the fact that volunteer staff are specifically mentioned in this regard;
10. welcomes the fact that the European Commission has taken on board the results of the mid-term evaluation of the current Erasmus+ programme and has maintained the structure of the preceding programme;
11. notes that the draft Regulation is very general and leaves the implementation quite flexible; in this context, points out the importance of implementing rules and calls on the Commission to closely involve the Member States, the national agencies, the regional authorities and the stakeholders in drawing these up;
12. regrets that the Programme will be called ‘Erasmus’ rather than ‘Erasmus+’. As the acronym ‘Erasmus’ stands for ‘European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students’, the CoR points out that appropriate measures must be taken to ensure the visibility of the various areas of education or funding, in order to guarantee that the ‘Erasmus’ brand becomes associated with all areas of education and training, as well as with the area of youth and sport;
13. welcomes the fact that most of the mobility measures, including all forms of learning and research mobility, in particular pupil mobility, will in future be brought together under Key Action 1 (‘learning mobility for individuals’);
14. calls for the United Kingdom, after leaving the European Union, and subject to pre-defined conditions, to be permitted to continue to participate in the Programme and welcomes the fact that this possibility has been created through Article 16(1)(d) (‘Third countries associated to the Programme’);

15. calls for consideration to be given to gradually opening up the possibilities for virtual cooperation provided by this Programme to educational and training projects with institutions in the Mediterranean countries and in Africa;
16. recommends creating effective incentives for all types of learning mobility so that environmentally friendly modes of transport are used, with a view to meeting the target for 25% of EU spending to contribute to achieving climate goals;
17. insists that the funds and specific grants for learning mobility should be adjusted to the regularly reviewed real cost of living in the host region;
18. calls, in the area of training and education, for 'strategic partnerships', which are under decentralised management, to be retained and strengthened, since this form of cooperation has proven itself, and the newly introduced concept of 'partnerships for cooperation' appears to be less ambitious;
19. stresses its strong interest in the continuation of the technical dialogue with the Commission on this issue and, in this connection, underlines the importance of the impact assessment report that the Commission will submit in due course, on the basis of its cooperation agreement with the CoR;

### **Training and education**

20. regrets that the willingness of firms to send apprentices abroad to other programme countries remains low. Incentives should be created for this and it should be more widely advertised among institutional economic players, e.g. chambers of industry and commerce, as well as firms and their organisations and associations providing training, particularly at local and regional level;
21. suggests giving consideration to a 'European firm' award, in order to increase firms' and businesses' motivation to make their apprentices and their training more open to 'Europe' by using the opportunities offered by Erasmus; also suggests to this effect that the Commission create a register of firms taking part in the Erasmus programme, which could be given the label of 'Erasmus firm';
22. calls for the promotion of both short and longer stays abroad in the field of vocational training, in order to meet the operational needs of SMEs and do justice to participants' individual possibilities. The Programme should also support linguistic and intercultural preparatory measures with systematic learning support for apprentices;
23. points out that the target group for adult education is adults of all ages and social backgrounds, not just those with limited (formal) qualifications;
24. also points out that 'adult education' may be promoted in the sense of a comprehensive form of education and not limited to 'professional development'. Freelance and voluntary employees should be taken into account in adult education;
25. welcomes the extension of learning mobility in the area of school education, in particular the possibility of individual mobility; calls, however, for strategic solutions to be developed in parallel that can support pupil/student mobility but also make it easier for them to return to their home region;

26. welcomes the introduction of networks of European universities, but is conscious of the increased budget expenditure for this; stresses that the European networks must be initiated, run and dominated by universities, in order to strengthen the university landscape in Europe in a sustainable way through the knowledge triangle (education, research and innovation), with funding from public administrations that support them and including private funding;

27. advocates the development, particularly in the area of vocational education, of 'European Schools', in the spirit of 'European Universities', which would foster lasting cooperation between institutions from several Member States in the area of youth and staff exchanges, coordination of curricula, and virtual collaboration;

28. welcomes the extension of the Jean Monnet actions from higher education to other areas of education and training, as well as the transfer of knowledge of EU integration issues to a broader audience;

### **Youth**

29. recommends taking greater account of existing local and regional youth work bodies as potential beneficiaries;

30. welcomes that the new 'DiscoverEU' programme will give young people aged 18 and over the chance to discover EU countries by train for a limited time period; points out, however, that, although the programme in question should have a strong learning component, this should not come at the expense of opportunities for learning mobility, which should remain the core business of the Erasmus programme; stresses that it would be desirable for all young people in the EU to have this opportunity to encounter and discover its diversity, culture, nature and people, regardless of their parents' financial position; suggests giving consideration to financing via public-private partnerships, particularly with partners from the mobility and tourism sector;

31. welcomes the consistency with the new EU Youth Strategy and other initiatives in the area of young people such as the European Solidarity Corps;

### **Sport**

32. points to the importance of non-profit sporting events, and deems it appropriate to remove the previous cap of 10% of the sport budget that can be used for sporting events; is in favour of also funding smaller events with fewer than 10 participating programme countries in the future;

33. calls for the number of programme countries to be significantly increased, particularly for grassroots sports, since European sport has traditionally extended far beyond the borders of the European Union.

Brussels, 6 February 2019.

*The President*

*of the European Committee of the Regions*

Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

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**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on 'Proposal for a Regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard'**

(2019/C 168/09)

<b>Rapporteur-general:</b>	Anna MAGYAR (HU/EPP), Vice-President of the County Council of Csongrád Megye
<b>Reference document:</b>	Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Border and Coast Guard and repealing Council Joint Action No 98/700/JHA, Regulation (EU) No 1052/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) 2016/1624 of the European Parliament and of the Council
	<i>A contribution from the European Commission to the Leaders' meeting in Salzburg on 19-20 September 2018</i>
	COM(2018) 631 final

**I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS**

**Amendment 1**

COM(2018) 631 final, Article 2(16)

**Definitions**

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
'operational staff' means border guards, return escorts, return specialists and other relevant staff constituting the 'European Border and Coast Guard standing corps'. In accordance with the <b>three</b> categories defined under Article 55(1), operational staff is either employed by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency as statutory staff (category 1), seconded to the Agency by the Member States (category 2) or provided for short term deployment by the Member States ( <b>category 3</b> ). Operational staff is to act as members of border management teams, migration management support teams or return teams <b>having</b> executive powers. Operational staff also includes the statutory staff responsible for the functioning of the central unit of ETIAS;	'operational staff' means border guards, return escorts, return specialists and other relevant staff constituting the 'European Border and Coast Guard standing corps'. In accordance with the <b>four</b> categories defined under Article 55(1), operational staff is either employed by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency as statutory staff (category 1), seconded to the Agency by the Member States (category 2) or provided for short term deployment <b>or for rapid reaction interventions</b> by the Member States ( <b>categories 3 and 4</b> ). Operational staff is to act as members of border management teams, migration management support teams or return teams. <b>Category 2, category 3 and category 4 staff may exercise</b> executive powers. Operational staff also includes the statutory staff responsible for the functioning of the central unit of ETIAS;

**Reason**

**Amendment 2**

COM(2018) 631 final, Article 3(a)

**European Border and Coast Guard Agency**

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(a) border control, including measures to facilitate legitimate border crossings and, where appropriate, measures related to the prevention <b>and</b> detection of cross-border crime, such as migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and terrorism, and measures related to the referral of persons who are in need of, or wish to apply for, international protection;	(a) border control, including measures to facilitate legitimate border crossings and, where appropriate, measures related to the prevention, detection <b>and stopping</b> of cross-border crime, such as migrant smuggling, trafficking in human beings and terrorism, and measures related to the referral of persons who are in need of, or wish to apply for, international protection;

**Reason**

The main border management activities must also include providing an operational solution to combatting cross-border crime.

