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I

(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

131ST COR PLENARY SESSION AND OPENING SESSION OF THE EWRC WEEK, 8.10.2018-10.10.2018**Resolution of the European Committee of the Regions — The economic policies for the euro area and in view of the 2019 Annual Growth Survey**

(2018/C 461/01)

Submitted by the EPP, PES, ALDE, EA and ECR political groups

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS,

- having regard to the European Commission's Communication on the Annual Growth Survey 2018 (AGS) ⁽¹⁾ and to the 2018 European Semester;
- having regard to its resolution of 11 October 2017 on the 2017 European Semester, in view of the 2018 Annual Growth Survey (AGS), and to its resolution of 1 February 2018 on the European Commission's Annual growth Survey 2018;
- having regard to the European Parliament resolutions of 26 October 2017 on the economic policies of the euro area ⁽²⁾ and of 14 March 2018 on the 2018 AGS;

1. takes note of the overall slow and uneven pace of EU-relevant structural reforms across the EU, as measured by the implementation rate of the Country-specific recommendations (CSRs) ⁽³⁾; stresses that reforms are needed in all Member States to foster competitiveness and growth and to increase economic, social and territorial cohesion and economic convergence, as well as resilience to external shocks, which is crucial for the stability of the euro area; stresses that above all lack of ownership at country level and to some extent also insufficient administrative and institutional capacity are widely seen as the main factors contributing to the unsatisfactory implementation record of the Country-specific recommendations (CSRs) ⁽⁴⁾;

⁽¹⁾ COM(2017) 690 final.

⁽²⁾ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P8-TA-2017-0418&language=EN&ring=A8-2017-0310>

⁽³⁾ Commission Communication on the 2018 CSRs, p. 3, (<https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2018-european-semester-country-specific-recommendation-commission-recommendation-communication-en.pdf>); see also the European Commission impact assessment of the proposal of a Reform Support Programme (<http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/10102/2018/EN/SWD-2018-310-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>).

⁽⁴⁾ See p. 23-26 of the impact assessment mentioned in the previous footnote.

2. notes the strong increase in the number of CSRs directly addressed to local and regional authorities (LRAs) (36 % in 2018, compared to 24 % in 2017) ⁽⁵⁾; also notes that, taking into account those CSRs involving the LRAs, even if indirectly, and those not involving the LRAs but having a territorial impact, territory-related recommendations account for 83 % of all CSRs (compared to 76 % in 2017);
3. takes note that 48 % of the 124 specific recommendations which are addressed in 2018 to local and regional authorities and/or which raise challenges related to territorial disparities, repeat what was already published in 2015; welcomes therefore the European Commission's multi-annual assessment of the implementation of Country-specific recommendations, which shows that more than two-thirds of Country-specific recommendations issued since the outset of the European Semester in 2011 have been implemented with at least 'some progress' ⁽⁶⁾; regrets however the persisting lack of transparency regarding the criteria upon which such assessment is based;
4. stresses that the European Semester needs to be aligned with an EU long-term strategy translating the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at EU level. The transition to a new European strategic framework succeeding the Europe 2020 strategy would be an appropriate juncture for reforming the governance of the European Semester;
5. strongly insists that the Country-specific recommendations should explicitly address territorial challenges and the role of the local and regional authorities in identifying and implementing them, while territory-related challenges and future scenarios should be explicitly analysed and addressed in the AGS and the Country Reports and be reflected in the National Reform Programmes;
6. stresses the need to ensure that the European Semester is fully coherent with the objective of economic, social and territorial cohesion set in the Treaty on European Union, and suggests that the Country-specific recommendations address Member States' multi-annual cohesion challenges;
7. welcomes the European Semester's focus on the European Pillar of Social Rights, and underlines that 45 % of Country-specific recommendations for 2018 give a role to local and regional authorities and/or raise challenges related to territorial disparities in the field of social rights ⁽⁷⁾;
8. reiterates that the involvement of the LRAs as partners in planning and implementing the European Semester, along with the adoption of multilevel governance arrangements and a structured, ongoing and explicitly recognised role for LRAs, would substantially increase ownership of CSRs at country level; stresses that this involvement is all the more important in the context of stricter links between cohesion policy and the European Semester under the 2021-2027 MFF and of the possible adoption of the Reform Support Programme, which would also be managed within the framework of the European Semester;
9. points out therefore a strong need to ensure better coordination and synergies between the European Semester process and the shared management approach, and the decentralized character of the ESI Funds; reiterates its proposal that the EU adopt a Code of Conduct to involve the LRAs in the European Semester ⁽⁸⁾, and stresses that such proposal is consistent with the subsidiarity principle and the current division of powers and competences across levels of government within the Member States; notes that the Code of Conduct should take into account the relevant experience of the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of cohesion policy's ESI Funds ⁽⁹⁾, as well as existing good practices of involving LRAs extensively in the Semester, in some countries;
10. welcomes the EU Task Force on Subsidiarity's 'strong' recommendation 'that Member States follow the guidance the Commission has given on encouraging greater participation and ownership of the Country-specific recommendations in light of the fact that [...] economic reforms [...] may have implications for all levels of governance[...] This should go beyond the national administrations and include local and regional authorities, the social partners, and civil society generally' ⁽¹⁰⁾;

⁽⁵⁾ http://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/Documents/publi-file/2018-Territorial-Analysis-of-CSRs/2018_CSRS_draft_final.pdf

⁽⁶⁾ Commission Communication on the 2018 CSRs, p. 3.

⁽⁷⁾ http://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/Documents/publi-file/2018-Territorial-Analysis-of-CSRs/2018_CSRS_draft_final.pdf

⁽⁸⁾ See CoR Opinion on Improving the governance of the European Semester: a Code of Conduct for the involvement of local and regional authorities of 11 May 2017.

⁽⁹⁾ Delegated Regulation on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds (No 240/2014).

⁽¹⁰⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/files/report-task-force-subsidiarity-proportionality-and-doing-less-more-efficiently_en

11. is concerned that the European Commission has still not provided a definition of 'structural reforms' in the context of the economic governance of the EU and possible support through EU programmes such as the proposed Reform Support Programme. Reiterates, therefore, that in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the scope of the structural reforms eligible for EU funding should only include the strategic policy areas relevant to the implementation of the Treaty objectives and which relate directly to EU competences. The CoR rejects any proposal to finance unspecified structural reforms in the Member States which have not undergone a prior European added value assessment and which do not relate directly to the Treaty-based EU competences. In this context, the CoR points to its resolution of 1 February 2018 rejecting the European Commission proposal for a regulation amending the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of 6 December 2017 ⁽¹¹⁾;

12. highlights that the state of local and regional finances deserves renewed attention at European and national levels, and welcomes therefore the Austrian Presidency's request for the CoR to explore the subject; recalls that LRAs' budgets, including social spending and welfare in particular, were among the first to be affected by the financial and economic crisis, and by the ensuing budget consolidations and cuts in transfers from central government; notes that while the crisis is a decade old, many LRAs' finances are still constrained;

13. reiterates its concern regarding the persistent low level of public investment in the EU, and in particular investment by local and regional authorities, which in 2017 remains more than 30 % lower than its 2009 level expressed as a share of GDP ⁽¹²⁾; notes with regret, therefore, that public investments are often the most affected by fiscal consolidation policies despite such investments having a direct impact on local economies and on the daily lives of citizens; is further worried by the growing centralisation of investment: the share of public investment made by local and regional authorities — while still above 50 % in the EU on average — having fallen noticeably compared to the level of 60 % seen in the 1990s ⁽¹³⁾;

14. welcomes the Commission's ambition to build on the experience of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) and Investment Plan more broadly with its proposal for the InvestEU Programme; acknowledges that the proposal has the potential to simplify the use of financial instruments, a long-standing demand put forwards by the CoR since the current complexity is an obstacle to widespread and effective usage;

15. regrets the trend towards increased protectionism in international trade and warns of the negative consequences of jeopardising multilateral trade cooperation and dispute settlement systems; reiterates, nevertheless, its view that new free trade initiatives must be preceded by impact assessments, which facilitate the early identification of and quantify possible asymmetric impacts on European regions, to allow swift public policy responses;

16. highlights that trade policy is an exclusive EU competence and that the European Globalisation Fund (EGF) is currently one of the instruments mitigating the possible negative side effects of trade policy choices; regrets that in the past funds available through the EGF have not been fully used and notes that some Member States have previously opted for the use of ESF instead. The CoR will analyse in a separate opinion in detail whether the European Commission's proposal to broaden the scope and the mission of the EGF, as well as the lowering of its thresholds, will guarantee that the reformed EGF brings added value and avoids overlaps and trade-offs with the ESF+, as is currently the case ⁽¹⁴⁾;

17. reiterates its call for a strong and holistic EU industrial policy strategy, one that will allow European industry, particularly SMEs, to tackle the challenges and opportunities of digitalisation and decarbonisation with particular attention to be given to investment in the technological enhancement of SMEs and the specialisation of workers through lifelong training; emphasises again the crucial role of local and regional authorities in building regional innovation ecosystems and clusters that are essential for successful innovation; stresses that the European Single Market is at the core of the EU's economic and political integration and points out that the creation of the Single Market is an ongoing project and it remains incomplete in important respects, which impact in particular consumers and SMEs; also welcomes the Commission's proposal for a new Single Market Programme after 2020, which provides a framework to support measures for improving the competitiveness of European SMEs;

⁽¹¹⁾ COM(2017) 826 final.

⁽¹²⁾ Source: Eurostat (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=tec00022&language=en>).

⁽¹³⁾ European Commission, 7th Cohesion Report (p. 168).

⁽¹⁴⁾ https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR13_07/SR13_07_EN.pdf

18. notes that the need to improve administrative and institutional capacity is at the heart of most structural reforms identified within the European Semester; stresses that different political priorities are one of the key reasons for the unsatisfactory implementation of structural reforms in the context of the European Semester; in some countries this compounded by insufficient administrative and institutional capacity at different levels of government, which hinders public and private investment, reduces the quality of public services provided to citizens and slows down implementation of the ESI funds and other EU programmes; stresses that, in 2018, 63 % of all recommendations directly addressed to local and regional authorities were about improving administrative capacity;

19. notes that, although applications submitted under the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) came from most Member States, the challenge of the quality and capacity of the public administration is more serious in many Southern and Eastern European countries ⁽¹⁵⁾; welcomes the possibility for LRAs to have access to the SRSP and calls the Commission to encourage Member States to address the capacity building needs of sub-national governments; welcomes the Commission's engagement in strengthening coordination between the different EU-funded capacity-building strands, and reiterates that the Commission should do this in a transparent manner by issuing a single strategic document ⁽¹⁶⁾;

20. calls on the Commission to carry out an assessment of how EU rules on public procurement have been transposed into national legislation and how they are being implemented, emphasising both the way in which they are implemented at local and regional level — in light of the weight of subnational authorities in the field of public procurement — and the extent to which new standards have simplified or complicated regulation in this area; notes that more progress needs to be made on digital public procurement and that Member States should strive for a rapid digital transformation of procedures and for the introduction of e-processes for all major stages;

21. instructs the President to forward this resolution to the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Austrian Presidency of the Council and the President of the European Council.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

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

⁽¹⁵⁾ Evidence on that is summarised on p. 27 of the European Commission impact assessment of the proposal of a Reform Support Programme (<http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/10102/2018/EN/SWD-2018-310-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>).

⁽¹⁶⁾ <https://memportal.cor.europa.eu/Handlers/ViewDoc.ashx?doc=COR-2018-00502-00-00-AC-TRA-EN.docx>

OPINIONS

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

131ST COR PLENARY SESSION AND OPENING SESSION OF THE EWRC WEEK, 8.10.2018-
10.10.2018

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions on Reflecting on Europe: the voice of local and regional authorities to rebuild trust in the European Union

(2018/C 461/02)

Co-Rapporteurs: Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ (BE/PES), President the European Committee of the Regions, Member of the Parliament of the German-speaking Community, Member of the Senate

Markku MARKKULA (FI/PPE), First Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions and City councillor of Espoo

Reference document: Referral by Donald TUSK, President of the European Council, on 8 November 2016 asking the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) to draft an opinion on 'Reflecting on Europe: the voice of regional and local authorities to rebuild trust in the European Union'

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Preamble: the context of the local and regional representatives' contribution to rebuilding trust

1. Having regard to the European Committee of the Regions' (CoR) Mission Statement, Brussels, 21 April 2009: 'We are a political assembly of holders of a regional or local electoral mandate serving the cause of European integration. Through our political legitimacy, we provide institutional representation for all the European Union's territorial areas, regions, cities and municipalities. Our mission is to involve regional and local authorities in the European decision-making process and thus to encourage greater participation from our fellow citizens (...) We keep watch to ensure that the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality are upheld so that decisions are taken and applied as close to the citizens as possible and at the most appropriate level (...) We have a direct dialogue with our fellow citizens on Europe's achievements and future challenges and we help to explain and expound the implementation and territorial impact of Community policies';

2. Having regard to the five political priorities of the CoR 2015-2020 ('A fresh start for the European economy', 'The territorial dimension of EU legislation matters', 'A simpler, more connected Europe', 'Stability and cooperation within and outside of the European Union', 'Europe of the citizens is Europe of the future');

3. Having regard to the referral of the President of the European Council on 8 November 2016 asking the CoR to draft an opinion presenting the perceptions and the proposals of local and regional authorities on the future of Europe in order to help rebuild trust in the European project ⁽¹⁾;

4. Having regard to the European Commission's White Paper on the future of Europe, Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025 of 1 March 2017 and the subsequent five Reflection Papers;

⁽¹⁾ Letter of the President of the European Council to the President of the Committee of the Regions, 8 November 2016, http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/events/Documents/Letter%20Tusk%20Markkula_Reflecting%20on%20the%20EU_081116.pdf.

5. Having regard to the Rome Declaration, signed on 25 March 2017, which states that the signatories 'pledge to listen and respond to the concerns expressed by [their] citizens' and that they 'will work together at the level that makes a real difference, be it at European Union, national, regional, or local level, and in a spirit of trust and loyal cooperation, both among Member States and between them and the EU institutions, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. We [they] will allow for the necessary room for manoeuvre at the various levels to strengthen Europe's innovation and growth potential. We want the Union to be big on big issues and small on small ones. We will promote a democratic, effective and transparent decision-making process and better delivery';
6. Having regard to the Letter of intent of the President of the EU Commission ⁽²⁾ which seeks to continue the White Paper debate on the future of Europe all the way to the June 2019 elections through debates, Citizens' Dialogues, interaction with national Parliaments and work with regions;
7. Having regard to the report 'Reaching out to EU citizens: a new opportunity' ⁽³⁾ which states: 'the regions also play a growing role in rethinking governance in the Union and its Member States. With their solid socioeconomic base and common cultural identity, they offer the right scale for policy orientations and adequate delivery in many policy areas, as they are important actors and intermediaries in the outreach to citizens'; and to the 'EU Citizenship Report 2017' ⁽⁴⁾, where it is recognised that it is vital to strengthen citizens' sense of belonging and participation to the integration project;
8. Having regard to the three resolutions of the European Parliament related to the future of the European Union ⁽⁵⁾;
9. Having regard to the launch of 'citizen's consultations' in EU Member States from April 2018.

Understanding and reporting the citizens' and local and regional representatives' perceptions and expectations on their EU

(a) Local and regional representatives are working to make the voice of citizens heard

10. Highlights that under its 'Reflecting on Europe' initiative launched in March 2016, it has been working to build trust between the European Union and its people through citizen and town hall dialogues and meetings with associations and assemblies of local and regional politicians as well as with a number of grassroots movements ⁽⁶⁾ and national and European territorial associations aiming at listening and reporting back the views, ideas and concerns of people on the European project;
11. Notes that, so far, over 176 political representatives of the European Committee of the Regions have engaged in the process by initiating and participating in Citizens' Dialogues as part of the 'Reflecting on Europe' exercise. Over 40 000 participants have taken part in person or digitally in these events in 110 regions across all the Member States. More than 22 000 citizens have taken part through an online survey and mobile application as feedback mechanism allowing participants in the dialogues and citizens to contribute to the discussion remotely also;
12. Highlights that elected representatives from all the CoR Political Groups are participating in these activities and, wherever possible, are sharing platforms with representatives of the European Council, members of national parliaments, members of the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee; stresses that further coordination is necessary to improve the visibility and the impact of the outreach activities of all institutions and Member States;
13. Stresses the results of the survey commissioned by the CoR among local and regional authorities (LRAs), including CoR members and alternates, and their associations ⁽⁷⁾;

⁽²⁾ Letter of intent to President Antonio Tajani and to Prime minister Jüri Ratas, 13 September 2017, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/letter-of-intent-2017_en.pdf

⁽³⁾ Luc Van den Brande — President Juncker's Special Adviser, *Reaching out to EU citizens: a new opportunity*, October 2017.

⁽⁴⁾ COR Opinion on EU Citizenship Report 2017, COR-2017-01319, Rapporteur Guillermo Martínez Suárez.

⁽⁵⁾ European Parliament (2017) Improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty, P8_TA (2017)0049; (2017) Possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union, P8_TA (2017)0048; (2017) Budgetary capacity for the euro area, P8_TA(2017)0050.

⁽⁶⁾ Such as Why Europe, Pulse of Europe, Stand up for Europe, Committee for the Defence of Democracy, 1989 Generation Initiative.

⁽⁷⁾ London School of Economics, *Reflecting on the future of the European Union*, March 2018, <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/studies/Documents/Future-EU.pdf>.

14. Notes that in the majority of dialogues issues are seen by people through the prism of what happens in their region, city or local area; in this context, notes that EU politicians from regions and cities are thus on the frontline of citizens' concerns and expectations;

(b) *What citizens told us: they want an EU project build on solidarity, cohesion and proximity*

15. Underlines that the main concerns expressed in CoR's citizens' dialogues⁽⁸⁾ are slow implementation of solutions especially in the field of unemployment, migration and in the general socioeconomic situation;

16. In this context, draws attention to the fact that many citizens have expressed a wish for more solidarity in the EU; this is a strong call for action to reduce the existing and in many cases growing inequalities in different fields, mainly by reinforcing cohesion and solidarity between and within Member States and regions; meeting this general expectation may require re-orienting and re-balancing a number of policies in the European Union;

17. Signals a widespread frustration with the EU, as the Union is often perceived as too remote and not trustworthy. At the same time many people still feel that they do not know what the EU is and what it is doing. This is leading to a significant gap between people's expectations and the EU's ability to deliver. There is a lack of perceived benefit in tackling local issues, also due to weak communication, as well as misleading narratives and vocabulary used when addressing citizens as well as poor involvement in the decision-making process;

18. Observes that Eurobarometer polls⁽⁹⁾ show that over two-thirds of respondents are convinced that their country has benefited from being a member of the EU;

19. Reiterates, in this respect, that the Member States have shared responsibility for finding solutions at European level to ensure that the EU has the capacity to act in relation to the major agendas, where it can bring real added value. At the same time they have to carry out the necessary national reforms, including sufficient funding, to ensure well-functioning local and regional management, where citizens can see that problems are being addressed;

20. Highlights the fact that in many local debates and also according to the survey's results, the under-30s are the generation that is most enthusiastic about the EU, and they set great store by the freedom of movement and the educational opportunities offered by the EU; is also aware, however, that this generation has been hit hardest in many countries by the lasting effects of the economic crisis and by youth unemployment and is very critical of the European Union's role in this context; insists therefore that a much stronger future-orientation of EU policies is necessary and needs to be built into the EU decision-making system, with concrete action and more dedicated resources to address specific problems of younger people;

21. Stresses that the concern of citizens that they are not sufficiently taken into consideration during the decision-making process often leads to different forms of distrust towards democratic institutions including those of the EU;

22. Highlights that trust in the local and regional levels of governance on average is higher than trust in national government, and in most Member States it is also higher than trust in the EU;

23. In order to rebuild trust in the EU, highlights the importance to clarify for citizens who is ultimately responsible for decisions at EU level and therefore calls for democratic accountability to be reinforced;

⁽⁸⁾ CoR, *Reflecting on Europe: how Europe is perceived by people in regions and cities*, April 2018, https://cor.europa.eu/en/events/Documents/COR-17-070_report_EN-web.pdf

⁽⁹⁾ Eurobarometer — *Public opinion in the European Union*, Annex, n. 88, November 2017 <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/81142> Eurobarometer — *Future of Europe*, n. 467, September — October 2017 <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/special/surveyky/2179>; Eurobarometer survey commissioned by the European Parliament, *Democracy on the move one year ahead of European election*, n. 89.2, May 2018, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2018/oneyearbefore2019/eb89_one_year_before_2019_eurobarometer_en_opt.pdf

24. Recalls that European integration is a project of giving political expression to a set of universal values and rights, but that many citizens are disappointed by what they perceive as the EU's inability to live up to, and uphold its own values; recognises that it is of crucial importance to continuously reconfirm the EU citizens' common values which are indispensable as the foundation of mutual trust and compromise;

25. Considers there is significant potential for the development of a 'civic European identity' among EU citizens with important rights and duties that affect their everyday lives; such an identity that is based on Europe's rich historical and cultural heritage would be important to increase the feeling of belonging by individual citizens to the 'European project' and should complement and enrich national, regional and local identities that make up an individual's identity; while no feeling of identity can and should be imposed, it can be supported and encouraged through civic participation, cultural activities and education and should thus be supported by adequate measures and resources;

26. Recognises that citizens living in knowledge-centred and future-centred societies can better spot the needs of their local communities and therefore are better placed to experiment and prototype evolving innovative solutions designed to meet local needs;

27. Supports the demand from citizens for more channels of democratic participation and better communication with the European institutions via permanent and structured channels of dialogue. To this end, urges that the European Commission's communication strategy operating through its information networks be strengthened by means of regional authorities' potential for coordinating the Europe Direct information centres situated on their territory. This would multiply the impact of their work;

(c) *The strong call of local and regional representatives to be fully involved in the definition and implementation of the EU project* ⁽¹⁰⁾

28. Agrees with the representatives of the local and regional level that the priority areas on which the EU should focus refer mainly to cohesion policy, followed by social policy (including education and mobility), economic policies (employment and growth), migration and integration, environmental issues (including climate change) and safety;

29. Highlights that both from the Citizens' Dialogues and from the survey among LRAs emerges a strong concern for young people, how to provide them with the right opportunities and how to meet their expectations;

30. Underlines that just as for citizens, solidarity is also a recurring concept for LRA representatives, as one of the European Union's key founding values;

31. Highlights that a majority of LRA respondents consider that more decentralisation and a better division of powers are essential elements of good governance because they increase transparency, accountability and quality of policy making as they allow a direct involvement of and engagement with citizens and allows place-based solutions; notes that the LRAs' involvement in the EU decision-making process brings added value to the policies pursued;

32. Observes that LRAs are keenly aware of the ever growing need for cooperation beyond national borders in order to meet the major challenges of our times such as climate change and natural disaster, globalisation in all its expressions, digitalisation and its social consequences, instabilities around the globe, demographic change, poverty and social exclusion etc. They also play a decisive role in implementing cohesion policy, including cross-border cooperation initiatives such as numerous small-scale and people-to-people projects which are particularly important as a daily concrete illustration of solidarity;

33. Highlights that LRAs also wish the European Union to focus more on EU citizenship rights such as the right to live, work, and study freely; in this respect, important work can be carried out by regional and local administrations, in cooperation with the European institutions, in informing citizens of the real opportunities that free movement offers them to study or develop their careers in another Member State;

⁽¹⁰⁾ London School of Economics, *Reflecting on the future of the European Union*, March 2018.

Anchoring EU policies locally to make a difference to people's lives

(a) Addressing societal challenges locally

34. Stresses that the EU policies need to empower people in addressing the issues that are important to their lives and to which all levels of governance, from the European to the local, need to provide answers;

35. Notes that the societal challenges ahead of us need to be addressed globally, but action has to be taken locally;

36. Recalls that cities and regions assure the connection between the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and citizens by replying to their call for action through the tools put at their disposal by the EU; the 17 SDGs will not be reached without engagement and coordination with local and regional governments. To this end, all instruments aiming at supporting decentralised cooperation, policy coherence and the territorial approach should be fully exploited as they mobilise the potential of LRAs and of civil society to promote partnership and synergies between all levels of governance;

(b) Promoting economic, social and territorial cohesion for the citizens

37. Stresses that tackling the persistent economic, social and territorial disparities remains a major challenge for the future of the EU;

38. Recalls that social, economic and territorial cohesion are objectives of the EU Treaty and their achievement requires addressing both structural and new challenges, promoting resilient societies and economies and a framework to harness globalisation;

39. Highlights the seventh report on economic, social and territorial cohesion, 'My Region, My Europe, Our Future' which 'shows how much cohesion policy is vital to Europe, its citizens, its economy and its cities and regions and that reconciling sustainable economic growth with social progress, as cohesion policy is helping to do, is as essential as ever' ⁽¹¹⁾;

40. Calls for a strong cohesion policy beyond 2020 for all regions, based on the principle of European partnerships, shared management and multi-level governance as requested by the #CohesionAlliance Declaration;

41. Regrets that only a minority of citizens are aware of the positive effects of cohesion policy. Calls therefore for concerted efforts of all levels of governance to make the effects of different elements of the EU's policies and funds better known;

42. Highlights that the EU urban agenda helps to tackle issues ranging from urban mobility to air quality, from circular economy to inclusion of migrants and refugees. Further emphasises the importance of urban-rural partnerships to tackle these issues more effectively. It also supports cities and regions to develop place-based innovation ecosystems and to implement smart specialisation strategies;

43. Underlines that Services of General Interest (SGIs) and Services of General Economic Interest (SGEIs) are an integral part of the European social model and social market economy, ensuring that everyone has the right and possibility to access essential goods and high-quality public services; advocates widening the concept of SGEI to new social services, such as reception and integration of refugees and migrants, social housing, minimum income or digital infrastructure;

44. Calls for more European partnerships between municipalities, cities and regions, including through twinnings, to operate as global forerunners in order to implement best practices in tackling societal challenges and latest scientific knowledge;

(c) Answering migration and ensuring integration

45. Points out that in the perception of Europe's citizens, the challenge of migration is one of the touchstones of how 'solidarity' is put into practice but that a common understanding of what solidarity means in this context still needs to be built; stresses the key role that local and regional authorities have to play in facilitating the reception and integration of migrants and in organising an open, rationale and humane debate about these sensitive questions;

⁽¹¹⁾ European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy, Seventh report on economic, social and territorial cohesion: My Region, My Europe, Our Future, September 2017.