**Amendment 3**

COM(2018) 631 final, Article 8(4), (6) and (7)

**Multiannual strategic policy cycle for European Integrated Border Management**

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(4) Based on the strategic risk analysis for European Integrated Border Management referred to in Article 30(2), the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 118 developing a multiannual strategic policy for European Integrated Border Management. That delegated act shall define policy priorities and provide the strategic guidelines for the following four years in relation to the components set out in Article 3.</p> <p>(...)</p> <p>(6) In order to implement the delegated act referred to in paragraph 4, the Member States shall establish their national strategies for integrated border management through close cooperation between all national authorities responsible for the management of borders and return. Those national strategies shall be in line with Article 3, the delegated act referred to in paragraph 4 and the technical and operational strategy referred to in paragraph 5.</p> <p>(7) Forty-two months after the adoption of the delegated act referred to in paragraph 4, the Commission shall carry out, with the support of the Agency, a thorough evaluation of its implementation. The results of the evaluation shall be taken into account for the preparation of the following cycle.</p>	<p>(4) <b>By [tbc] the Commission shall present the European Parliament and the Council with a draft multiannual strategic policy for the first multiannual strategic policy cycle</b> based on the strategic risk analysis for European Integrated Border Management referred to in Article 30(2). <b>Within [tbc] of its presentation by the Commission, a meeting between the European Parliament, the Council and Commission shall be convened to discuss the draft multiannual strategic policy. Following that discussion,</b> the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 118 developing a multiannual strategic policy for European Integrated Border Management. That delegated act shall define policy priorities and provide the strategic guidelines for the following four years in relation to the components set out in Article 3.</p> <p>(...)</p> <p>(6) In order to implement the delegated act referred to in paragraph 4, the Member States shall establish their national strategies for integrated border management through close cooperation between all national authorities responsible for the management of borders and return <b>and in consultation with relevant regional and local authorities of the sub-national territories concerned.</b> Those national strategies shall be in line with Article 3, the delegated act referred to in paragraph 4 and the technical and operational strategy referred to in paragraph 5.</p> <p>(7) Forty-two months after the adoption of the delegated act referred to in paragraph 4, the Commission shall carry out, with the support of the Agency, a thorough evaluation of its implementation. The results of the evaluation shall be taken into account for the preparation of the following cycle. <b>The Commission shall communicate the evaluation to the Council, to the European Parliament and to the European Committee of the Regions.</b></p>

**Reason**

The national strategies for integrated border management should be consulted with LRAs of those territories that are highly concerned by ongoing, foreseeable or potential strong migratory flows or other challenges with serious consequences for the local or regional level. Furthermore, the Commission should report back to the co-legislators (Am. 23 LIBE draft opinion), as well as to the political representation of the local and regional level at the EU level.

**Amendment 4**

COM(2018) 631 final, Article 21(1) and (3)

**National coordination centre**

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(1) Each Member State shall designate, operate and maintain a national coordination centre which shall coordinate, and exchange information among all authorities with a responsibility for external border control at national level, as well as with the other national coordination centres and the Agency. Each Member State shall notify the establishment of its national coordination centre to the Commission, which shall forthwith inform the other Member States and the Agency thereof.	(1) Each Member State shall designate, operate and maintain a national coordination centre which shall coordinate, and exchange information among all authorities with a responsibility for external border control at national level, <b>and, where appropriate with relevant regional and local authorities</b> , as well as with the other national coordination centres and the Agency. Each Member State shall notify the establishment of its national coordination centre to the Commission, which shall forthwith inform the other Member States and the Agency thereof.
(...)	(...)
(3) The national coordination centre shall:	(3) The national coordination centre shall:
(a) ensure the timely exchange of information and timely cooperation between all national authorities with a responsibility for external border control, as well as with other national coordination centres and the Agency;	(a) ensure the timely exchange of information and timely cooperation between all national authorities with a responsibility for external border control, <b>and, where appropriate, with relevant regional and local authorities</b> , as well as with other national coordination centres and the Agency;
(...)	(...)

**Reason**

To ensure proper dissemination and exchange of information to the local and regional level, when they are concerned.

**Amendment 5**

COM(2018) 631 final, Article 39(3)(m)

**Operational plan for joint operations**

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(m) procedures setting out a mechanism to receive and transmit to the Agency a complaint against all persons participating in a joint operation or rapid border intervention, including border guards or other relevant staff of the host Member State and members of the teams alleging breaches of fundamental rights in the context of their participation in a joint operation or rapid border intervention;	(m) <b>an accelerated procedure for dealing with third-country nationals who illegally enter the territory of a Member State;</b>
(n) logistical arrangements including information on working conditions and the environment of the areas in which the joint operation is foreseen to take place.	(n) procedures setting out a mechanism to receive and transmit to the Agency a complaint against all persons participating in a joint operation or rapid border intervention, including border guards or other relevant staff of the host Member State and members of the teams alleging breaches of fundamental rights in the context of their participation in a joint operation or rapid border intervention;
	(o) logistical arrangements including information on working conditions and the environment of the areas in which the joint operation is foreseen to take place.

**Reason**

It is also necessary, during a joint operation, to set out an accelerated procedure for third-country nationals who illegally enter the territory of a Member State, so that a return decision can be issued for them as soon as possible.

**Amendment 6**

COM(2018) 631 final, Article 55(1)

**European Border and Coast Guard standing corps**

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>1. A European Border and Coast Guard standing corps of 10 000 operational staff shall be part of the Agency. This standing corps shall be composed of the following <b>three</b> categories of staff in accordance with the annual availability scheme set in Annex I:</p> <p>(a) Category 1: operational staff members of the Agency recruited in accordance with Article 94 (1) and deployed in operational areas in accordance with Article 56;</p> <p>(b) Category 2: operational staff seconded from Member States to the Agency for a long term duration as part of the standing corps; in accordance with Article 57;</p> <p>(c) Category 3: operational staff from Member States provided to the Agency for a short term deployment as part of the standing corps in accordance with Article 58.</p>	<p>1. A European Border and Coast Guard standing corps of 10 000 operational staff shall be part of the Agency. This standing corps shall be composed of the following <b>four</b> categories of staff in accordance with the annual availability scheme set in Annex I:</p> <p>(a) Category 1: operational staff members of the Agency recruited in accordance with Article 94 (1) and deployed in operational areas in accordance with Article 56;</p> <p>(b) Category 2: operational staff seconded from Member States to the Agency for a long term duration as part of the standing corps; in accordance with Article 57;</p> <p>(c) Category 3: operational staff from Member States provided to the Agency for a short term deployment as part of the standing corps in accordance with Article 58;</p> <p>(d) <b>Category 4: operational staff of the rapid reaction pool.</b></p>

**Reason**

Adding a fourth category of operational staff would alleviate a possible burden on LRAs in terms of deployments, while at the same time complementing the standing corps for rapid border interventions (Am. 55 and Am. 64 of draft LIBE report).

**Amendment 7**

COM(2018) 631 final, Article 64(6)

**Technical equipment pool**

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>[...]</p> <p>If the minimum number of items of technical equipment proves to be insufficient to carry out the operational plan agreed for such activities, the Agency shall revise it on the basis of justified needs and of an agreement with the Member States.</p>	<p>[...]</p> <p>If the minimum number of items of technical equipment proves to be insufficient to carry out the operational plan agreed for such activities, the Agency shall revise it <b>and make sure those items are available</b>, on the basis of justified needs and of an agreement with the Member States.</p>

**Reason**

In order to guarantee the implementation of the operational plans, the Agency shall, where appropriate, ensure a minimum amount of technical equipment is available, after examining the needs of the individual operational plans.

**Amendment 8**

COM(2018) 631 final, Article 84(1) new (e)

**Accreditation document**

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(c) a recent digitised photograph; <b>and</b>	(c) a recent digitised photograph;
(d) tasks authorised to be performed during the deployment.	(d) tasks authorised to be performed during the deployment; <b>and</b> <b>(e) a specific identification number.</b>

**Reason**

Each document must contain the specific identification number of the holder of the card that is to be assigned according to the type of deployment and their role during deployment. A specific identification number will also help to speed up identification in the registration system.

**Amendment 9**

COM(2018) 631 final, Article 102 (4-6)

**Meetings of the management board**

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
4. Ireland shall be invited to attend the meetings of the management board.	4. Ireland shall be invited to attend the meetings of the management board <b>as an observer</b> .
5. The United Kingdom shall be invited to attend the meetings of the management board taking place before the date of withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union.	5. The United Kingdom shall be invited <b>as an observer</b> to attend the meetings of the management board taking place before the date of withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union.
6. Representatives of the European Union Agency for Asylum and EUROPOL shall be invited to attend the meetings of the Management Board. The management board may also invite a representative of relevant Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies.	6. Representatives of the European Union Agency for Asylum and EUROPOL shall be invited to attend the meetings of the Management Board <b>as observers</b> . The management board may also invite a representative of relevant Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies <b>to act as observers</b> .