46. Insists that municipalities, cities and regions must be supported in their roles in both crisis management and long-term integration. The EU needs to provide a coherent policy framework for migration, as well as sufficient targeted financial and technical support in addition to the Member States, to facilitate the integration of migrants at the local level;

47. Underlines that integration policies for migrants must be developed in partnership between all levels of governance and supported also by appropriate financial instruments from the EU level as part of a comprehensive EU migration policy. In order to guarantee the highest chances of successful integration in the interest of both the migrants and the host society, several factors such as the migrants' professional and language skills, existing family ties, their preferences and possible pre-arrival contacts with a host country should be taken into consideration;

48. Notes that an effective and humane management of the EU's external borders and the development of a comprehensive migration policy and a common EU asylum system with common high standards are essential for all municipalities, cities and regions, in particular those hosting refugees and those situated at borders particularly affected by migratory peaks; stresses also that such a policy must comprise a coordinated approach to humanitarian protection, new paths for regular migration including circular migration schemes as well as efforts to combat the causes of migration and fighting human trafficking in all its forms, particularly the trafficking of women and children for sexual purposes and that this requires both new political commitment at all levels, and the appropriate means;

(d) Ensuring social rights and access to education and promoting cultural heritage

49. Highlights that citizens strongly feel the need for the EU's social dimension to be developed throughout all EU policies and programmes, in complementarity to the existing national or regional gender equality and social protection schemes. Articles 8 and 9 TFEU provide a basis for that and should therefore be properly enforced. The CoR also supports the implementation of the social pillar regarding which LRAs should play a fundamental role and calls for a Social Progress Protocol to be included into the EU Treaties; aims at putting social rights on a par with economic rights; welcomes the fact that the Social Pillar has been included in the European Semester. The CoR supports the idea of a social scoreboard in the European Semester and is also of the opinion that social targets of a binding nature must be brought into EU primary legislation;

50. Insists that social investment should not be seen purely as a burden on the public purse. Financing social policies and protecting social rights, as identified at the Gothenburg Summit in November 2017, has a clear European added value which is fundamental in rebuilding citizens' trust in the integration process;

51. Underlines the key importance of helping citizens to access local and fair labour markets to eradicate unemployment, with special measures to help those groups most affected by it; seeks to draw up a plan for social targets to be included in a forward-looking social policy action programme, containing specific measures and concrete legislative follow-up investing in people, skills, knowledge, social protection and inclusion;

52. Calls for an EU that is fully committed to promoting equality between women and men and, in particular, to the prevention and elimination of violence against women, which is a universal, structural and multidimensional problem that generates incalculable personal, social and economic costs;

53. Insists that it is essential to invest in young people and calls on the EU to support LRAs in addressing the needs in the area of skills and education; calls for a new 'alliance for skills and education' with the objective of boosting public investment in education, promoting mobility (Erasmus+), fostering interregional cooperation in particular in cross-border areas and encouraging people-to-people exchanges not just in a professional context, but also in the cultural sphere;

54. In keeping with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, calls for regional governments to be involved in managing instruments such as the European Social Fund and the funds to support the application of the Youth Guarantee, as it is often at regional level that active employment policies, including social innovation and equality policies, are implemented;

55. Emphasises that in the field of education, it would be beneficial for school curricula to include the various elements which we share as Europeans, in different areas such as history, culture, heritage and even the European integration project itself. In any case, it furthermore highlights the importance of the work usually undertaken by local and regional authorities to make the European project known among school students;

56. Recalls that cultural heritage in its diverse forms is a major asset for Europe: it is a resource with the potential to become a key lever for more cohesive and sustainable regions in the EU that can help strengthen identity in a region as well as in Europe as a whole, and particularly embodies the EU's motto of 'united in diversity';

57. Stresses that tourism and creative industries can transform the regions' cultural heritage into an opportunity for job-creation and economic spill-over, including through innovation and smart specialisation strategies.

58. Underlines that the European Union must champion and enhance the linguistic and cultural diversity to which it is home, foster knowledge of it, and promote innovation and interregional cooperation in all cultural fields, as well as new business models in the cultural and creative industries;

(e) Boosting research, innovation and digital transformation

59. Considers that European funding programmes based on research, innovation, exchange, partnership and mobility that are provided in smart cities can enable better services for citizens thus improving their quality of life, and stresses that cohesion and the common agricultural policies can be vibrant and forward-looking also through Research and Innovation;

60. Calls for increasing the scale of innovation in the public sector and in businesses, including by the help of initiatives like 'Science meets regions', bringing together politicians and scientists to discuss evidence-informed decision-making, allowing Europeans to co-create their future;

61. Highlights that digital transformation and e-governance support local public administrations. Citizens and business communities appreciate the European added value of such investments often as part of cross-border or interregional cooperation (including broadband for all), because they strengthen the resilience of the local economy and help in improving the quality of life at local and regional level;

62. Highlights that cities are places — both physical and digital — where people can meet, encounter new ideas, explore new possibilities, design the future in an innovative way, learn about how society is changing and what the implications are for citizens. Cities can therefore accelerate the process of local communities becoming digitally connected throughout Europe;

63. Therefore recalls that digital transformation represents a new instrument for cohesion and an effective tool for tackling demographic challenges: remote and rural areas, and the outermost regions, need to remain connected and transform their natural disadvantages into assets in line with the principle of territorial cohesion. Innovation hubs, living labs, fab-labs, design studios, libraries, incubators, innovation camps supported by the EU and local actors boost local economy and facilitate stakeholders' accession to digital technologies;

(f) Supporting the development of rural areas, securing the Common Agricultural Policy and promoting local production

64. Recalls that rural and intermediate areas account for 91 % of the EU's territory and are home to 60 % of its population, and recalls that there is a significant development lag between urban and rural areas, where a sense of abandonment translates into growing Euroscepticism; therefore it considers that both the Common Agriculture Policy and Cohesion Policy need to continue to act as solidarity-based instruments to promote renewal in sustainable and innovative agriculture and rural development and it stresses that rural areas should be taken into account in all EU policies;

65. Interregional cooperation can be a key ingredient in optimising smart specialisation strategies, by generating synergies and maximising the performance of the global innovation drive;

66. Emphasises that the way we produce and consume food has a tremendous local and global impact not only on the citizens' well-being, environment, biodiversity and climate, but also on our health and economy; calls for the development and promotion of local markets and short food chains as food systems with a specific local dimension and urges that high-quality European production be promoted;

67. Considers the cuts in the second pillar of the CAP to be disproportionate and is concerned that this measure could be to the detriment of rural areas and the European Commission's goal of strengthening environmental and nature protection, as well as the EU's climate and resource protection objectives;

(g) Sustainability, environmental protection and the fight against climate change

68. Points out that citizens expect global and local action to fight climate change and promote energy efficiency. Sustainability should therefore be mainstreamed in all EU policies with particular regard to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, cleaner mobility, renewable energy generation and through carbon sinks and sustainable production and consumption. The CoR calls on the EU to provide a sound legal and political framework, within which regions and cities can develop their own initiatives to promote the achievement of the Paris targets;

69. Recalls that the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy and bottom-up implementation initiatives play a crucial role in achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement, and calls on the EU to support the development of locally determined contributions to CO₂ reduction; sustainability and environmental protection in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the EU's other international commitments should be therefore mainstreamed in all EU policies;

70. Underlines the need for greater synergies between networks, projects and agreements aimed at addressing climate change and those dealing with disaster resilience, such as the Sendai Framework;

(h) Cooperation beyond the EU to support stability and development

71. Recalls that the role played by LRAs in the cross-border cooperation and city-diplomacy activities beyond the EU, in particular in the enlargement process and the EU's neighbourhood, is crucial to promote grass-root democracy, sustainable development and stability;

72. Recalls that local authorities have a major role ensuring the security of citizens by preventing violent radicalisation and protecting public spaces; considering the cross-border and transnational nature of crime and terrorism, citizens and LRAs are facing the need for cooperation and will benefit from the added value of the EU action for joint projects;

73. Recalls the CoR's position that any proposal for trade liberalisation agreements must be preceded by a territorial impact assessment. Also reiterates that mechanisms at the national and local levels should be put in place to access relevant information on trade policy. Moreover, trade negotiations should be accompanied by a formal and participative dialogue between the responsible national authorities and local and regional authorities. This is crucial in particular where trade negotiations also cover areas of shared competences with Member States as in these cases, competences of the local and regional level are most often affected;

Ensuring the necessary room to manoeuvre for cities and regions: a European post 2020 budget that meets ambitions and uses flexibilities to act and invest

74. Highlights that the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) must reflect the priorities and ambitions of the EU to meet its Treaty obligation and the expectations of its citizens; defends an MFF representing 1,3 % of the EU-27 Gross National Income (GNI);

75. Underlines that the EU budget should not be understood as a trade-off between net-payers and net-receivers, but as a joint tool to achieve our common objectives by providing added value throughout Europe. Therefore supports the findings of the Commission that we are all beneficiaries of the MFF because whereby the positive effects of a common market, security and cohesion outweigh the individual financial contribution to the EU;

76. Stresses that the future of the EU is dependent on an ambitious and efficient EU budget following the principle that additional tasks for the EU should also go hand in hand with additional resources and the phasing out of the rebates on national contributions;

77. Stresses that any recentralisation of the European budget, particularly through undermining shared management programmes and place-based approaches, could jeopardise cohesion in the Union and must be avoided;

78. Recalls that public service quality is a key determinant of trust in institutions as citizens assess governments from the perspective of their experience of service delivery and, taking into account that more than one third of all public expenditure and more than half of public investment is carried out at the sub-national level, stresses that the level of public investment in the EU remains too low to provide the right public infrastructure and services. Closing the public investment gap is therefore crucial;

79. Points out the need, 10 years after the financial crisis which has greatly damaged the public investment of local and regional authorities, to strengthen their investment capacity by providing them with the necessary fiscal space needed to support public investments, promoting local solutions by strengthening the principles of shared management based on partnership and multi-level governance and by excluding public co-financing of EU programmes from the debt calculations in the context of the Stability and Growth Pact;

Building our union from the bottom up: the way forward for an EU democratic revival is possible through a grassroots engagement

(a) *Empowering EU action: the right action must be taken at the right level*

80. Firmly believes that the proper application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality is of utmost importance in bringing the European Union closer to its citizens; recalls the importance of decisions being taken as close to citizens as possible and stresses the need for a fully accountable and transparent system of decision-making in the EU where citizens are able to recognise clearly who is politically responsible and accountable for the decisions taken⁽¹²⁾;

81. Emphasises that the shared responsibility and the close link between the principles of multi-level governance and subsidiarity are crucial elements of a genuinely democratic European Union;

82. Highlights that consistent application of the subsidiarity principle must in future be the EU's safeguard. This means 'more Europe where more is needed' and 'less Europe where less is needed', which will lead towards a more efficient and performing European Union. The mere logic of protecting Member States' interests against EU interference is counterproductive when discussing the future of Europe; is aware of its own role as one of the 'guardians' of the subsidiarity principle and considers that the subsidiarity principle should be seen as a dynamic political and legal concept in policy making and policy implementation, with the purpose of ensuring that the most appropriate levels take the right action at the right time and in the best interests of the citizens; is reassured in these convictions by the final report of the Task Force on Subsidiarity and Proportionality which stresses a new 'active subsidiarity' understanding; will seek to implement the Task Force recommendations in close cooperation with the other EU institutions, national parliaments and local and regional authorities across the Union;

83. Reiterates its call to codify and implement the principles of multilevel governance and partnership in an inter-institutional Code of Conduct, and for them to be reflected in the Inter-Institutional agreement on Better Law Making. Beyond cohesion policy, multilevel governance shall be incorporated into all legislative and regulatory provisions of policies which have a regional impact⁽¹³⁾;

⁽¹²⁾ CoR Resolution on the European Commission White Paper on the Future of Europe — Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025 (2017/C 306/01).

⁽¹³⁾ CoR Opinion on the Reflection Paper on the future of EU finances, COR-2017-03718, Rapporteur Marek Woźniak.

84. Deems it crucial to counteract any shifts towards centralisation, and to support the development of appropriate, place-based and effective solutions on the ground, notably in the future cohesion policy, serving as a model for governance also in other policy areas;

85. Recommends developing further the existing Territorial Impact Assessments (TIAs) in order to create effective feedback loops that take into account the diversity of EU regions and the very different repercussions of EU policies on different LRAs;

(b) Involving regions and cities: renewing European democracy through ownership and effectiveness

86. Stresses that the EU policies need to give people a proactive place in addressing the issues that are important to their lives. People seek solutions at the local level, better engagement in defining problems and help to deal with them. This people-centred, citizens-driven approach can solve many local challenges and demonstrate how the EU is relevant to citizens; it also means focusing the EU policy on strengthening the role of cities and regions with citizens' engagement through public-private-people partnerships;

87. Underlines that LRAs bring an added value to EU policies acting as laboratories to develop and implement new forms of societal innovations, solidarity and inclusive policies that citizens are expecting from the European Union;

88. Notes that this also means that not all citizens' problems can be solved through detailed rules in EU legislation. The principle of subsidiarity is not just about whether it is legally possible for the EU to legislate, but also whether the solutions make sense for citizens. If people think that the EU comes up with solutions that are meaningless in their daily life, it will only create greater resistance against the EU;

89. Is convinced that the EU's institutional system will have to continue to evolve and to be adapted to new challenges in the interest of achieving inclusive, transparent, democratic and effective decision-making; underlines that the role of local and regional authorities as represented by the CoR needs to be more fully recognised, both in the day-to-day running of EU affairs and in future adjustments to the EU Treaties where the CoR should be represented with full rights in any future Convention;

90. Strongly believes that the local and regional dimension needs be acknowledged in the European Semester and that LRAs therefore should be involved from the beginning of the preparation of the Annual Growth Survey, in the drafting of the Country Reports and in the National Reform Programs; is convinced that to this end, the macroeconomic imbalance procedure (MIP) scoreboard should be enriched with regional indicators that will help promote and sustain the regional dimension of the EU Semester process;

91. Considers that the democratic legitimacy of the EU and in particular of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) needs to be strengthened with the principles of social progress and equality of opportunity being at the heart of EU decision making so that employment and social standards are not being treated as peripheral to the macroeconomic adjustment process;

92. Considers that a better involvement of regions and of regional parliaments in the EU decision-making process could enhance democratic control and accountability;

(c) Facilitating the citizens' participation in EU policies and co-creating a permanent dialogue with people beyond 2019

93. Recalls also that the EU will gain in trust and credibility only if and when it delivers and if citizens receive clearer explanations of the European added value and the rationale and necessary compromises at the basis of EU decisions. In this sense, the CoR demands much greater efforts in the area of supporting multi-lingual, European media and information formats including easy to understand narratives, the development and deployment of European civic education modules for different levels of education as well as substantial increases in support for people-to-people meetings across European borders (exchange schemes at educational and vocational level, twinning programmes etc.);

94. Stresses that participative instruments such as the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) ⁽¹⁴⁾ should be strengthened; as a complementary tool to the existing structures of representative democracy at EU level, and to innovative additional elements of participative decision making and permanent dialogue, ECIs can help to mobilise citizens around a common cause, highlight the European dimension of key political issues and foster the creation of pan-European debates and corresponding public opinion;

95. Calls on the CoR Members to continue engaging with citizens and listening to them through local events, town hall meetings and citizens dialogues in order to reach every region in the EU 27 and asks the other institutions to join forces; highlights in this context the aim to organise citizens' dialogues in all EU regions by the European elections in 2019 and encourages its members to organise dedicated sessions of their local or regional assemblies together with local citizens and their associations, in order to gather input to the questions on the future of Europe identified in the CoR's own, as well as the European Commission's questionnaire; stresses the crucial importance of decentralised communication on EU policies and the political choices underpinning them and the need for the EU institutions to support local and regional efforts and initiatives in this direction;

96. Highlights that citizens' consultation should also reach out to those citizens who are often ignored or are not interested in consultative processes; it is important to ensure a genuinely inclusive and representative dialogue with citizens to avoid that the debate is monopolised by those who are most mobilised already in favour or against the EU or a particular political issue;

97. Stresses that communication and permanent dialogue with citizens are vital in every political system and therefore essential to increase the democratic legitimacy of the EU and to bring Europe closer to its people;

98. Recalls in this context that engaging citizens must not be limited to the periods leading up to the European elections;

99. Commits to propose ahead of the European elections 2019 a methodology for a permanent and structured system of dialogue between citizens, EU politicians and institutions, involving local and regional authorities through the CoR and based on a transparent process of seeking citizens' input, providing them with the space and information to identify and debate the issues of greatest concern to them, feeding the results into EU policy making and giving proper feedback on the impact of the citizens' contributions;

100. Is convinced that by giving feedback to the citizens, the political work of the CoR members can strengthen the links with the grassroots and reinforce the trust of people in 'EU politics'.

Brussels, 9 October 2018.

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

⁽¹⁴⁾ CoR Opinion on the Regulation on European Citizens' Initiative, COR-2017-04989, Rapporteur Luc Van den Brande.

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Establishment of a European Labour Authority

(2018/C 461/03)

Rapporteur-general: Doris KAMPUS (AT/PES), Regional minister for social affairs, work and integration of the Styrian regional government

Reference document: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a European Labour Authority, 13 March 2018 (text relevant to the EEA and Switzerland)

COM(2018) 131 final

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

Proposal for a decision

Recital 5

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
(5) A European Labour Authority (the 'Authority') should be established in order to help strengthen fairness and trust in the Single Market. To that effect, the Authority should support the Member States and the Commission in strengthening access to information for individuals and employers about their rights and obligations in cross-border labour mobility situations as well as access to relevant services, support compliance and cooperation between the Member States to ensure the effective application of the Union law in these areas, and mediate and facilitate a solution in case of cross-border disputes or labour market disruptions.	(5) A European Labour Authority (the 'Authority') should be established in order to help strengthen fairness and trust in the Single Market. To that effect, the Authority should support the Member States and the Commission in strengthening access to information for individuals and employers about their rights and obligations in cross-border labour mobility situations as well as access to relevant services, support compliance and cooperation between the Member States to ensure the effective application of the Union law in these areas, and mediate and facilitate a solution in case of cross-border disputes or labour market disruptions. <i>This also includes a consistent and effective enforcement grid.</i>

Reason

For clear, fair and effective enforcement of Union legislation on cross-border labour mobility and the coordination of social security systems, national and regional authorities need appropriate enforcement mechanisms, which also develop a dissuasive preventive function.

Amendment 2

Proposal for a decision

Recital 14a (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	<i>(14a) For greater legal certainty and uniform application of law (also for the jurisdiction of local courts), rules are needed on the legal use of information (e. g. admissibility as evidence) gathered in the course of inspections. Steps should be taken to ensure that results from joint inspections can be used in a consistent manner.</i>

Reason

For years, the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) has been recommending that the status of joint measures be clarified across the EU.

Amendment 3

Proposal for a decision

Article 5(c)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
(c) coordinate and support concerted and joint inspections, in accordance with Articles 9 and 10;	(c) strengthen , coordinate and support concerted and joint inspections, in accordance with Articles 9 and 10;

Reason

The nature of concerted and joint inspections of national competent authorities should be considerably enhanced in order to improve enforceability of results.

Amendment 4

Proposal for a decision

Article 5(h) (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	<i>(h) facilitate the continuation of the work of existing, smoothly functioning structures, including EURES cross-border partnerships, which foster cooperation in cross-border regions with a view to supporting fair cross-border mobility.</i>

Reason

The synergies promised by the Commission and the integration of existing, smoothly functioning structures (such as EURES cross-border partnerships which are important to the regions) should be guaranteed and secured in budgetary terms.

Amendment 5

Proposal for a decision

Article 6(c)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
(c) provide relevant information to employers on labour rules, and the living and working conditions applicable to workers in cross-border labour mobility situations, including posted workers;	(c) provide relevant information to employers and employees on labour rules, and the living and working conditions applicable to workers in cross-border labour mobility situations, including posted workers;

Reason

Tailored information should be made available for the whole range of social partners.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a decision

Article 6(g) (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	(g) <i>promote the flow of information between the regions, cities and municipalities concerned by mobility so as to exchange knowledge and experience in a structured fashion and pass it on to other parties.</i>

Reason

Information on local conditions and experience contributes significantly to improvements in cooperation, capacity-building and the use and consolidation of available knowledge.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a decision

Article 7(1)(e) (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	(e) <i>recommend the exchange of good practice between regions, cities and municipalities concerned by mobility and share such experience.</i>

Reason

The exchange of experience in the area of services should also be ensured.

Amendment 8

Proposal for a decision

Article 8(1)(d)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
(d) facilitate cross-border enforcement procedures of penalties and fines;	(d) facilitate cross-border enforcement procedures of national penalties and fines and develop proposals for promoting greater transparency and consistency in the implementation of such national sanctions in a cross-border context;

Reason

Inadequately regulated accountability in the enforcement of national penalties and fines in a cross-border context jeopardises the efficient application of Union legislation in cross-border cooperation between regional authorities.

Amendment 9

Proposal for a decision

Article 9(1)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
1. At the request of one or several Member States, the Authority shall coordinate concerted or joint inspections in the areas under the scope of the Authority's competences. The request may be submitted by one or several Member States. The Authority may also suggest to the authorities of the Member States concerned that they perform a concerted or joint inspection.	1. At the request of one or several Member States the Authority shall coordinate concerted or joint inspections in the areas under the scope of the Authority's competences. The request may be submitted by one or several Member States in accordance with national practices concerning the labour market in the Member States in question. The Authority may also suggest to the authorities of the Member States concerned that they perform a concerted or joint inspection.

Reason

The plethora of national traditions in respect of monitoring compliance with legislation (including institutions cooperating with the national authorities) should be borne in mind.

Amendment 10

Proposal for a decision

Article 9(2)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
Where the authority of a Member State decides not to participate in or carry out the concerted or joint inspection referred to paragraph 1, it shall inform the Authority in writing of the reasons for its decision duly in advance. In such cases, the Authority shall inform the other national authorities concerned.	Where the authority of a Member State decides not to participate in or carry out the concerted or joint inspection referred to paragraph 1, it shall inform the Authority in writing of the reasons for its decision duly in advance. In such cases, the Authority shall inform the other national authorities concerned.

Amendment 11

Proposal for a decision

Article 10(5)(a) (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	<i>5a. In the Member States involved, the results of joint inspections may be used by the competent authorities as evidence with the same legal value as documents collected in their jurisdiction.</i>

Reason

For years, the Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) has been recommending that it be clarified across the EU whether joint measures are legally binding.

Steps to boost cooperation should also entail the legal enforceability of the results of joint inspections being regulated and ensured at all levels of authority.

Amendment 12

Proposal for a decision

Article 11(2)(d) (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	<i>(d) for this knowledge to be kept up to date, regular exchange should be organised with the regions, cities and municipalities most concerned — both in host countries and the countries of origin.</i>

Reason

There should also be steps to ensure regular exchange of information in analysis and risk assessment, as well as input from the regions most concerned.

Amendment 13

Proposal for a decision

Article 18 (new)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
1. The Management Board shall be composed of one senior representative from each Member State and two representatives of the Commission, all of whom have voting rights.	1. The Management Board shall be composed of one senior representative from each Member State, two representatives of the Commission and one representative of the Member States' regional authorities , all of whom have voting rights.
2. Each member of the Management Board shall have an alternate. The alternate shall represent the member in his or her absence.	2. Each member of the Management Board shall have an alternate. The alternate shall represent the member in his or her absence.

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
<p>3. Members of the Management Board representing their Member States and their alternates shall be appointed by their respective Member States in light of their knowledge in the fields referred to in Article 1(2), taking into account relevant managerial, administrative and budgetary skills.</p> <p>The Commission shall appoint the members who are to represent it.</p> <p>The Member States and the Commission shall make efforts to limit the turnover of their representatives on the Management Board in order to ensure continuity of the Board's work. All parties shall aim to achieve balanced representation between men and women on the Management Board.</p> <p>4. The term of office for members and their alternates shall be four years. That term shall be extendable.</p> <p>5. Representatives from third countries, which are applying the Union law in areas covered by this Regulation, may participate in the meetings of the Management Board as observers.</p>	<p>3. Members of the Management Board representing their Member States and their alternates shall be appointed by their respective Member States in light of their knowledge in the fields referred to in Article 1(2), taking into account relevant managerial, administrative and budgetary skills.</p> <p>The Commission shall appoint the members who are to represent it.</p> <p><i>The representative of the Member States' regional authorities shall be appointed by the Committee of the Regions from among its members from EU Member States in which responsibility for employment policy is shared with the regions.</i></p> <p>The Member States, the Commission and the Committee of the Regions shall make efforts to limit the turnover of their representatives on the Management Board in order to ensure continuity of the Board's work. All parties shall aim to achieve balanced representation between men and women on the Management Board.</p> <p>4. The term of office for members and their alternates shall be four years. That term shall be extendable.</p> <p>5. Representatives from third countries, which are applying the Union law in areas covered by this Regulation, may participate in the meetings of the Management Board as observers.</p>

Reason

In some Member States, responsibility for employment policy is shared between the State and the regions: the authority's management board should include one representative of regional authorities, in order to ensure a balanced representation of interests.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

General considerations and general assessment of the proposal

1. welcomes the aim of the proposal, namely consolidating fairness and supporting confidence in the single market by means of more effective application of Union law in the area of cross-border labour mobility and coordination of social security;
2. supports the approach entailing the establishment of a European Labour Authority (ELA) to assist Member States in combating irregularities in the field of free movement of workers, freedom of establishment and freedom to provide services, thus improving the quality of mobility;
3. underlines the observation that abusive use of these freedoms not only weakens the cohesion of the EU, but also leads to considerable social, economic and budgetary constraints being placed on regions, cities and municipalities and on people themselves;
4. reiterates that when this happens, tax revenue and social security contributions are reduced and there is a negative impact on employment, working conditions, competition, local and regional development, welfare and social security;

5. therefore advocates greater consistency and the facilitation of cooperation between national authorities, who currently come up against territorial jurisdictional limitations in the effective enforcement of existing rules in cross-border situations;

6. underlines that better coordination at EU level of sanctions for infringements of legislation on labour mobility could constitute a deterrent to non-compliance and make a significant contribution to a more effective enforcement system, also in the spirit of Articles 81 and 82 TFEU. Moreover, this would strengthen trust and fairness in the Internal Market, by ensuring, inter alia, a clear business environment and a level playing field. For the effective achievement of such a coordination, it is necessary to deploy all the necessary means (such as links between IT platforms or telematics systems or other means of communication);

7. supports the operational role of the ELA, which is to take over the technical tasks of existing structures and incorporate and further develop them in order to plug the gaps in the system and create synergies;

8. points out that tasks and competences should be clearly defined so that at all levels of public administration, supporting cooperation measures are devised in a targeted, efficient manner and duplication of existing structures avoided;

9. points out that in the ELA's proposed remit, there is a broad spectrum of national, regional and local practices and legal situations, and would stress that the ELA's mandate should be compatible with this diversity and accumulated knowledge taken on board;

Critical assessment of the objective and tasks from the regions' perspective

10. stresses that especially those employees who work across borders are in a vulnerable position in Europe because their rights are more easily infringed due to their mobility between their regions of origin and the host regions;

11. underlines that the regional and local level is directly affected by irregularities in matters of cross-border labour mobility, that it has the closest contact with the public and thus with job seekers and employers, and that labour market mobility is to a considerable extent arranged — and arrangeable — along regional lines ⁽¹⁾;

12. emphasises that, because of this key role, provision should be made for local and regional authorities to be appropriately represented on the ELA management board ⁽²⁾;

13. notes that the ELA should cover all areas of the economy and that close involvement of the social partners should be ensured through sectoral and regional representation in the stakeholders' group so that enough account is taken of the various problems;

14. highlights how important it is for achieving the objectives that the ELA's actions be based on an enforceable approach and accountability, while upholding to the same extent the autonomy of national systems;

Subsidiarity and proportionality

15. stresses that the subsidiarity principle has to be complied with fully at every development level of the ELA and all national competences in labour and social policy matters respected;

16. underlines that the proportionality principle must be fully upheld to avoid an additional financial and administrative burden;

17. points out that the establishment of the ELA should aim to strengthen the basic freedoms of the single market and serve as a support for national authorities in those areas where effective application of Union law by Member States is limited by national borders and/or where regional differences cannot be tackled properly at national level;

18. notes that the European Labour Authority has to allow for the different labour market models and priorities that Member States may have. The European Labour Authority should on no account affect the autonomy of the social partners and the central role they play;

⁽¹⁾ CoR opinion on Labour Mobility and Strengthening of EURES (CoR 2014-1315).

⁽²⁾ CoR opinion on the European Pillar of Social Rights (CDR 2868/2016).

19. maintains that this should contribute to an improvement in the quality of mobility as part of existing competences and regulations;

20. points out that positive effects, both for the region of origin and the host region, could be achieved by more efficient cross-border enforcement by national authorities and, in so doing, an increase in tax and social security revenue could be expected and the impact on fair working conditions and competition of greater legal certainty and consistent implementation of legislation could be felt locally ⁽³⁾;

Additional proposals and further regulatory requirements

21. recommends that, given the dynamic nature of the European labour market against a background of demographic change and technological challenges, and in accordance with the subsidiarity and proportionality principles, provision be made for development opportunities for the ELA;

22. deems it essential that, when dealing with cross-border situations, the commitment of all actors involved to a swift, effective and consistent follow-up has to be strengthened in order to achieve a positive impact at regional and local level;

23. recommends that, when dealing with third countries and where applicable, the Authority should build on the Union's macro-regional strategies, which help address, through strengthened cooperation, common challenges faced by a defined geographical area covering Member States and third countries and contribute to the achievement of social, economic and territorial cohesion.