**Reason**

Only members are entitled to vote in the management board's meetings. Other entities shall be invited and may participate in the meeting as observers, without having the right to vote.

**Amendment 10**

COM(2018) 631 final, Article 116(1)

**Evaluation**

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(c) the implementation of European cooperation on coast guard functions;	(c) the implementation of European cooperation on <b>border and</b> coast guard functions;

**Reason**

Under Article 4, the Agency guarantees the existence of the European Border and Coast Guard.



## II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. reiterates the need to strengthen the supportive role and mandate of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (hereafter: Agency), notably as regards cooperation with third countries, with a view to ensuring the effective protection of the EU's external borders and in order to step up significantly the effective return of illegal migrants. At the same time, it points out that an expanded mandate brings the need to strengthen safeguards to ensure that all its actions fully respect fundamental rights and the international obligations of the EU and its Member States, in particular the principle of *non-refoulement*, and to avoid the Agency's involvement in any operation in which fundamental rights compliance could not be ensured;
2. recognises that the effective control of the EU's external borders is an important integral part of a comprehensive EU policy on migration, and in this context the proposed reinforcement of the European Border and Coast Guard may be necessary; underlines however, as stated in the recent CoR opinion on the asylum and migration fund, that the growth of financial and operational resources for border protection must be matched by corresponding efforts to enhance the other aspects of the EU's migration policy in order to guarantee a balanced approach;
3. stresses the fact that free movement of EU citizens is one of the EU's major achievements, and in an area without internal borders, undocumented migration across the external borders has serious legal, economic and security related implications for the functioning of the Schengen system;
4. emphasises the fact that the temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders severely jeopardises the ability of neighbouring regions to cooperate with each other, and moreover has severe impacts on regional economies, and that therefore, effective external border controls are essential;
5. underlines the fact that the effective protection of external borders contributes to the fight against human trafficking and to definitively breaking the business models of smugglers, thus preventing tragic loss of life; moreover, the effective control of external borders can contribute to preventing certain threats to internal security, public order and public health in local and regional authorities; especially in those situated along the external borders of the EU;
6. considers that the precondition for a properly-functioning migration policy is a comprehensive approach to migration that includes enhanced control of the EU's external borders as well as a functioning common European asylum system, a common approach to deal with people in need of international protection, a coherent system of legal pathways for migration and a much more consistent policy on addressing the external dimension and causes of migration;
7. stresses that an effective return policy is a key element of a comprehensive approach to migration and that the Agency must, therefore, be able to support Member States in the area of returns, in compliance with international and EU law, ensuring that the principle of *non-refoulement* is respected;
8. welcomes the enhanced mandate of the Agency to ensure comprehensive support to Member States and third countries in the field of effective and humane return operations. This may also include in specific cases the possibility to provide operational support to third countries upon request, without geographical limitations, and in order to prevent the escalation of crisis situations; such cases however require clear guarantees and safeguards concerning the respect of fundamental rights and international law, as well as appropriate mechanisms to ensure the accountability of the Agency for its actions beyond Member States' jurisdiction;
9. stresses the fact that the protection of external borders is a joint competence of the EU and Member States; the proposal should ensure that the EC oversees the coordination and control of the external borders of the Union;
10. recognises as necessary that obligations are laid on the Member States to contribute to the Agency's joint operations, but is concerned about the proposal to create a standing corps of up to 10 000 operational staff, as the deployment of national border guards and national staff to the Agency may result in a possible brain drain; underlines that the creation of such new structures must not place an additional burden on local and regional authorities, especially in border regions; or endanger the performance of tasks carried out at the external borders by existing national, regional or local structures, and therefore proposes a more realistic and gradual establishment of the standing corps in Annex I;

11. is concerned about the lack of an appropriate assessment of several aspects of the proposal's impact, including its potential territorial impact of and finds it necessary to explore the possible ways in which the supportive role of the Agency could be ensured in the most cost-effective way. Such an impact assessment should also reflect on the financial implications in both normal and crisis situations, as well as the complex legal issues which could arise in particular with regard to operations outside the EU territory;

12. stresses the multi-actor framework in which border management takes place and the role that the local and regional level can have within this framework, as reflected in Article 22. Notes, in this context, that the local and regional authorities concerned (such as those managing border and coastal regions) should be properly involved in the exchange of information, especially as regards the national coordination centres (Article 21) and in the preparation of national strategies for integrated border management (Article 8);

13. underlines that irregular migration puts significant pressures on local and regional authorities and creates challenges in targeting limited public services towards those to whom we have an international obligation to provide refuge and asylum. Underlines therefore that swift returns of unsuccessful asylum applicants and ensuring the respect of legal channels of migration are crucial;

14. believes that the protection of the external borders of the EU is a common interest, and that the objectives of the proposed legislation cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and regional authorities alone, and that the proposal therefore complies with the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality.

Brussels, 6 February 2019.

*The President*  
*of the European Committee of the Regions*  
Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

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**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on ‘Road safety and automated mobility’**

(2019/C 168/10)

<b>Rapporteur:</b>	József RIBÁNYI (HU/EPP), Vice-President of the County Council of Tolna Megye
<b>Reference document:</b>	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions – On the road to automated mobility: An EU strategy for mobility of the future  COM(2018) 283 final  Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Europe on the move. Sustainable Mobility for Europe: safe, connected, and clean  COM(2018) 293 final  Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management  COM(2018) 274 final

**I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS**

*Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management (COM(2018) 274 final)*

**Amendment 1**

Recital 5

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
A large proportion of road accidents occur on a small proportion of roads where traffic volumes and speeds are high and where there is a wide range of traffic travelling at different speeds. Therefore the <b>limited</b> extension of the scope of Directive 2008/96/EC to motorways and <b>primary</b> roads beyond the TEN-T network should contribute significantly to the improvement of road infrastructure safety across the Union.	A large proportion of road accidents occur on a small proportion of roads where traffic volumes and speeds are high and where there is a wide range of traffic travelling at different speeds. Therefore the extension of the scope of Directive 2008/96/EC to motorways and <b>other primary</b> roads beyond the TEN-T network should contribute significantly to the improvement of road infrastructure safety across the Union <b>and the same high level of safety for all road users. It is essential to get local and regional stakeholders involved in the implementation of the extended scope of the directive, especially with regard to determining which roads are covered by its provisions. Such an approach would enable the Commission’s proposal to be considered compliant with the subsidiarity and proportionality principles.</b>

**Reason**

The extension of the Directive’s scope is limited to motorways and other primary roads, according to the national classification.

Since regional and local stakeholders know their area, their involvement ensures that the extension of the scope of the directive to certain sections of road is truly warranted. If this approach is based on multi-level governance and complies with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, the proposed extension of the scope will facilitate the harmonisation of safety requirements for all EU citizens.

**Amendment 2**

New recital after recital 5

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<b><i>In order to ensure that such extension of scope has the intended effect, it is logical that other primary roads should include at least those roads that connect major cities or regions belonging to the highest category of road below the category 'motorway' in the national classification.</i></b>

**Reason**

The Directive should focus primarily on roads of European value, i.e. roads connecting major cities and regions.

**Amendment 3**

Recital 6

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Further, the mandatory application of the procedures of Directive 2008/96/EC to any road infrastructure project outside urban areas which is completed using Union funding should ensure that Union funds are not used to build unsafe roads.	<b><i>Further, the mandatory application of the procedures of Directive 2008/96/EC to any road infrastructure project outside urban areas which is completed using Union funding should ensure that Union funds are not used to build unsafe roads. Similarly, attention should also be paid to the situation of existing unsafe roads. In this area regional transport development programmes have four times as much funding as the Connecting Europe Facility; in both cases financial envelopes are open for planning and establishing new road sections. Therefore, adequate funds should be allocated to upgrading of existing roads. When delivering this, measures should be considered to enable smaller regions and towns to afford the investments required for RISM.</i></b>

**Reason**

Safe road transport should be accessible in all European settlements and regions; this needs targeted financial sources for road planning, establishment and operation, especially in regions that do not have the required financial resources and means for such purposes. Given the fact that new road sections are subject to higher road safety authorisation standards, existing roads require systematic overhaul so as to meet the RISM criteria in force.