Brussels, 9 October 2018

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

⁽³⁾ <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Documents/Territorial-impact-assessment/TIA-ELA-Labour-Authority-20180704.pdf>

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — The contribution of EU cities and regions to the CBD COP14 and the post-2020 EU Biodiversity Strategy

(2018/C 461/04)

Rapporteur: Roby BIWER (LU/PES) Member of Bettembourg Municipal Council

Reference document: Letter from Frans Timmermans, Vice President, European Commission, April 2018

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

A. Current state of play in meeting biodiversity targets in Europe and across the globe

1. expresses concern at the gravity of biodiversity loss, which is not limited to animal and plant species loss, but also adversely impacts opportunities for the future — economic, environmental and even societal and cultural;
2. highlights the fact that the target dates of two important policy instruments for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity — namely the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD Strategic Plan) and the corresponding 2020 EU Biodiversity Strategy — are approaching soon;
3. reiterates the view that — whilst there is remarkable progress in parts — scientific evidence indicates that the world in general, and many local and regional authorities (LRAs) in particular, are not on track to meet all global Aichi Biodiversity Targets (ABT) and to implement the EU Biodiversity Strategy. However, much can still be achieved by 2020 and the preparatory phase for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework has already started;
4. stresses that the global biodiversity loss, as well as loss and deterioration of ecosystems, is a major threat to the future of our planet; in the overarching political context of achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), tackling and reversing biodiversity loss and restoring ecosystems is a crucial element closely linked to combating climate change;
5. acknowledges the culminating impact of individual local (in)actions as a contribution towards the global biodiversity crisis, which brings to light the danger of 'narrow framing' by dealing with each biodiversity-related case in isolation on a local scale — hence neglecting its impact globally as well as other external impacts — and underlines the need for a balanced micro-macro perspective;
6. maintains that there is sufficient evidence and scientific proof that it is urgent to take more radical, proactive and preventive actions at global, regional and local levels towards halting biodiversity loss and restoring degraded ecosystems now and not to wait any longer (i.e. for the formal assessment of progress in 2020);
7. highlights the inconsistency in policy objectives — horizontally and vertically —, with often contradictory approaches towards environmental issues, including, for example, agricultural or energy policies, which undermines progress in achieving ABT;
8. realises that urbanisation policies of EU Member States still cause landscape fragmentation and urban sprawl, resulting in loss of ecosystems and biodiversity;
9. welcomes the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and their functioning, and the development of a new overarching policy and governance frameworks that support cross border cooperation and calls on the relevant national and regional authorities to start using these instruments to develop coherent policy interventions across borders;

10. asserts the destruction of individual Natura 2000 sites and the current level of illegal killing and trapping of birds and other species and is convinced that greater effort at all levels is needed to meet the requirements of monitoring and enforcing the Nature Directives through appropriate management plans;
11. is disconcerted by the persistence of illegal trading in protected species, the increase in invasive alien species and the unsustainable use of pesticides, such as neonicotinoids, causing a massive decline of pollinators, including bee populations;
12. recalls the urgency of substantially enhancing global and EU efforts to effectively address the world biodiversity crisis and of decoupling economic development from biodiversity loss and related issues, including the subsequent deterioration of ecosystem functions and services;
13. draws attention to the insufficient financial means and instruments for mainstreaming biodiversity action and adequate biodiversity management and the related financial and economic risks of non-action, which is predominant at all levels;
14. stresses the need to focus on the weaknesses in the global and European governance structure, the challenges in the implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan and improving the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework in order to achieve effective implementation through concrete strategies;
15. notes with concern the absence and/or inadequacy of measuring, reporting and verifying (MRV) mechanisms for (voluntary) contributions to assess the progress with implementation of the ABT through National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans (NBSAPs) and Regional Biodiversity Strategic Action Plans (RBSAPs);
16. urges the early involvement of all relevant stakeholders in preparations for the next phase in formulating the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Frameworks — globally and at EU-level;

B. Actions and responsibilities until 2020

17. thinks it appropriate to use the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) 14th Conference of Parties (CBD COP14) as a major opportunity to identify what can actually still be achieved by 2020, so that clear and achievable commitments can be formulated;
18. stresses the important role of LRAs in implementing the ABT in the remaining two years;
19. highlights the importance of an adequate multilevel governance framework for coordinated action by LRAs, the EU and its Member States on further implementation of the ABT and the delivery of the European Biodiversity Strategy by 2020;
20. backs the European Union's decision to ban widely used pesticides, such as neonicotinoids, because of the serious danger they pose to non-target insects such as pollinators, which are crucial for plant reproduction in forests, urban green areas and crop fields, and therefore vital for global food production. The Committee emphasises the role of LRAs in limiting the use of pesticides — with due regard to the differences that exist between the Member States in terms of the division of responsibilities — including through initiatives such as 'Pesticide-Free Towns' and 'Bee-Friendly Cities';
21. advocates an increase of resources (legal, financial and human) for LRAs who wish to do so to adequately develop their direct competences in matters of protection, planning, sustainable use, management, restoration and monitoring of biodiversity and ecosystems, including sites of greater conservation interest;
22. highlights the importance of LRAs being provided with tools and mechanisms to access high quality information on status and trends of species, habitats, ecosystems and their services;

23. calls on EU Member States to establish an integrated approach to the development and implementation of national, subnational and local biodiversity strategies and action plans (LBSAP), along the lines suggested in the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Guidelines of the CBD Secretariat and ICLEI, where they are not already in place, and to improve LRA involvement in setting up, reviewing and implementing NBSAPs in order to support their effective delivery and their integration into planning — vertically and horizontally — and sectors whose activities impact biodiversity (positively or negatively);

24. underlines the need to increase biodiversity funding, particularly investments in Natura 2000, throughout EU funding instruments, including the Structural and Cohesion Funds, and also welcomes support tools such as eConservation which offers a database with valuable information about biodiversity funding opportunities by public donors;

25. proposes best practices be provided on the removal of perverse subsidies in different sectoral policy fields in order to increase the coherence of EU action for biodiversity protection and carry out assessments of environmentally harmful subsidies to better steer the EU budget towards sustainable development; earmarking of financial resources must give a high priority to sustainable development;

26. welcomes the efforts of the EU's Horizon 2020 programme to intensify research and innovation activities exploring the potential of Nature-based Solutions (NBS) and Green and Blue Infrastructures (GI) for regenerating urban areas which it sees as good building blocks for improving the implementation of the EU biodiversity strategy in urban and densely populated areas, including in the period 2020-2030 and in conjunction with the EU Urban Agenda; underlines, however, the need to further foster implementation of the EU Nature Directives, and stresses that these programmes on NBS and GI must not be considered a replacement for, but can be useful additions to, strong biodiversity and ecosystem services actions in peri-urban and rural areas;

27. highlights the fact that funds from the various existing financing instruments should be managed directly by the competent and mandated regional and local bodies responsible for conservation and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems in accordance with the ABT;

28. calls for a strengthening of the role of LRAs in preventing illegal trading by establishing biodiversity-oriented procurement rules and for halting the increase of invasive alien species, notably by providing frameworks for collaborative, joint activities in cross-border situations in the interest of integrated species migration and biodiversity management; highlights the role of existing strategic networks such as the Trans-European Network for Green Infrastructure (TEN-G) in providing cross-border green infrastructures and corridors through cross-border cooperative management and action plans;

Central Role of Local and Regional Authorities in the Implementation of the CBD Strategic Plan and the EU Biodiversity Strategy up to 2020

29. confirms and welcomes the increasing recognition of the role of local and regional authorities at EU level in delivering on the European Biodiversity Strategy;

30. believes that LRAs should be actively involved in the creation and implementation of policies for the removal of counter-productive subsidies and mainstreaming biodiversity in different sectoral policy fields, including agriculture as well as urban and regional development (through the relevant EU Funds);

31. encourages LRAs to step up work to mainstream biodiversity considerations in land-use and urban planning as an effective instrument to facilitate contributions to implement the ABT;

32. reasserts the role of LRAs in running, on a voluntary basis, awareness-raising programmes and platforms aimed at highlighting the importance of protecting and restoring our biodiversity and ecosystems and their services;

33. encourages LRAs to engage in international, European and national standardisation and certification processes for managing biodiversity and ecosystems, including tools to use as references and to support uptake of a coherent biodiversity governance and management framework;

C. Towards an effective and operational post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

34. welcomes the Resolution from the Parliament on the EU Action Plan for Nature, People and Economy adopted at the end of 2017, which asks the Commission to start working without delay on the next EU Biodiversity Strategy, in line with the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) formulation process;

35. recognises the need to reinforce the political commitment at global and EU level to address the global biodiversity crisis and raise the ambitions in the post-Aichi decade 2020-2030;

36. expects CBD COP15 to generate renewed global attention and commensurate commitments to not only halt the loss of, but actually to restore biodiversity and ecosystems and to establish an ambitious, inclusive post-2020 GBF until 2030 that is capable of achieving the 2050 Vision of the CBD and other relevant UN Agreements;

37. urges the EU to take responsible leadership in the global preparatory process towards a post-2020 GBF and establish an 'external biodiversity policy' — or contribute to a 'global interior biodiversity policy' — determining the EU's responsibility as a global leader in biodiversity;

38. calls on the EU and all parties of the CBD COP to strengthen and formalise the dialogue and participation of LRAs (and other non-party stakeholders) in the development and implementation of the new policy framework;

39. encourages the EU to engage in cross-regional collaboration with Africa, South America, Asia, and — in particular — China, as host of CBD COP 2020, in order to develop common and coherent approaches to promoting joint interests in meeting the 'renewed' ABT for restoration, sustainable use and management of biodiversity and ecosystems in the decade 2020-2030;

40. highlights the need to translate the Vision for 2050 into tangible terms and pathways that include pragmatic, solutions-oriented responses, to be discussed at CBD COP14;

41. highlights the need for developing the post-2020 GBF by aligning and integrating all relevant environmental UN Agreements, such as UN SDGs, the Paris Climate Change Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), with the — renewed — Aichi Biodiversity Targets, to prevent the separation of biodiversity and ecosystem services from the social and economic goals that they underpin; this will allow biodiversity values to be mainstreamed into other sectors and, hence, policies and planning processes, as well as in cross-border collaboration;

42. urges policy coherence through better integration of biodiversity in particular with SDG 11 'Sustainable Cities and Communities', SDG 14 'Life below Water', SDG 15 'Life on Land' — and more precise and aligned formulations across the different instruments in order to avoid confusion, contradiction and duplication;

43. emphasises the crucial significance of multilevel cooperation and the establishment of an effective and operational multilevel governance structure in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, including LRAs (globally as well as in the EU), for coordinated action towards meeting the 'renewed' ABT;

44. calls for the new post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to explicitly mention the role of LRAs in the mechanism for national monitoring, reporting, and verification;

45. encourages a coherent post-2020 Global Biodiversity Governance structure and mechanism that applies the principles of horizontal mainstreaming, vertical alignment, and cooperative and integrated management linked to measurable targets and reporting mechanisms by and for all levels, including subnational governments, aligned with other international agreements;

46. recommends exploring the possibility of fostering a system of voluntary contributions at the different levels — similar to UNFCCC introducing nationally, regionally and locally determined contributions — commensurate with national circumstances, but at least equally bold and ambitious;

47. reiterates the need to continue with an approach similar to — and in the spirit of — the ABT, introducing clear, time-bound and new measurable targets to halt the loss of, and to restore, biodiversity, nature and ecosystems, as well as effectively eradicate and prevent the introduction of invasive alien species and effectively stop the illegal killing and trading of wildlife in the decade 2020-2030;

48. calls on the EU to provide a strategic and continuous orientation and guidance for EU Member States and other countries for their efforts in addressing threats to, and management of, biodiversity and ecosystem services. Given the understanding that biodiversity loss is driven by a multitude of individual cases and decisions, guidance should include principles and criteria for assessing the impacts of these derived from, and compared with, global biodiversity targets to avoid 'narrow framing';

49. considers a coherent monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) approach very important for the accounting of progress within the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the periodical stock-taking of the implementation of its long-term goals. This must be done in a comprehensive and facilitative manner, focusing on (1) halting biodiversity loss, (2) restoring biodiversity and ecosystems, (3) sustainable use and management of biodiversity and ecosystems. This should be done through prevention of arrival and eradication of invasive alien species, and stopping illegal killing and trading of wildlife, and monitoring and verifying biodiversity indicators. MRV must be as objective as possible and based on the best available science, providing for the attribution of quantified impacts to policies and action, visibility of progress and achievements, and identification of needs for correction or further action;

50. urges the mapping and monitoring of national contributions, including regional and local, against global targets under the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to allow for tracking and periodical stock-taking of collective pledges;

51. favours the creation of a common scientific and technical knowledge base on biodiversity which would involve developing comparable methods of detection, establishing common monitoring rules and creating appropriate platforms for management and dissemination of data and knowledge;

52. wishes to see greater awareness of resources and services (environment, tourism, agriculture, crafts, energy, services and the social economy) offered by subnational levels in order to promote a better meshing of biodiversity conservation measures with the planning at different levels of government and with subnational socioeconomic development initiatives;

53. calls for a deepening and dissemination of knowledge of good practices in the management of Natura 2000 areas at European level and the promotion of a regular dialogue with the relevant management bodies, as well as the involvement of various public and private stakeholders in the locality that work in biodiversity;

54. proposes the introduction of operational 'SMART' (specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, and time-bound) targets in the post-2020 framework, moving from status-related, non-measurable goals, towards result-oriented, 'pressure-related' targets, defined in clear and operational manner and language, and allowing for progress to be measured and reported in comparison to the targets;

55. acknowledges the need for more compelling and easily communicable goals and targets in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, while also updating and/or replacing the time bound Aichi targets, including the following: (1) Strategic goal B on reducing direct pressure on biodiversity and promoting sustainable use should incorporate sustainable use of terrestrial species alongside fish and invertebrate stocks and aquatic plants under Target 6; (2) Strategic goal D on enhancing benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services should acknowledge the contribution of biodiversity to human health — apart from those mentioned in targets 14, 15 and 16 — with additional targets on issues such as pharmaceutical use, medicinal plants, nutrition, mental health and health promotion, etc., as well as a recognition of the links between biodiversity, peace and conflict and migration of people; (3) increased attention to the services offered by soil, freshwater and the high seas and their respective biodiversity, and (4) measures in respect of nature and ecosystem services aimed at improving the living environment in cities and peri-urban areas, including from the perspective of climate change;

56. points out to local communities the importance of seeing biodiversity as an opportunity in economic, social and employment terms, including in relation to social inclusion needs, and of experimenting with new local cooperation models based on the dissemination of social and environment provisions designed to improve biodiversity;

57. calls for joint biodiversity indicators to be built on, added to and to be aligned across all relevant international frameworks, including in particular the SDGs, in order to avoid duplication, to promote effective, integrated measurability and implementation and to leverage transformational change in the interest of eradicating poverty, promoting climate mitigation and adaptation and increasing food resilience in local communities;
58. calls for more capacity development opportunities — including the necessary financial means and innovative, activating methods such as peer-to-peer learning — to strengthen technical knowledge and skills for halting biodiversity loss, restoring biodiversity and ecosystems as well as preventing invasive alien species and illegal killing and trading of wildlife, at all levels, involving Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), experts and professionals (including hunters, fishers, shepherds and foresters) in managing biodiversity;
59. proposes stronger partnerships and support for collective action amongst all stakeholders and the wider public, with special attention to contributions from Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), women, young people and those directly relying on and managing biodiversity (including hunters, fishers, shepherds and foresters) and the stopping of illegal killing and trading of wildlife. The CoR reiterates the need for increasing technical assistance and/or guidance (not only for EU local and regional authorities but also for transit and source regions of wildlife trafficking), capacity building and rights-based instruments for an effective participatory process integrating the principles of good governance;
60. encourages the development of international standards for Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans and integrated management and planning, as well as other instruments related to the future governance and management mechanism to facilitate uptake and coherence;
61. recognises the importance of global biodiversity modelling and scenarios for better informed and sound biodiversity management decisions and the development of innovative data collection systems or the expansion of existing systems with data on biodiversity;
62. encourages the creation of a global platform for knowledge transfer, monitoring and reporting on implementation of commitments by nations and LRAs for engaging LRAs in exchanging and snowballing best practices and supporting MRV;
63. insists on the need to increase biodiversity funding — globally, in the EU and domestically — targeted at specific local contexts. This should include appropriate guidance to ease access and effective and efficient deployment of available funding instruments, as well as regular systematic evaluation of results to avoid adverse effects and conflicts between different policy objectives;
64. recommends the benefits be explored and exploited of new and innovative financing options, including tax incentives, payments for ecosystem services, regional/national lotteries, a dedicated biodiversity fund at EU and/or global level, and the combination and blending of financing, as well as related structural innovations, such as public-private partnerships for biodiversity, private-business foundations, foundations under public law, and incentives for action through, for example, voluntary labelling/certification;
65. commits itself to continuously and proactively engaging in the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework preparatory process in the spirit expressed in this opinion.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

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

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Communication on a European Strategy for Plastics in a circular economy

(2018/C 461/05)

Rapporteur: André VAN DE NADORT (NL/PES), mayor of the municipality of Weststellingwerf

Reference document: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on A European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy

COM(2018) 28 final

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

A. General remarks

The Committee of the Regions:

1. Welcomes the European Commission's Communication on a European Strategy for Plastics in a circular economy, and the challenges and key actions identified, and stresses that ambition is needed to make the transition towards a circular economy and to tackle the societal and environmental challenges and practical issues relating to plastics. Takes note in this context of the legislative proposals by the European Commission to target the ten single-use plastic products found most often on EU beaches and in EU seas which, together with abandoned fishing gear, constitute 70 % of all marine litter.
2. Recognises that plastics — being a highly durable, hygienic and inexpensive material — have a number of benefits, but is deeply concerned about the current low collection and recycling rates for plastics and believes that current practices to tackle this challenge are focussed too much on end-of-pipe solutions (collection, sorting, processing).
3. Stresses the key role and interest of local and regional authorities in the development and implementation of solutions for plastics in a circular economy. The responsibilities of local and regional authorities (LRAs) concern waste management and environmental protection: including elements such as waste prevention, collection, transport, recovery (including sorting, reuse and recycling), disposal and cleaning up litter, in streets, on coasts, in lakes and in the sea, supporting fisheries and tourism and building awareness about waste, littering and recycling matters among their citizens.
4. Focusses on the circular future of plastics from a local and regional perspective. This means less plastics, better plastics, better collection, better recycling and better markets.
5. Strongly believes that better cooperation and a material-chain approach between all stakeholders in the plastics value chain are essential for effective solutions. The measures must target all links in the value chain, including product design, plastics manufacturing, procurement, consumption, collection and recycling.
6. Emphasises the role of innovation and investment towards circular solutions in promoting the social and behavioural changes needed for the transition to a circular economy as a crucial step towards implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals at EU, national, regional and local level; asks therefore the European Commission and the EU Member States, during their negotiations on the next MFF, to fully explore options for an increase in EU funding for the circular plastics economy.

B. Less plastics

Prevention is the first priority to reduce plastic waste

7. Points out that plastic waste prevention should be the first priority in line with the overall EU waste hierarchy. Plastic that does not end up as waste will not need sorting, processing or incineration. Waste prevention starts with limiting the use of plastics, and through product design.

8. Recalls that there are many ways to avoid the unnecessary use of plastics in single-use products and the over-packaging of products. The essential criteria for packaging need to be strengthened in order to prevent unnecessary packaging and over-packaging and to regularly verify whether key products on the EU market fulfil these criteria.

9. Requests further research on the relation between packaging and food preservation on a life-cycle basis and possible alternative approaches to prevent food waste without the use of (complex) plastic packaging.

Prevention of litter and plastic soup and decrease of single-use products

10. Underlines the major concern about plastic litter: cleaning up has a high cost for LRAs and prevention of littering, both on land and at sea, is therefore essential.

11. Supports the European Commission's initiative for a legislative proposal on single-use plastics, proposing objectives limiting the use of single-use plastics, since most of the plastic litter on our streets originates from single-use plastics. In this regard, takes the recent proposals focussing on the most wide-spread single-used products on beaches and in the sea as an important first step, but expects further ambitious action to address also littering by other single-use plastic items and on land.

12. Expects ambitious collection targets for single-use and on-the-go plastic applications covered by an extended producer responsibility (EPR) system, for example, plastic beverage packaging to be part of the producer responsibility in order to curb litter.

13. Stresses that producers and importers have full responsibility for the negative impact of their products when they become litter, and that they must therefore take full responsibility for the cost for collection and treatment of the littering of their waste.

14. Highlights the various difficulties of specific communities and regions of the EU, i.e. Outermost Regions, river communities, islands, coastal and harbour communities in the fight against marine litter and stresses the particular importance of involving stakeholders from these communities to ensure that their voices are taken into account in finding positive and practically applicable solutions.

15. Supports the organisation of awareness-raising campaigns on littering and clean up actions; promotes the participation of local and regional authorities (LRA) in events such as the 'Let's Clean Up Europe' campaign and the European Week for Waste Reduction and encourages LRA to come up with additional initiatives and explores the possibilities of involving volunteers through the European Solidarity Corps.

16. Strongly supports against this background the principle included in the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships (COM(2018) 33) that the fees for the use of port reception facilities shall be reduced if the ship's design, equipment and operation are such that the ship produces reduced quantities of waste, and manages its waste in a sustainable and environmentally sound manner.

Prevention of microplastics

17. Highlights that microplastics are an increasingly widespread and problematic phenomenon, which by now can be found in nearly any part of every ecosystem including the human diet. The effects of microplastics on animal and human health and on our ecosystems are to a large extent still unknown.

18. Advocates further research into the major sources and routes of microplastics, such as wear and tear from car tyres, textiles and litter, including the relation between plastics recycling and microplastics and the effects of microplastics on animal and human health and ecosystems. Therefore also emphasises the need to establish reliable and effective measuring technology and processes, and calls on the European Commission to support research and development activities for this matter.

19. Calls for a ban on oxo-degradable plastics and intentionally added microplastics in all products where they are not necessary from a human health point of view, including skin-care products and cleaning agents. The CoR also calls for minimum requirements on the release of unintentional microplastics from products such as car tyres and textiles, and on measures to reduce plastic pellet losses.

C. Better plastics

Better design of plastics

20. Strongly believes that there is an urgent need for a better design of plastics, taking into account the possibilities for future separate collection, sorting and recycling of plastics and plastic products in order for plastics to become a sustainable element in the circular economy, and underlines that there is a strong need for innovation in this area.

21. Emphasises that in a circular economy, we should in principle not accept non-recyclable products or materials to be put on the EU market. Therefore by 2025 all plastics, plastic products and plastic packaging, placed on the EU market, should as a minimum be recyclable in a cost-effective manner. This also requires that environmentally harmful and hazardous substances should be completely removed from plastics and plastic products by 2025.

22. Underlines that a circular economy is also a fossil-free economy. Therefore a strong innovation agenda and subsequent support for the large scale roll-out of fossil-free plastics is needed in order to move from the current fossil-based plastics to innovative, sustainable and environment-friendly plastics.

23. Is convinced that it is necessary to limit the number of different polymers available when making plastic products to polymers which are fit for purpose and easy to separate, sort and recycle, especially for single-use products. EU-level industry standards for these applications may have to be developed for this purpose.

24. Requests further study into the need for harmonisation and possible limitation of additives used in plastics to influence and enhance the physical properties of plastics, in order to further ease and simplify the recycling of plastics and the application of recyclates. EU-level industrial standards for additives in plastics may have to be developed for this purpose.

25. Moreover, takes the view that plastic products other than packaging are also liable to create litter and should therefore be designed to avoid this, and also that producers must provide for the necessary systems to dispose of these products at the end of their useful life.

26. Recalls that Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes can play an important role in promoting eco-design, with a modulation of fees according to the level of circularity of the product, including the possibilities for reuse, separate collection, processing and recycling and on the amount of recycled content. EPR legislation therefore needs to include the responsibility for eco-design. EPR legislation should also refer to EU-level industrial standards for the use of polymers and additives in single-use products.

27. Stresses that it will be important, over the coming decades, to develop materials that do not have the negative impact on health and the environment that all plastics currently have and that can fully replace plastics. The Committee therefore calls for research activities and instruments that can create momentum towards a plastic-free future with new modern materials.

Biodegradable plastics

28. Recognises that the current generation of biodegradable plastics is not an answer to the problem of plastic litter and plastic soup as they do not biodegrade in a natural environment or in water systems.

29. Underlines that for consumers the message that some plastics should be separated as plastic and others as bio-waste, is confusing. This makes the communication to consumers complex and leads to mistakes in the separation of both conventional plastics and biodegradable plastics.

30. Emphasises that biodegradable plastics that end up in the plastics recycling stream hinder the recycling of conventional plastics. Therefore the use of biodegradable plastics should be limited to applications where biodegradability has a specific purpose, e.g. the use of biodegradable bags for the collection of bio-waste.

31. Stresses the need for better definitions and/or standards for the different forms of biodegradability. They should be linked to waste treatment, including standards for compostability and digestibility and take into account common practice in European treatment facilities. This will improve and/or simplify labelling, reduce littering and improve correct sorting, and it will also encourage the innovation of biodegradable plastics.

32. Particularly stresses the importance of ensuring that plastics marketed as being compostable do in fact break down in the environment without requiring industrial composting. This kind of definition can significantly reduce the risk of the spread of microplastics, as there is a risk that consumers may erroneously believe that compostable plastics as currently labelled can break down in the environment with no additional processing.

D. Better collection

33. Emphasises that effective systems for separate collection of plastic waste are an essential requirement for a circular economy of plastics. For this purpose, collection systems have to be simple and logical for their users.

34. Highlights that existing collection systems in EU Member States usually do not target non-packaging plastics which are therefore not separately collected and end up in landfills or incineration plants as a part of residual waste, or even as (marine) litter. This leads to environmental damage, the loss of valuable recyclable materials and to confusion amongst consumers who do not understand why some plastics should be separated for recycling and other plastics not. Better information campaigns and greater consistency between Member States in the rationale of separate waste collection would increase both the amount recycled and the compliance of locals and tourists alike with guidance on separation.

35. Recognises that in those situations where the collection of plastics and plastic products is based on EPR, effective targets have to be set in such a way that producers are incentivised to go beyond the targets whenever possible.

Effective separate collection of plastics

36. Invites the Commission to involve all stakeholders including those active in waste prevention and management of non-plastic materials, to improve separate collection.

37. Stresses that the focus in the collection systems should be on plastics as a material rather than plastics as a packaging product. This would significantly simplify consumer communication and lead to an increase in collection rates. Improved alignment between LRA and EPR schemes would be necessary to address non-packaging plastic waste during dialogue with producers and importers. This also needs to be taken into account in the revision of the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive.

38. Welcomes the preparation of guidelines on separate collection and sorting of waste and asks the European Commission to ensure that LRAs are involved in the process of preparation and dissemination of the guidelines considering the important role they have in many Member States.

39. Emphasises that local and regional waste management strategies should focus on the waste hierarchy, i.e. waste prevention, separate collection and minimisation of residual waste. There are many good examples and experiences of this kind of strategy. Innovation in separate collection should be stimulated and the exchange of best practices and knowledge between LRA should be strongly supported, e.g. through instruments such as the TAIEX peer-to-peer tool or the EU Urban Agenda.

40. Stresses the need to prevent China's ban on plastic leading to more landfill, (illegal) dumping, or incineration and in addition the need to invest in modern recycling capacities.

Public awareness and behavioural change

41. Stresses that for the development of successful waste management strategies, the EC, Member States and LRAs have to be aware of the linkages at local and regional level between infrastructure, communication and public perception and the instruments that can be applied to support behavioural change.

42. Underlines that the public awareness of citizens of waste management is a precondition for the proper functioning of effective collection systems. Public awareness translates into support for separate collection and prevention, and organisation of local initiatives, but by itself it does not necessarily lead to behavioural change. Better understanding of the mechanisms that can contribute to positive behavioural change is therefore essential. The CoR therefore stresses that the further development of strategies to encourage behavioural change both through classical means such as incentives and sanctions, and through innovative methods should be stimulated and the exchange of best practices and knowledge between LRA should be strongly supported.