**Amendment 4**

Recital 7

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Risk-based network-wide road assessment has emerged as an efficient and effective tool to identify sections of the network that should be targeted by more detailed road safety inspections and to prioritise investment according to its potential to deliver network-wide safety improvements. The entire road network covered by this Directive should therefore be systematically assessed to increase road safety across the Union.</p>	<p>Risk-based network-wide road assessment has emerged as an efficient and effective tool to identify sections of the network that should be targeted by more detailed road safety inspections and to prioritise investment according to its potential to deliver network-wide safety improvements. The entire road network covered by this Directive should therefore be systematically assessed to increase road safety across the Union. <b><i>As safe road transport should be accessible in all European settlements and regions, the methodology of risk-based network-wide road assessment should take due account of multi-level governance. Higher level territorial units should be given RISM coordinating functions, while the functions that are held by the state and the municipalities should be synchronised.</i></b></p>

**Reason**

As road safety is part of the future vision of settlements and regions, the relevant territorial units should contribute to that in accordance with their level of competence. This makes synchronisation of the functions carried out by municipalities and the state essential.

**Amendment 5**

Recital 10

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The safety performance of existing roads should be improved by targeting investment to the road sections with the highest accident concentration and the highest accident reduction potential.</p>	<p>The safety performance of existing roads should be improved by targeting investment to the road sections with the highest accident concentration and the highest accident reduction potential. <b><i>When doing so, the physical and digital infrastructure of public roads targeted by the Directive should be developed in parallel. In this regard, automated vehicles equipped with adaptive cruise control and transport support systems should contribute to enabling safe and effective operation of road traffic. Care must be taken that also smaller, demographically challenged and outermost regions are enabled to ensure universal availability of digital infrastructure.</i></b></p>

**Reason**

Road safety being a complex issue, it also has economy of scale aspects to be considered. In this regard targeting investments where accidents and fatalities are the most frequent should involve complex physical and digital infrastructure developments, as well as the facilitation of extended use of automated vehicles equipped with adaptive cruise control and transport technologies to be applied.

**Amendment 6**

## Recital 12

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Vulnerable road users accounted for 46 % of road fatalities in the Union in 2016. Ensuring that the interests of these users are taken into account in all RISM procedures should therefore improve their safety on the road.</p>	<p>Vulnerable road users accounted for 46 % of road fatalities in the Union in 2016. Ensuring that the interests of these users are taken into account in all RISM procedures should therefore improve their safety on the road. <b><i>The objective of avoiding or managing traffic emergencies involving pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists should be addressed by education and training tools, as well as by developing quality requirements for an infrastructure that supports pedestrians' and cyclists' mobility and safety, i.e. establishing road markings, road signs and sufficient pedestrian crossings, especially adjacent to public transport stops and public buildings in parallel, as well as constructing elevated, separate bike zones and pavements along all road stretches.</i></b></p>

**Amendment 7**

## Recital 13

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The design and maintenance of road markings and road signs is an important element in ensuring road infrastructure safety, especially in light of the development of vehicles equipped with driver assistance systems or higher levels of automation. In particular, it is necessary to ensure that road markings and signs can be easily and reliably recognised by such vehicles.</p>	<p>The design and maintenance of road markings and road signs is an important element in ensuring road infrastructure safety, especially in light of the development of vehicles equipped with driver assistance systems or higher levels of automation. In particular, it is necessary to ensure that road markings and signs can be easily and reliably recognised by such vehicles. <b><i>Similarly, smart roads with smart road markings and road signs support road safety in European regions and cities. Attention should also be paid to the climate conditions in these regions and cities, as, for example, installing pavement sensors and signals is subject to the local climate. Care must further be taken that these sensors also perceive vulnerable road users and non-connected road users.</i></b></p>

**Reason**

Safe road transport should involve installing road markings and road signs and signals recognisable in all climatic conditions.

**Amendment 8**

Add a new recital after recital 18

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<i>Carrying out network-wide road assessment and road safety inspections should have realistic implementation deadlines set, taking into consideration the administrative and financial capacities of national, regional and local actors involved in RISM planning and delivery, especially in rural, mountainous, remote and lagging European regions.</i>

**Amendment 9**

Article 1 (1) 2

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
This Directive shall apply to roads which are part of the trans-European network, to motorways and to primary roads, whether they are at the design stage, under construction or in operation.	This Directive shall apply to roads which are part of the trans-European network, to motorways and to <b>other</b> primary roads, whether they are at the design stage, under construction or in operation.

**Reason**

The extension of the Directive's scope is limited to motorways and other primary roads, according to the national classification.

**Amendment 10**

Article 1(1) new paragraph after paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<i>Each Member State shall designate primary roads within its territory according to its existing road classification and after duly consulting the competent local and regional authorities. Each Member State shall notify the Commission of the primary roads within its territory at the latest 24 months following the entry into force of this Directive. Member States shall notify any subsequent change thereto.</i>

**Reason**

In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the decision on the classification of the road network should lie with the individual Member State.

### Amendment 11

Article 1, add a new paragraph after paragraph (2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<p><i>(2a) in Article 4 the following paragraph 6 is added:</i></p> <p><i>The Commission shall set up guidelines with precise technical characteristics for the provision and maintenance of ‘forgiving roadsides’ (roads laid out in an intelligent way to ensure that driving errors do not immediately have serious consequences) building on the experience of all national, regional and local transport authorities and promote them amongst auditors and transport planners. The Commission shall provide technical and financial assistance to support the competent authority in the implementation of the guidelines.</i></p>

## II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

### ‘On the road to automated mobility’ – technology, infrastructure and cohesion

1. acknowledges that while connected and automated mobility is a road infrastructure issue, it is also a vehicle issue; highlights that in rural areas priority should be given to the development of smart vehicles, while in urban areas more emphasis should be given to the development of smarter roads;
2. draws attention to the harmonisation of temporal and spatial transport that requires the use of automated mobility to be extended. The importance in mixed traffic (human-, assisted- and automated driven vehicles) of establishing designated traffic zones is emphasised to avoid major congestion;
3. highlights the potential contribution of automated mobility to EU cohesion objectives, noting in particular that such services could reduce intraregional disparities and make longer distance commuting more convenient, thus helping to mitigate saturation of major urban areas;
4. points to the fact that the feeder capacity of automated vehicles helps transport hubs to be reached as a part of integrated transport. The CoR emphasises the benefits of extending self-driving solutions to rural areas in order to provide flexible feeder road transport for coaches or trains;



5. notes also in this respect that public transport is largely a competence of LRAs and calls on the Commission to provide a framework and appropriate guidance for regions and communities that desire to integrate their ticketing systems and timetables as well as their feeder systems for private vehicles on a higher administrative level (regional, national or European), in line with the practices followed by market operators;
6. notes that in peak and quiet traffic periods, automated mobility can offer flexible pricing and pre-orders, enabling a more even use of capacities. Adds that with integrated ticketing, guarantees against delays/cancellations of connected automated transport services prevent late arrival or non-arrival. Believes it paramount that this increased flexibility be used to improve public transport thus not only reducing emissions and noise from vehicle traffic, but also improving accessibility for all and equality in the transport system;
7. considers that while in automated freight transport the platooning of trucks can be used in tunnels, it is not suitable for urban transport with its complex interaction of road users. The regions should be given the opportunity to influence the decision-making process concerning more extensive trials with automated vehicles, and special arrangements may be necessary;
8. stresses the significant potential of decentralised renewable energy sources for powering automated vehicles and recommends that the energy required for the operation of smart road infrastructure be supplied by local smart grids;
9. points to the challenges regarding interoperability of different types of self-driving and highlights that harmonisation of the different self-driving levels currently applied on different continents will be required for safe use of the relevant assisted or automated technologies inside the European continent. The CoR also emphasises the ethical issues arising in connection with European driverless cars (level 5), while for semi-automated or assisted driving (levels 1-4), the additional costs and complexity of driving should be dealt with. Specific attention should be paid to the impact on road safety of a large proportion of the fleet comprising semi-automated vehicles or vehicles with assisted driving technologies;
10. proposes that the training for a driving licence should cover the technology of assistance systems. In this regard the automotive industry, together with municipalities, could offer training courses and training areas for private and professional drivers; recalls the important contribution of infrastructure construction and modernisation to territorial cohesion and economic convergence, while noting that investment in infrastructure in the EU continues to be significantly below pre-crisis levels. Emphasises the importance in this context of ensuring appropriate financial resources are made available for infrastructure modernisation and road safety measures over the years ahead, including to support smaller and lagging regions and capacity building. In the context of the 2021-2027 MFF as proposed, the need to make full use of opportunities under all funding instruments available and to optimise synergies will be particularly critical (post-2020 CEF, Horizon Europe, proposed Digital Europe Programme etc.);