43. Encourages all local and regional stakeholders to contribute to increase awareness of the advantages of recycled plastics.

The use of a harmonised deposit system for beverage packaging should be considered on a European scale

44. Acknowledges that deposit systems have proven to achieve very high collection rates and high quality recycling and are also very effective in preventing litter and plastic soup.

45. Recognises that an increasing number of EU countries implement deposit systems, causing sometimes negative cross-border effects in regions with different deposit systems.

46. Suggests that a harmonised approach at EU level or at least a maximum of coordination should be considered for those Member States which currently implement deposit systems or which are planning to develop new schemes in the future, in order to prevent negative cross-border impacts and facilitate free movement of goods.

Alternatives to quantitative targets should be explored

47. Notes that targets related to separate collection and recycling of plastics in different EU Directives (Packaging and Packaging Waste, ELV Directive, WEEE Directive) are equal for all Member States, although the actual performance of Member States may differ greatly. This leads to a situation where some Member States still have to make a great effort where others already easily achieve targets and have no incentive to exceed targets.

48. Urges that the target-setting in the various directives should be re-examined in order to create stronger incentives and encourage a higher quality of recycling based on the following possible approaches:

- introduction of a bonus when targets are exceeded,
- expansion of the financial responsibility of producers to the full cost of waste management of their products, including the cost of cleaning up litter or the cost of collection and treatment of their products that have not been separately collected and still end up in residual waste.

E. Better recycling*Development of sorting and recycling technology*

49. Strongly supports research and innovation with regard to new sorting and recycling technologies, including depolymerisation. This could, theoretically, solve many of the current issues related to plastics sorting and recycling.

50. Emphasises the potential of regions and cities to develop and support bottom-up initiatives through living labs, innovation hubs, and other forms of collaborative and innovative approaches to promote smart design and the use of secondary raw materials.

51. Supports the proposed additional investment for priority research and innovation actions in the Strategy and offers to cooperate with the European Commission on the preparation of the new Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda on plastics. Such cooperation should ensure that the local and regional dimension is taken into account both in the identification of the priority problems to be tackled and in the adequate dissemination of innovations produced.

52. Supports the work to develop quality standards for sorted plastic waste and recycled plastics.

Energy recovery is preferable to landfill

53. Recalls that in the short term, unrecyclable plastic waste, or plastic waste which contains hazardous substances, should be treated in the most effective and cleanest waste-to-energy plants where the high energy content of plastic waste can be utilised to generate heat and power.

F. Better markets

The uptake of recycled content in new products should be strongly encouraged

54. Strongly believes that the demand for recycled content by end users should be stimulated through financial incentives that create an actual financially attractive alternative for virgin materials and fossil-based plastics, as well as by removing barriers to a single market for secondary raw materials.

55. Recalls that subsidies still exist on fossil fuels, rendering virgin plastics cheaper than recycled plastics or bio-based plastics, which is a key economic barrier to the development of a circular economy for plastics; insists therefore that such wrong incentives need to be removed. In addition, producers or importers of fossil-based plastics or plastic products could be made financially responsible for the reduction of CO₂ emissions from the final treatment of their plastic waste.

56. Stresses that by 2025, producers of plastic products should use a minimum of 50 % of recyclates in the production of new plastics, unless legal restrictions on the end products prohibit the use of recyclates. Emphasises that a value chain driven approach is required to align the interests of producers, consumers, LRAs, and the recycling industry in order to increase the quality of recycling and the uptake of secondary material.

57. Supports therefore the EU initiative regarding voluntary pledges for companies and/or industry associations and invites LRAs to give visibility to the pledges from stakeholders from their areas, promoting good practice and thus incentivising others to follow, while also checking how the pledges made are being followed-up and, if necessary, also highlight failures, in order to ensure that voluntary pledges are not empty promises used only to greenwash certain products or sectors.

Public procurement

58. Stresses the potential for Europe's public authorities of Green Public Procurement (GPP) in plastic waste prevention as they can use their purchasing power voluntarily to choose environmentally friendly goods, services and works, which also sets an example for other organisations. Invites therefore all LRAs to contribute to the recyclability of plastics through their public procurement policies, by demanding the application of eco-design principles and the use of recycled content in products they procure.

59. Welcomes in this context the guidance which the European Commission and a number of European countries have developed in the area of GPP in the form of national GPP criteria⁽¹⁾ but asks the Commission to propose more detailed guidance documents containing information on the type of recycled plastics, their potential uses and the environmental and potential economic benefits for regional and local authorities in using recycled plastics.

⁽¹⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/pubs_en.htm

60. Highlights that most of the plastic reaching the oceans comes from Asia and that only 9 % of plastic is recycled globally. Against this background, sees great potential to improve sustainability and traceability in global supply chains through the implementation of the EU's new trade strategy 'Trade for All', which aims at using trade agreements and preference programmes as levers to promote sustainable development around the world. Endorses in this context the sectoral 'EU Garment Flagship Initiative' proposed by the European Parliament in March 2017 ⁽²⁾; highlights that such initiatives will also depend on local and regional authorities' support in promoting them and should guide local and regional action in decentralised development cooperation.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

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

⁽²⁾ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2017-0196+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Mainstreaming sport into the EU agenda post-2020

(2018/C 461/06)

Rapporteur: Roberto PELLA (IT/EPP), Mayor of Valdengo, BI**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

General comments

1. aims to look at the economic and human dimension and the social-inclusion role of sport for the European Union and local and regional authorities, as these aspects are inseparable. Sport, defined as a continuum of motor activity and physical activity, relates to a wide range of policies, products and services that intersect and interact with different value chains;
2. points out that according to the most recent estimates, sport is an essential economic sector for the EU, with 'a share in the national economies which is comparable to agriculture, forestry and fisheries combined' ⁽¹⁾, a share which is expected to rise in the future. Moreover, the sports sector represents 2 % of the EU's overall GDP, accounting for 7,3 million jobs across the continent and 3,5 % of total employment in the EU. With regard to the tourism sector, between 12 and 15 million international journeys are planned every year for the purpose of taking part in sporting events or practising an activity. One of the particular features of the sports sector is thus its strong links with other areas of production (e.g. accessible or sports tourism, technology, health, environment, transport, integration, buildings and infrastructure), where it helps both directly and indirectly to create added value ⁽²⁾;
3. notes, however that a study carried out by SportsEconAustria (SpEA) ⁽³⁾ for the European Parliament has shown how the scope and impact of sport in terms of influencing and shaping public policies has been underestimated, particularly when considering occurrences such as volunteering (the majority of sporting activities are carried out by not-for-profit bodies) and the spillover effects of integration and social inclusion processes are factored in, along with the cost of physical inactivity, which amounts to EUR 80 billion per year in the 28 EU countries ⁽⁴⁾, and the medium-term impact on regional health budgets of illnesses caused by a lack of or insufficient exercise;
4. stresses that, despite the growing recognition of physical activity as a major policy concern, a strong gap in knowledge still exists at local level when it comes to the wider benefits of physical activity, as research shows that 66 % of local policymakers are unaware of obesity levels in their communities, and 84 % of overweight levels ⁽⁵⁾;
5. highlights the fact that sport is not a marginal sector, but rather a priority area for EU investment, as alongside competitive activities, the definition of sport nowadays also fully encompasses the areas of motor activity and physical activity, which are useful not only in terms of increasing sporting activity itself, but also in promoting health and the adoption of a healthy lifestyle. An approach to the issue should be taken which aims to provide more equal — in other words balanced, fair and equivalent — access to the various disciplines, as well as to prevent the onset of chronic diseases (in particular non-communicable diseases such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular risk and mental illness, etc.);

⁽¹⁾ European Commission (2014), *Sport as a growth engine for EU economy*, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-14-432_en.htm

⁽²⁾ European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/sport-growth-engine-eu-economy-0_en

⁽³⁾ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/563392/IPOL_STU\(2015\)563392_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/563392/IPOL_STU(2015)563392_EN.pdf)

⁽⁴⁾ Studio ISCA/CEBR 2015 in *Narrative review: the state of physical activity in Europe*, p. 37, and the PASS Project <http://fr.calameo.com/read/000761585fb41d432c387>

⁽⁵⁾ PASS Project <http://fr.calameo.com/read/000761585fb41d432c387>

6. underlines the key role of sport as a health enhancing and well-being factor, as acknowledged, in particular in the Third EU Health Programme and HEPA (Health-Enhancing Physical Activity) monitoring, the WHO 2014-2019 Agenda and the WHO European Database on Nutrition, Obesity and Physical Activity (NOPA);

7. further reminds that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development considers sport an important enabler of sustainable development and recognises its role in better health and education, as well as its contribution to peace, the promotion of tolerance, respect and social inclusion, and the empowerment of women and young people ⁽⁶⁾;

8. notes some of the results from the EuroBarometer on sport ⁽⁷⁾:

— almost half (46 %) of European citizens never exercise or play sport and this proportion has gradually increased in recent years (42 % in 2013), continuing a gradual trend since 2009,

— the rate of participation in sport or exercise decreases among individuals with lower education levels and/or greater economic difficulties,

— ‘informal settings’ for sport, such as parks or outdoor areas (40 %), the home (32 %) or the journey between home and work or school (23 %) are more widespread than locations formally designated to serve this purpose,

— the main motivation for participation in sport or physical activity is improved health and fitness. Lack of time is the principal barrier,

— the majority of Europeans think that there are opportunities to be physically active at local level, but, at the same time many of them feel that their local authorities do not do enough in this regard;

9. points out that the role played by sport in the economy and in contemporary society — including following the economic crisis experienced by EU — entails significant benefits for local and regional authorities in terms of: the permeability of the sectors that it impacts, producing a significant leverage effect; competitiveness, attractiveness and quality of life where sporting events activities are of a significant size and held regularly; employability, considering that European local authorities are very often owners of the facilities; and integration, as a powerful tool for communicating shared EU values which are often expressed more clearly at local level ⁽⁸⁾. Given that sport is increasingly used as a means of achieving social and economic objectives, the demand for effectiveness and efficiency in the sports sector is gradually growing, not only as a means of achieving objectives set, but also as a strategic objective in itself;

Background: existing European initiatives

10. notes that the first policy document on sport, the White Paper on sport, was published by the European Commission in 2007;

11. would like to draw the attention to the fact that sporting, cultural and educational events can provide a framework for breaking down barriers to integration, as stated in the CoR opinion on combating radicalisation and violent extremism ⁽⁹⁾;

12. underlines that the Treaty of Lisbon, which has been in force since December 2009, introduced a specific article — Article 165 TFEU — giving the EU new competences to support sport, by providing provisions on the promotion of sport and calling for EU action to develop the European dimension in sport. Article 6(e) TFEU established that the EU has the competence to carry out actions to support or supplement the actions of the Member States in the area of sport;

⁽⁶⁾ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

⁽⁷⁾ Eurobarometer (release date 22.3.2018), https://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/2018/new-eurobarometer-sport-and-physical-activity_en

⁽⁸⁾ Study on the contribution of sport to regional development through the Structural Funds, https://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/20161018_regional-development-structural-funds_en

⁽⁹⁾ CdR 6329/2015.

13. notes that in 2011, the Commission adopted a communication entitled 'Developing the European Dimension in Sport' ⁽¹⁰⁾, on the basis of which, the Council adopted a resolution on an EU Work Plan for Sport 2011-2014, which further aimed to strengthen European cooperation on sport, by setting priorities for activities at EU level that involve Member States and the Commission. In 2012, the Council adopted conclusions on promoting health-enhancing physical activity and on improving the database for developing sports policies, calling on the Commission to publish regular surveys on sport and physical activity;

14. further notes that, to implement the Work Plan, experts have focused on devising the questionnaire for the current Special EuroBarometer survey;

15. points out that, more recently (2017), an inter-regional initiative on economic development and value creation in the sector was launched in collaboration with the European Platform for Sports Innovation (EPSI). The initiative, named ClusSport, includes 10 countries to date; during the last 18 years ACES Europe promoted the European values through the awards European Capital, City, Community and Town of Sport, under the flag of Europe;

16. notes that a new EU Work Plan on Sport entered into force in July 2017 and outlines the key areas that the Member States and the Commission should prioritise in the run-up to 2020, including: integrity in sport, focusing on good governance, safeguarding minors, combating match fixing and corruption and preventing doping; the economic dimension of sport, focusing on innovation and links between sport and the digital single market; sport and society, focusing on social inclusion, coaching, the media, the environment, health, education and sport diplomacy;

17. reminds, finally, the Commission's most recent initiative, the 'Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle' ⁽¹¹⁾, a roadmap which has prompted a positive dynamic of cross-sectoral collaboration;

Objectives

18. given the potential and the shortcomings identified so far, proposes addressing the following challenges:

- a. improving dialogue between existing projects and the most recent measures put in place in the regions, by encouraging high levels of participation and the sharing of good practices and partnerships (extended to the countries of the enlargement programme);
- b. being more closely in touch with people and the social dimension of sports projects, by making proximity and the 'local' approach their main feature, also reflecting the responsibility that local and regional authorities have with regard to facilities and events;
- c. maximising overall awareness of the benefits of exercise, physical activity and sport;
- d. broadly communicating the positive impact of sport on the EU economy, and therefore ensuring greater integration of sports policy in sectors that it intersects and influences;
- e. driving greater technological innovation and more companies on the basis of tools for local and regional authorities, by encouraging stakeholders in research, technology and education, together with managing authorities, to make a joint effort to develop and implement a common strategy, acting on links with all value chains, both upstream and downstream of the production process, with the utmost attention given to the job opportunities offered by the sector;
- f. considering sport as a genuine right of citizenship, as a tool for socialisation and inclusion, particularly with regard to people with disabilities, and for opening up opportunities for improving quality of life and physical and mental well-being, and as an educational opportunity;
- g. providing support aimed at making sports facilities fully accessible to all, regardless of age, gender, nationality and status, allowing them to be freely used and extending the hours during which they are available to the public;

⁽¹⁰⁾ CdR 66/2011 fin.