#### **Ensuring a European single market for automated mobility – the role of LRAs**

11. welcomes the timely presentation of the EU agenda on Connected and Automated Mobility (CAM) and the gradual completion of the legal and policy frameworks to support the deployment of safe CAM;
12. emphasises the importance of close cooperation between legislators in the field of self-driving vehicles and stakeholders in the area of transport organisation/operation and vehicle development; the CoR calls for a multi-level governance approach in this context, recalling that mobility and transport are a competence of LRAs, who are in charge of designing and implementing mobility policies and of providing public transport in their territory;
13. notes the increasing availability of semi-automated driving solutions over the short-term time horizon and emphasises the need for a robust legal and regulatory framework for such technologies as soon as possible;
14. confirms its support for improved cross-border cooperation on CAM testing and recommends that future cooperation fora ensure appropriate LRA participation;

#### **Impacts on society and the economy**

15. highlights that automated mobility makes public transport more competitive by means of non-timetabled, demand-based, personalised, shared, high-quality, energy efficient mobility services within and outside of settlements. In order to make further progress in this direction, the technology and the regulatory environment will need to be developed in concert;

16. notes that in underdeveloped, peripheral and outermost European regions, car-sharing and ride-sharing and -sourcing services with digital solutions enable local residents to reach more distant centres with a lower environmental impact, whilst avoiding depopulation of such areas; highlights particularly the potential of automated mobility to provide access and reduce the cost of mobility in dispersed and demographically challenged communities; notes, however, that the needs of elderly users should be taken into consideration when designing, developing and testing user-friendly systems;

17. reiterates the importance of assessing the social and environmental impacts of automated mobility by means of pilot projects. Proposes that such passenger and freight road transport trials should be implemented progressively and under controlled conditions, in order to secure public acceptance for automated vehicles. Attention is also drawn to the need to envisage particular support for regions where the socio-economic impact of the transition to automated mobility is likely to be greatest;

18. draws attention to the fact that education and awareness-raising play a crucial role in the promotion and acceptance of automated mobility. In particular, the basic principles and the operation of artificial intelligence, which plays a key role in automated mobility systems, should be taught to all road users in addition to drivers;

19. emphasises that the feeder and 'last mile' functions of automated road freight transport within and among settlements result in profound changes in supply chain concepts;

20. highlights that in the multi-ethnic European Union, widely and easily comprehensible automated transport solutions, including universal signage, should be applied;

21. advises that urban-interurban planning and regional spatial planning practices of European towns and cities should include the designation of areas for automated transport and mobility, as well as the re-evaluation of planning practices based on non-assisted or non-automated mobility. Proposes a prior study of the consequences of automated mobility in terms of urban and regional planning in metropolitan areas – for example, effective use of automated mobility will result in increased availability of parking spaces, calling for re-thinking of urban planning methodologies as well. It is important to improve accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, especially at public transport stops, to provide safe and attractive spaces and parking facilities available to all (pedestrians, cyclists), and to include potential bike-sharing schemes at transport hubs in regional planning instruments. Emphasises that using automation to improve public transport networks and boost their social and economic efficiency and their use is a necessity;

22. underlines nonetheless that urban mobility problems cannot be solved with a sectorial approach only, and that account has to be taken of the link between the urban dimension of transport policy and the broader concept of spatial planning, not only to improve urban transport and infrastructure, but also to combat urban sprawl and rethink the relationship between cities and their surrounding areas;

23. agrees that the highest possible quality standards are advised to be applied to automated mobility. Adds that although safety is always paramount, it is very much connected to efficiency issues also;

24. welcomes the increased involvement of local and regional authorities in devising road safety measures and policies; believes that this greater involvement should be accompanied by clarification of the form that strategies, programmes and measures will take, particularly in terms of funding to allow regions to implement them;

25. notes that in urban regions, automated driving may significantly increase road traffic and increase use of public transport. One important element in the implementation of a competitive public transport system is that the development of the 'mobility as a service' approach should keep pace with that of automated vehicle technology. Automated vehicles should be seen as one element in a wider mobility concept based on a vision of how mobility as a service can address the challenge of sustainability within the local, regional and national context;

26. notes further that to date the Commission has devoted much attention to road transport by car, but that automated systems are also under development in several forms of public and private transport;

27. proposes that links and interoperability with public transport and between the different modes be promoted through targeted measures;

### **Evolving digital environment – opportunities and challenges**

28. notes that 5G technology is not available everywhere yet, and 3G and 4G solutions effectively connect road transport vehicles. Proposes that existing widespread connection technologies between vehicles should be supported;

29. notes that some financial or implementation barriers to physical road infrastructure development can be remedied by digitalisation. Recommends its use, as upgrading digital infrastructure is less expensive, provides for better and more up-to-date digitalised images, and has the potential to connect public and private sector developments;

30. advises simpler and universal connection of smart road systems and vehicles (Waze, Google traffic data, etc.);

31. eagerly awaits smartphone-smart device communication and operation being able to extend assisted-automated mobility and to help to scale up traffic operation methods, realizing also how data collected in this network would enable urban authorities to better understand urban logistic requirements, help to improve the efficiency of movements and identify more appropriate routes for vehicles resulting in lower emissions;

32. recalls that when updating maps and databases used for automated mobility, priority should be given to using solutions of European origin and encourages an EU-wide approach in this area;

33. points out that, because of external factors such as snow, fog and rain, it is not always possible to guarantee that road markings and road signs can be easily and reliably recognised by both human drivers and vehicles equipped with driver assistance systems or higher levels of automation. In the event of heavy snow, it is not possible to guarantee, for example, that roads are kept free of snow round the clock, even where full road clearing is targeted, i.e. measures aimed at clearing roads almost entirely of ice and snow. When the aim is partial road clearing, where new snow is for the most part pushed to the roadside and the remaining snow is flattened by passing vehicles, such that a hard layer is built up, by definition the visibility of any road markings cannot be guaranteed. As a consequence, steps should be taken to ensure that the bodies responsible for road maintenance are not made responsible for any accidents due to misinterpretations by driver assistance systems or higher levels of automation, since if that were the case the risk of failure of driver assistance systems would be passed on from the motor industry to those bodies responsible for road maintenance;

34. emphasises the need for communication between vehicles, as well as the development and harmonisation of road markings and road signs, including name signage of public spaces. It is also anticipated that automated vehicles will require local traffic regulations and cartographical data to be very clear and unambiguous;

35. notes that many road users, thereunder vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians might remain disconnected from the network and that any legal, digital and physical framework for smart vehicles will need to take mixed traffic into account;

36. highlights that public authorities and fleet operators should be prepared to manage electric smog generated by automated mobility;

37. notes that fair and direct access to vehicle data should empower drivers to determine its use and provide business opportunities for other operators and service providers, without, however, impacting road users' rights to privacy and data protection. The CoR underlines the need for appropriate access to such data for LRAs as the largest operator of road networks in the Union. In that connection, it will be important for the public sector to facilitate and support the trials being undertaken, to prevent barrier effects and to make data available;

38. calls, therefore, for measures providing proper protection of personal data and data of users which is a determining factor for the successful deployment of cooperative, connected and automated vehicles;

39. calls for more far-reaching measures to be taken in order to tap the full potential of automated mobility and vehicle to vehicle communication and meet the longer-term goals: low-emission fully-automated multimodal transport, mobility as a service, and door-to-door transport, particularly to promote social inclusion.

Brussels, 6 February 2019.

*The President*  
*of the European Committee of the Regions*  
Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

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**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on ‘Streamlining TEN-T implementation’**

(2019/C 168/11)

<b>Rapporteur:</b>	Michiel SCHEFFER (NL/ALDE), Member of the Executive Council of the Province of Gelderland
<b>Reference document:</b>	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the trans-European transport network  COM(2018) 277 finals

**I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS**

*Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the trans-European transport network*

COM(2018) 277 final

**Amendment 1**

Recital 1

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council [1] sets out a common framework for the creation of state-of-the-art, interoperable networks for the development of the internal market. The trans-European transport networks (TEN-T) have a dual layer structure: the comprehensive network ensures connectivity of all regions of the Union whereas the core network consists of those elements of the network which are of the highest strategic importance for the <b>Union</b> . Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 defines binding completion targets for implementation, with the core network to be completed by 2030 and the comprehensive network by 2050.	Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council [1] sets out a common framework for the creation of state-of-the-art, interoperable networks for the development of the internal market <b>and for the social, economic and territorial cohesion of the Union</b> . The trans-European transport networks (TEN-T) have a dual layer structure: the comprehensive network ensures connectivity of all regions of the Union, <b>as well as the necessary distribution channels to supply the basic network</b> , whereas the core network consists of those elements of the network which are <b>also</b> of the highest strategic importance for the <b>EU and should accordingly serve as cross-border and multi-modal accelerators for a single European transport and mobility area</b> . Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 defines binding completion targets for implementation, with the core network to be completed by 2030 and the comprehensive network by 2050. <b>Furthermore, Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 focuses on cross-border connections that will improve interoperability between the different modes of transport and contribute to the multi-modal integration of Union transport.</b>

**Reason**

The TEN-T serves many purposes, among these social, economic and territorial cohesion. Cross-border cooperation needs to be as simple and easy as possible in order to improve low-emission, cross-border mobility; in line with paragraph 18 in the policy recommendations.

### Amendment 2

#### Recital 2

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Notwithstanding the necessity and binding timelines, experience has shown that many investments aiming to complete the TEN-T are confronted with complex permit granting procedures, cross-border procurement procedures and other procedures. This situation jeopardises the on time implementation of projects and in many cases results in significant delays and increased costs. In order to address these issues and make synchronised TEN-T completion possible, harmonised action is necessary at Union level.</p>	<p>Notwithstanding the necessity and binding timelines, experience has shown that many investments aiming to complete the TEN-T are confronted with complex permit granting procedures, cross-border procurement procedures and other procedures. <b>In addition, early public participation and consensus building are often neglected which results in the lack of support by citizens due to missing transparency.</b> This situation jeopardises the on time implementation of projects and in many cases results in significant delays and increased costs. In order to address these issues and make synchronised TEN-T completion possible, <b>simplified and timely</b> harmonised action is necessary at Union level.</p>

#### Reason

Permit-granting procedures are not the only reason projects are delayed. The lack of early public participation and consensus building also delays them.

### Amendment 3

#### Recital 3

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>In the legal frameworks of many Member States priority treatment is given to certain project categories based on their strategic importance for the <b>economy</b>. Priority treatment is characterised by shorter timelines, simultaneous procedures or limited timeframes for appeals while ensuring that the objectives of other horizontal policies are also reached. When such a framework exists within a national legal framework, it should automatically apply to Union projects recognised as projects of common interest under Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013.</p>	<p>In the legal frameworks of many Member States priority treatment is given to certain project categories based on their strategic importance for the <b>territorial, economic and social cohesion of the Union and measures to combat climate change</b>. Priority treatment is characterised by shorter timelines, simultaneous procedures or limited timeframes for appeals while ensuring that the objectives of other horizontal policies are also reached. When such a framework exists within a national legal framework, it should automatically apply to Union projects recognised as projects of common interest under Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013. <b>Where such a framework does not exist, competent authorities should give priority to the harmonisation of administrative procedures for the issuing of permits and project implementation or, where appropriate, take the necessary steps to facilitate the creation of a joint management entity.</b></p>

#### Reason

Combating climate change needs to be one of the fundamental targets of Union transport policy.

**Amendment 4**

## Recital 4

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>In order to improve the effectiveness of the environmental assessments and streamline the decision-making process, where the obligation to carry out assessments related to environmental issues of core network projects arises simultaneously from Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, and from other Union legislation such as Directive 92/43/EEC, Directive 2009/147/EC, Directive 2000/60/EC, Directive 2008/98/EC, Directive 2010/75/EU, Directive 2012/18/EU and Directive 2011/42/EC, Member States should ensure that a joint procedure fulfilling the requirements of these Directives is provided.</p>	<p>In order to improve the effectiveness of the environmental assessments and streamline the decision-making process, where the obligation to carry out assessments related to environmental issues of core network projects arises simultaneously from Directive 2011/92/EU, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU, and from other Union legislation such as Directive 92/43/EEC, Directive 2009/147/EC, Directive 2000/60/EC, Directive 2008/98/EC, Directive 2010/75/EU, Directive 2012/18/EU and Directive 2011/42/EC, Member States should ensure that a joint procedure fulfilling the requirements of these Directives is provided <b>without necessarily having to lay down new procedures, if adequate ones already exist.</b></p>

**Reason**

Some Member States already have integrated procedures and it would be an additional administrative burden to introduce new procedures.

**Amendment 5**

## Recital 8

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Given the urgency to complete the TEN-T core network, the simplification of permit granting procedures should be accompanied by a time limit within which competent authorities responsible should make a comprehensive decision regarding the construction of the project. This time limit should stimulate a more efficient handling of procedures and should, under no circumstances, compromise the Union's high standards for environmental protection and public participation.</p>	<p>Given the urgency to complete the TEN-T core network, the simplification of permit granting procedures should be accompanied by a time limit within which competent authorities responsible should make a comprehensive decision regarding the construction of the project. This time limit should stimulate a more efficient handling of procedures and should, under no circumstances, compromise the Union's high standards for environmental protection and public participation. <b>That said, the time limit should only be set after an initial, early public consultation, including that with local and regional authorities, on the planned project.</b></p>

**Reason**

Self-explanatory. Permit-granting procedures are not the only reason projects are delayed. The lack of early public participation and consensus building also delays them.

**Amendment 6**

## Recital 11

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Public procurement in cross-border projects of common interest should be conducted in accordance with the Treaty and Directives 2014/25/EU and/or 2014/24/EU. In order to ensure the efficient completion of the cross-border <b>core</b> network projects of common interest, public procurement carried out by a joint entity should be subject to a single national legislation. By way of derogation from the Union public procurement legislation, the applicable national rules should in principle be those of the Member State where the joint entity has its registered office. It should remain possible to define the applicable legislation in an intergovernmental agreement.</p>	<p>Public procurement in cross-border projects of common interest should be conducted in accordance with the Treaty and Directives 2014/25/EU and/or 2014/24/EU. In order to ensure the efficient completion of the cross-border <b>TEN-T</b> network projects of common interest, public procurement carried out by a joint <b>management</b> entity should, <b>by joint agreement between the parties</b>, be subject to a single <b>EU or, where appropriate</b>, national legislation. By way of derogation from the Union public procurement legislation, the applicable national rules should in principle be those of the Member State where the joint entity has its registered office. It should remain possible to define the applicable legislation in an intergovernmental agreement.</p>

**Reason**

It would facilitate cross-border cooperation, in line with paragraph 18 in the policy recommendations.

**Amendment 7**

## Article 1

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Subject matter and scope</b></p> <p>This Regulation sets out requirements applicable to the administrative procedures followed by the competent authorities of Member States in relation to the authorisation and implementation of all projects of common interest on the core network of the trans-European transport network.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Subject matter and scope</b></p> <p>This Regulation sets out requirements applicable to the administrative procedures followed by the competent authorities of Member States (<b><i>national, regional or local authorities or other project promoters</i></b>) in relation to the authorisation and implementation <b><i>of all infrastructure components and requirements</i></b>, of all projects of common interest on the core network of the trans-European transport network, <b><i>with priority status as identified in Article 3.</i></b></p>

**Reason**

Instead of applying the proposed procedure to all TEN-T projects, the regulation should specify which projects should fall under its application, in order to target the most important projects and speed up their implementation. Member States should decide what priority projects fall under the application of the regulation.

**Amendment 8**

## Article 2, point (e)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>'Cross-border project of common interest' means a project of common interest according to Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 covering a cross-border section <b><i>as defined in point (m) Article 3 of that Regulation</i></b> which is implemented by a joint entity.</p>	<p>'Cross-border project of common interest' means a project of common interest according to Article 7 of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 covering a cross-border section <b><i>within the framework of a cooperation agreement or any other type of agreement between Member States or between Member States and regional or local authorities or between regional or local authorities in different Member States or between Member States and third countries, for the planning and implementation of transport infrastructure</i></b> which is implemented by a joint entity.</p>

**Reason**

It is important to value the potential of the local and regional authorities (LRAs) in cross-border projects.



**Amendment 9**

## Article 3

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p><b>'Priority status' of projects of common interest</b></p> <p>1. <i>Each project of common interest on the TEN-T core network</i> shall be subject to an integrated permit granting procedure managed by a single competent authority designated by each Member State in accordance with Articles 5 and 6.</p> <p>2. Where priority status exists under national law, projects of common interest shall be granted the status with the highest national significance possible, and be treated as such in permit granting procedures, where and in the manner such treatment is provided for in national legislation applicable to the corresponding types of transport infrastructure.</p> <p>3. To ensure efficient administrative procedures related to projects of common interest, project promoters and all authorities concerned shall ensure that the most rapid treatment legally possible is given to these projects, including as regards the resources allocated.</p>	<p><b>'Priority status' of projects of common interest</b></p> <p>1. <i>Member States shall identify priority components on the TEN-T. Projects of common interest that are located on priority section shall receive 'priority status' and</i> shall be subject to an integrated permit granting procedure managed by a single competent authority designated by each Member State in accordance with Articles 5 and 6.</p> <p>2. Where priority status exists under national law, projects of common interest shall be granted the status with the highest national significance possible, and be treated as such in permit granting procedures, where and in the manner such treatment is provided for in national legislation applicable to the corresponding types of transport infrastructure.</p> <p>3. To ensure efficient administrative procedures related to projects of common interest, project promoters and all authorities concerned shall ensure that the most rapid treatment legally possible is given to these projects, including as regards the resources allocated.</p>

**Reason**

See amendment 7.

**Amendment 10**

## Article 4(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>In order to meet the time limits set out in Article 6 and reduce the administrative burden related to the completion of projects of common interest, all the administrative procedures resulting from the applicable law, both national and <i>of the</i> Union, shall be integrated and result in only one comprehensive decision.</p>	<p>In order to meet the time limits set out in Article 6 and reduce the administrative burden related to the completion of projects of common interest, all the administrative procedures resulting from the applicable law, <i>including the relevant environmental assessments as well as citizens information and participation campaigns</i>, both <i>at</i> national and Union level, shall be integrated and result in only one comprehensive decision.</p>

**Reason**

Combating climate change needs to be one of the fundamental targets of Union transport policy.

**Amendment 11**

## Article 5(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>By ... (OP please insert the date one year of the entry into force of this Regulation), each Member State shall designate <b>one</b> single competent authority which shall be responsible for facilitating <b>the</b> permit granting process including for making the comprehensive decision.</p>	<p>By ... (OP please insert the date one year of the entry into force of this Regulation), each Member State shall designate single competent authority/<b>authorities</b> which shall be responsible for facilitating <b>an integrated</b> permit granting process including for making the comprehensive decision. <b>If a Member State has already designated a single competent authority/authorities, the Member State in question may confirm the designation of that/those single competent authority/authorities.</b></p>

**Reason**

Some Member States already have integrated procedures or designated competent authorities. It would therefore be an additional administrative burden for them to introduce new procedures or designate new competent authorities.

**Amendment 12**

## Article 5(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The responsibility of the single competent authority referred to in paragraph 1 and/or the tasks related to <b>it may be delegated to, or carried out by, another</b> authority at the appropriate administrative level, per project of common interest or per particular category of projects of common interest, <b>under the following conditions:</b></p> <p>(a) only one authority is responsible per project of common interest;</p> <p>(b) the authority is the sole point of contact for the project promoter in the procedure leading to the comprehensive decision for a given project of common interest, and</p> <p>(c) the authority coordinates the submission of all relevant documents and information.</p> <p><b>The single competent authority may retain the responsibility to establish time limits, without prejudice to the time limits set in accordance with Article 6.</b></p>	<p><b>Member States may delegate</b> the responsibility of the single competent authority referred to in paragraph 1 and/or the tasks related to <b>it, to an existing or a newly established</b> authority at the appropriate administrative level <b>taking into consideration national, regional and local competences</b>, per project of common interest or per particular category of projects of common interest, <b>provided that:</b></p> <p>(a) only one authority is responsible per project of common interest;</p> <p>(b) the authority is the sole point of contact for the project promoter in the procedure leading to the comprehensive decision for a given project of common interest, and</p> <p>(c) the authority coordinates the submission of all relevant documents and information.</p>

**Reason**

The regulation should not interfere with the constitutional set-up of the Member States, in particular because in some Member States, different levels of government carry out these tasks.

The time limits should be set in close cooperation with the project promoter, to make it possible to have a tailor-made timeframe for projects. Allowing the early involvement of all stakeholders, with enough time allocated to consensus building amongst all stakeholders, will significantly improve project implementation.

**Amendment 13**

## Article 5(5)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>If a project of common interest requires decisions to be taken in two or more Member States, the respective competent authorities shall take all the necessary steps for efficient and effective cooperation and coordination among themselves. Without prejudice to obligations arising under applicable Union and international law, Member States shall endeavour to provide for joint procedures, particularly with regard to the assessment of environmental impacts.</p>	<p>If a project of common interest requires decisions to be taken in two or more Member States, the respective competent authorities shall take all the necessary steps for efficient and effective cooperation and coordination among themselves. Without prejudice to obligations arising under applicable Union and international law, Member States shall endeavour to provide for joint procedures, particularly with regard to the assessment of environmental impacts. <b>Especially in cases where a joint entity is set up by the participating Member States or competent local and regional authorities, this entity shall benefit from joint procedures and coordination among the Member States and should only be in contact with one single competent permit granting authority.</b></p>

**Reason**

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## Amendment 14

## Article 6(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Duration and implementation of the permit granting procedure</p> <p>1. The permit granting procedure shall consist of the pre-application phase and the phase of the assessment of the application and the decision-making by the single competent authority.</p> <p>2. The pre-application phase, covering the period from the start of the permit granting procedure to the submission of the complete application file to the single competent authority, shall in principle not exceed two years.</p> <p>3. In order to launch the permit granting procedure, the project promoter shall notify the single competent authority of the Member States concerned about the project in writing, and shall include a detailed description of the project. No later than two months following the receipt of the above notification, the single competent authority shall either acknowledge it or, if it considers that the project is not mature enough to enter the permit granting procedure, reject the notification in writing. If the single competent authority decides to reject the notification, it shall justify its decision. The date of signature of the acknowledgement of the notification by the competent authority shall serve as the start of the permit granting procedure. If two or more Member States are concerned, the date of the acceptance of the last notification by the competent authority concerned shall serve as the date of the start of the permit granting procedure.</p> <p>4. Within three months of the start of the permit granting procedure, the single competent authority, in close cooperation with the project promoter and other authorities concerned and taking into account the information submitted by the project promoter on the basis of the notification referred to in paragraph 3, shall establish and communicate to the project promoter a detailed application outline, containing:</p> <p>(a) the material scope and level of detail of information to be submitted by the project promoter, as part of the application file for the comprehensive decision</p> <p>(b) a schedule for the permit granting process, identifying at least the following:</p> <p>(i) the decisions and opinions to be obtained;</p> <p>(ii) the authorities, <b>stakeholders, and the public likely to be concerned;</b></p> <p>(iii) the individual stages of the procedure and their duration;</p> <p>(iv) major milestones to be accomplished and their deadlines in view of the comprehensive decision to be taken;</p> <p>(v) the resources planned by the authorities and possible additional resource needs.</p>	<p>Duration and implementation of the permit granting procedure</p> <p>1. The permit granting procedure shall consist of the pre-application phase and the phase of the assessment of the application and the decision-making by the single competent authority.</p> <p><b><i>The single competent authority involves, in accordance with the respective Member State's institutional and legal framework, local and regional authorities, whose territories are concerned by the projects, in a participatory procedure, aiming to the preliminary evaluation of the project and also before the final authorisation.</i></b></p> <p>2. The pre-application phase, covering the period from the start of the permit granting procedure to the submission of the complete application file to the single competent authority, shall in principle not exceed two years. <b><i>The single competent authority could give the project promoter more time in special circumstances, related to the size and the nature of the project, and/or to allow enough time to properly involve the public. Such public consultations and participation must have already been undertaken before the pre-application phase. The outcome of public participation, in the form of trade-offs that directly affect infrastructure implementation, and the planned further measures for consulting the public, shall determine the length of the pre-application phase.</i></b></p> <p>3. In order to launch the permit granting procedure, the project promoter shall notify the single competent authority of the Member States concerned about the project in writing, and shall include a detailed description of the project. No later than two months following the receipt of the above notification, the single competent authority shall either acknowledge it or, if it considers that the project is not mature enough to enter the permit granting procedure, reject the notification in writing. If the single competent authority decides to reject the notification, it shall justify its decision. The date of signature of the acknowledgement of the notification by the competent authority shall serve as the start of the permit granting procedure. If two or more Member States are concerned, the date of the acceptance of the last notification by the competent authority concerned shall serve as the date of the start of the permit granting procedure.</p> <p>4. Within three months of the start of the permit granting procedure, the single competent authority, in close cooperation with the project promoter and other authorities concerned and taking into account the information submitted by the project promoter on the basis of the notification referred to in paragraph 3, shall establish and communicate to the project promoter a detailed application outline, containing:</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<p>(a) the material scope and level of detail of information to be submitted by the project promoter, as part of the application file for the comprehensive decision</p> <p>(b) a schedule for the permit granting process, identifying at least the following:</p> <p>(i) the decisions and opinions to be obtained, <b>including, in particular, in accordance with the respective Member State's institutional and legal framework, the opinions of the local and regional authorities;</b></p> <p>(ii) <b>measures already taken to involve stakeholders and get the public to participate in the process and how this will be continued throughout project implementation;</b></p> <p>(iii) the authorities, <b>including, in accordance with the respective Member State's institutional and legal framework, local and regional authorities which must be involved;</b></p> <p>(iv) the individual stages of the procedure and their duration;</p> <p>(v) major milestones to be accomplished and their deadlines in view of the comprehensive decision to be taken;</p> <p>(vi) the resources planned by the authorities and possible additional resource needs.</p>

### Reason

By adopting a tailor-made approach for each project and involving the public early on in the process, delays in granting permits can be significantly reduced, due to fewer legal appeals against the outcome of the planning procedure. The necessary timeframe for consensus building among the stakeholders concerned cannot therefore be determined in general. Rather, it must be determined depending on quantifiable factors linked to project implementation, and various trade-offs during consensus building with all stakeholders involved. Such a flexible, tailor-made approach could even speed up project implementation compared to what the case might be were a strict timeframe imposed.

### Amendment 15

#### Article 7(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>For projects that involve two or more Member States, the competent authorities of the Member States concerned shall align their timetables and agree on a joint schedule.</p>	<p>For projects that involve two or more Member States, the competent authorities of the Member States concerned shall align their timetables and agree on a joint schedule. <b>If a joint entity set up by the participating Member States applies for a permit, it shall only have to contact one competent authority. The competent authority will then coordinate with the other authority/authorities involved to ensure fulfilment of all obligations under applicable law in all Member States concerned by the project, as stated in Article 5(5).</b></p>

**Reason**

This is to facilitate the granting of cross-border permits by adopting a one-stop shop approach for joint entities.

**II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

## THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

*Key messages*

1. underlines that the completion of the TEN-T core and comprehensive network is the key to ensuring territorial cohesion, making all regions more accessible and boosting the economic development of peripheral and cross-border regions;
2. points out that transport infrastructure development is often a competence of regional authorities, who are in charge of spatial planning, delivering plan approval orders and granting permits in their territory;
3. recalls that the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and the TEN-T Regulation have set ambitious targets for infrastructure development in Europe. The TEN-T core network should be completed by 2030, but it will be difficult to meet the financial needs to reach these ambitious goals;
4. recognises that together with strengthening the project pipeline, broadening funding and financing (CEF), and creating an investment-friendly environment, streamlining forms an important pillar of EU TEN-T policy;
5. welcomes the proposal of the Commission, in the context of speeding up the implementation of the TEN-T network and achieving the Paris agreement objectives. It is also very important for harmonising procedure and technical standards and increasing interoperability;
6. recalls these three fundamental principles:
  - ensuring procedures across different territories are coordinated, both inside and between Member States;
  - ensuring that the different legal requirements such as directives on habitat, water and biodiversity, are in sync;
  - maintaining and improving public participation;
7. would like to stress the importance of streamlining procedures etc. in border regions. The simplification of administrative authorisations, permit-granting procedures and other regulatory procedures shall therefore aim to facilitate TEN-T completion;
8. stresses that if Member States already have streamlined procedures in place, they should have the possibility of choosing their own streamlined procedure;
9. suggests that instead of applying the proposed procedure to all TEN-T projects, the regulation should specify which projects fall under its application. Member States should, for example, be allowed to decide what projects fall under the regulation;
10. recognises that the timely completion of the TEN-T network is being undermined by delays caused by long permit-granting procedures. However, those permits are granted in the integrated framework of national administrations, respecting European and national legal frameworks in the areas of spatial planning, environmental protection and civil rights. It is difficult to implement this complex procedure using a one-size-fits-all approach. A tailor-made approach is more suitable;
11. recalls that simplifying and reducing administrative burden is one of the key objectives of the current Commission. The proposal reflects this to a certain extent. However, administrative burden must not be simplified and reduced at the expense of subsidiarity and proportionality. Tailor-made approaches should be possible if a Member State already has streamlined procedures in place;

12. recalls that to achieve the Paris agreement objectives, it is necessary to speed up rail infrastructure development, prioritise addressing bottlenecks, complete missing sections and provide support for cross-border infrastructure enabling green mobility, in line with the opinions 'Missing transport links in border regions' and 'Delivering low emission mobility and that the EU could further contribute towards the financial viability of green mobility by actively supporting an international ETS as well as an EU ETS with stable, high carbon prices that do not fluctuate purely do to speculation, in line with the CoR opinion 'Cost-effective emissions reductions and low-carbon investments';

13. recalls the need to balance the general, but not explicitly expressed interests, of the users (citizens and economic operators) in the spirit of freedom of movement of people and goods, with the interests of those affected by infrastructure development;

*Cross-border aspects*

14. insists on the need to continue pursuing cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation as part of the aim of strengthening territorial cohesion in line with Article 174 TFEU;

15. points out that some of the CoR's observations regarding the constraints imposed by different procedural or organisational approaches in cross-border projects (e.g. opinion 'Missing transport links in border regions') are still pertinent, and calls for the removal of these legal and administrative obstacles to cross-border transport infrastructure development (e.g. opinion 'Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions');

16. welcomes the intention of the proposal to facilitate cross-border cooperation for the development of transport links, to remove missing links. Nevertheless, cross-border projects and purely national projects have different preconditions and a top-down approach might not be suitable for their specific features;

17. recalls that, while the TEN-T network is a planning tool for developing pan-European transport connections, the place-based approach must be maintained for individual TEN-T projects. Spatial planning, as well as public and stakeholder participation, need to take place at local and regional level;

18. urges the Commission to encourage measures that are aimed at facilitating cross-border project implementation and addressing bottlenecks in TEN-T projects by streamlining administrative procedures and requirements.

Brussels, 7 February 2019.

*The President*

*of the European Committee of the Regions*

Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

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