⁽¹¹⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/sport/sites/sport/files/ewos-tartu-call_en.pdf

- h. increasing support for and raising the profile of women's sports competitions;
- i. considering sport as an instrument to facilitate social integration and equality;
- j. providing budgetary support for the mobility of amateur sportsmen and -women participating in competitions, especially those from remote, island or outermost regions.

Policy recommendations and proposals

19. points out the opportunity to propose measures and to adopt practical tools with a view to 'Mainstreaming sport into the EU agenda post-2020', through:

Political level

20. making a significant commitment to sport diplomacy, which will promote European values through sport and multi-level, constructive dialogue, involving all levels of government and European institutions such as the European Parliament, through the Intergroup on Sport; the relevant Commission directorates-general; the national and European Olympic committees; and all other stakeholders, including civil society, involved in this process, e.g. through pilot projects;

21. developing external relations and international cooperation projects outside of Europe, in order to add a further dimension to exchange efforts, through mobility projects and sharing knowledge, experience and good practice (communities of practice);

22. developing at European level tools to promote sport as a growth factor for the EU, through: mentoring programmes and soft policy measures (in conjunction with the annual Forum on Sport and the Info Days, for example) and through support for the exchange of best practices; amongst local and regional sporting associations and organisations involved at national and European level, using a bottom-up and participatory approach that takes account of their requests and needs;

23. enhancing the role of European local and regional authorities, by ensuring that the regions are involved actively and in a more coordinated fashion in the annual European Week of Sport — which, since its launch, has been a major source of motivation for undertaking medium and long term policies that have a demonstrable impact on healthy lifestyles and behaviours and on encouraging increased participation by people in the workforce, thereby ensuring greater professionalism and employability for the sports sector;

24. practical support from the European Union towards full implementation in the Member States of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with regard to its sport dimension;

Programme level

25. welcoming the European Commission's proposal to double the Erasmus funding for the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027, as well as its focus on grassroots sports⁽¹²⁾. Calls the Commission to focus in this regard on exchanges of experience between coaches, sports officials and professionals related to the sector in a broad sense — particularly young people — via, for example, peer-learning activities and study visits, mutualising expertise and experience and building capacity within cities, municipalities and regions at local level to develop innovative approaches to integrating physical activity as a key component of cities' or regions' strategies;

26. calling for the allocation of funding specifically and explicitly to sport in the next European Structural and Investments Funds, given also the underinvestment in local grassroots sports infrastructures, focusing on the promotion of physical activity particularly in disadvantaged areas, ensuring access to sports activities for everyone and strengthening human skills and capabilities as key enablers of economic and social development;

⁽¹²⁾ COM(2018) 367 final, 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.

27. considering it essential to introduce more explicit guidelines also under 'Erasmus+', on the need to boost sport beginning with compulsory education;

28. calling for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) to support employment, particularly youth employment, through start-ups or technological innovation platforms in the sector and to boost basic grassroots sport with the help of a new generation of small-scale sports infrastructures and facilities; promoting gender equality through sport for more effective sport policies to increase the percentage of participation. Moreover, the ESIF could support new solutions to specific challenges facing regions across the EU, such as support for popular and traditional sports and encouraging their mainstreaming into curricula in the public education system, which can be used to enhance and promote Europe while keeping alive the specific characteristics and identity of communities;

29. promoting health through exercise and physical activity, as already outlined in the Tartu Charter, including at the workplace, by considering incentives for employers, including European SMEs, for doing so, with a view to improving employees' overall performance and productivity, while at the same time limiting absenteeism and preventing illness;

30. underlining the importance of planning community activities — where possible in cooperation with civil society stakeholders — in accessible areas, that can be easily reached by the most vulnerable groups, particularly those with reduced mobility⁽¹³⁾, mothers and children, the elderly, groups at risk of social exclusion such as migrants and those living in precarious socioeconomic conditions, in order to promote greater interaction between generations and integration of European citizens; planning community activities for people in prison. To this effect, calls for the consideration of a Sport4EU scheme, similar to the existing WIFI4EU one, for the promotion of health through exercise and physical activity. It would operate at the level of local and regional authorities on the basis of vouchers, disbursed in a geographically balanced manner;

31. emphasising the link between physical activity and a healthy diet, especially at school, through education but also under the thematic objectives of the agriculture programmes. This could be done, for example, by setting up real test-beds, known as 'health gardens', which would provide children, adolescents and families with practical information on healthy eating, the seasonality of fruit and vegetables, the risks associated with unhealthy lifestyles and the importance of sport and physical activity;

32. given the tremendous amount of attention that the European institutions have given to the future Urban Agenda, providing resources needed for testing and developing 'active cities', which are very attractive in terms of tourism and innovation and are smarter with regard to addressing the needs of urban populations;

33. calling for the inclusion of emblematic sporting events and sites in the Interrail project, starting with the younger generations so that they can discover and spread sporting values promoted by the EU, thereby empowering them and strengthening their sense of identity;

34. using the structural funds available for making public buildings and other public infrastructures more energy efficient in order to contribute to the environmental sustainability of existing sports facilities, including through preventing the growing use of microplastics, while exploring the possibility of converting such facilities into multidisciplinary facilities with EU funds;

35. including the opportunity to improve data collection and modelling tools in the next 'Horizon Europe' programme, with a view to finding innovative solutions and new technologies to facilitate the continuous exchange of knowledge, something which also addresses the objectives set by the future Romanian presidency in relation to the smart specialisation strategy and the Digital Single Market;

36. calling that the above-mentioned initiatives be considered in the negotiations for the next Multiannual Financial Framework with sport being effectively mainstreamed into the EU agenda post-2020; further calling for a discussion on the appropriateness of eventually establishing a Sports Programme;

⁽¹³⁾ CdR 3952/2013 fin.

Subsidiarity and proportionality

37. expects, during discussions on and the subsequent approval of the next MFF, to have the opportunity to invoke the principle of subsidiarity in relation to this issue, as well as to draw the Commission's attention to the aim of emphasising, under the appropriate circumstances, the key role played by the local and regional authorities with regard to the economic and human dimension of sport;

38. reiterates its commitment to considering regional operational plans — which define the investment strategies underpinning the Structural Funds — as another useful, effective instrument to be targeted by these efforts, positioning local and regional authorities as the guarantors of collaborative multi-level governance, which allows institutions, businesses, civil society organisations and citizens to contribute to the planning and development of the sector;

39. intends to take part, along with the European institutions, in a reflection process that translates debate and policy narratives into tangible proposals, in accordance with the SEDEC commission work programme SEDEC (21/11/2017, p. 1.2) and the Committee of the Regions' political priorities;

40. hopes that the Commission is committed to the EU's ratification of the Council of Europe's Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

*The President
of the European Committee of the Regions*

Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Fair taxation package

(2018/C 461/07)

Rapporteur: Paul LINDQUIST (SE/EPP), Commissioner of Stockholm County Council

Reference documents: Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC as regards rates of value added tax

COM(2018) 20 final

Annex to the Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC as regards rates of value added tax

COM(2018) 20 final

Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax as regards the special scheme for small enterprises

COM(2018) 21 final

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC as regards rates of value added tax
(COM(2018) 20 final)

Amendment 1

Recital (4)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
In a definitive VAT system all Member States should be treated equally and should therefore have the same restrictions in applying reduced VAT rates, which should remain an exception to the standard rate. Such equal treatment without restricting Member States' current flexibility in setting VAT can be achieved by enabling all of them to apply a reduced rate for which the minimum requirement does not apply, as well as an exemption with the right to deduct input VAT, in addition to a maximum of two reduced rates of a minimum of 5 %.	In a definitive VAT system all Member States should be treated equally and should therefore have the same restrictions in applying reduced VAT rates, which should remain an exception to the standard rate. Such equal treatment without restricting Member States' current flexibility in setting VAT can be achieved by enabling all of them to apply a reduced rate for which the minimum requirement does not apply, in order to take into account the beneficial social or environmental effects of various goods and services , as well as an exemption with the right to deduct input VAT, in addition to a maximum of two reduced rates of a minimum of 5 %. Within the limits set by this directive, it is possible for Member States to maintain existing reduced VAT rates or to introduce new rates that benefit the final consumer and are in the general interest, for example for labour-intensive services or to factor in social and/or environmental considerations.

Reason

If the rules are too specific, there is a considerable risk that they may stand in the way of the flexibility sought.

Amendment 2

Recital (8)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
While the application of different rates in certain remote areas continue to be possible, it is necessary to ensure that the standard rate respects the minimum of 15 %.	While the application of different rates in certain remote areas continue to be possible, it is necessary to ensure that the standard rate respects the minimum of 15 % and the maximum of 25 %.

Amendment 3

Add a new () after Article 1(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	Article 97 is replaced by the following: ‘The standard rate may not be less than 15 % or greater than 25 %.’

Amendment 4

Article 1(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Article 98 is replaced by the following: ‘Article 98 1. Member States may apply a maximum of two reduced rates. The reduced rates shall be fixed as a percentage of the taxable amount, which shall not be less than 5 %. 2. By way of derogation from paragraph 1, Member States may in addition to the two reduced rates apply a reduced rate lower than the minimum of 5 % and an exemption with deductibility of the VAT paid at the preceding stage. 3. Reduced rates and exemptions applied pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2 shall only benefit the final consumer and shall be applied to pursue, in a consistent manner, an objective of general interest. The reduced rates and exemptions referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall not be applied to goods or services in the categories set out in Annex IIIa.’	Article 98 is replaced by the following: ‘Article 98 1. Member States may apply a maximum of two reduced rates. The reduced rates shall be fixed as a percentage of the taxable amount, which shall not be less than 5 %. 2. By way of derogation from paragraph 1, Member States may in addition to the two reduced rates apply a reduced rate lower than the minimum of 5 % and an exemption with deductibility of the VAT paid at the preceding stage. 3. Reduced rates and exemptions applied pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2 shall benefit the final consumer and shall be applied to pursue, in a consistent manner, an objective of general interest that takes into account the beneficial social or environmental effects of various goods and services. The reduced rates and exemptions referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall not be applied to goods or services in the categories set out in Annex IIIa.’

Reason

Limiting the exemptions so that 'only' the final consumer benefits could be difficult to implement in practice because many goods and services are sold to both individual consumers and companies. The recitals state that the basic thinking behind the proposal is among other things to preserve the functioning of the internal market, avoid unnecessary complexity and thus avoid a rise in business costs. The word 'only' should therefore be deleted from the text of the directive.

Annex to the Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC as regards rates of value added tax (COM(2018) 20 final)

Amendment 5

Number 5

Text proposed by the Commission					CoR amendment				
(5)	Supply of alcoholic beverages	11.01 11.02 11.03 11.05 47.00.25	None	None	(5)	Supply of alcoholic beverages	11.01 11.02 11.03 11.04 11.05 47.00.25	None	None

Reason

There is no reason to allow alcohol made of other non-distilled fermented beverages, such as vermouth, to be taxed at a reduced rate.

Amendment 6

Number 7

Text proposed by the Commission					CoR amendment				
(7)	Supply, hire, maintenance and repair of means of transport	29 30 33.15 33.16 45 47.00.81 77.1 77.34 77.35 77.39.13	Supply, hire, maintenance and repair of bicycles, baby carriages and invalid carriages	30.92 33.17.19 47.00.45 47.00.75 77.21.10 77.29.19 95.29.12 29.10.24 45.11.245.-11.3	(7)	Supply, hire, maintenance and repair of means of transport	29 30 33.15 33.16 45 47.00.81 77.1 77.34 77.35 77.39.13	Supply, hire, maintenance and repair of bicycles (including e-bicycles), e-scooters, baby carriages and invalid carriages	30.92 33.17.19 47.00.45 47.00.75 77.21.10 77.29.19 95.29.12 29.10.24 45.11.245.-11.3

Reason

It should be spelled out that Member States may also apply a reduced tax rate to e-bikes and e-scooters. E-bikes and e-scooters play an important role in mobility.

Amendment 7

Number 10

Text proposed by the Commission					CoR amendment				
(10)	Supply of computer, electronic and optical products; supply of watches	26 47.00.3 47.00.82 47.00.83 47.00.88	None	None	(10)	Supply of computer, electronic and optical products; supply of watches	26 47.00.3 47.00.82 47.00.83 47.00.88	Irradiation, electromedical and electrotherapeutic equipment; spectacles and contact lenses	26.60 32.50.4

Reason

Member States should be able to apply reduced tax rates to spectacles and contact lenses, as well as pacemakers and hearing aids.

Amendment 8

Number 15

Text proposed by the Commission					CoR amendment				
(15)	Supply of financial and insurance services	64 65 66	None	None	(15)	Supply of financial services	64 66	None	None

Reason

Under Article 135(1)(a) of Directive 2006/112/EC the Member States are required to exempt insurance and reinsurance transactions, including related services performed by insurance brokers and insurance agents, from tax.

The Commission proposal thus contradicts the text of Directive 2006/112/EC.

Proposal for a Council Directive amending Directive 2006/112/EC on the common system of value added tax as regards the special scheme for small enterprises
(COM(2018) 21 final)

Amendment 9

Recital (13)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Furthermore, in order to ensure compliance with conditions for exemption granted by a Member State to enterprises not established there, it is necessary to require prior notification of their intention to use the exemption. Such notification should be made by the small enterprise to the Member State where it is established. That Member State should thereafter, based on the information declared on the turnover of that enterprise, provide that information to the other Member States concerned.	Furthermore, in order to ensure compliance with conditions for exemption granted by a Member State to enterprises not established there, it is necessary to require prior notification of their intention to use the exemption. Such notification should be made through an online portal set up by the Commission. The Member State of establishment should thereafter, based on the information declared on the turnover of that enterprise, provide that information to the other Member States concerned.

Reason

This amendment goes with the amendment to Article 1(12) — it reproduces the proposal set out in the draft report presented to the European Parliament by T. Vandenkendelaere (EPP/BE).

Amendment 10

Article 1(12)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Article 284 is replaced by the following: <i>'Article 284</i>	Article 284 is replaced by the following: <i>'Article 284</i>
1. Member States may exempt the supply of goods and services made within their territory by small enterprises established in that territory whose Member State annual turnover, attributable to such supplies, does not exceed a threshold fixed by those Member States for the application of this exemption.	1. Member States may exempt the supply of goods and services made within their territory by small enterprises established in that territory whose Member State annual turnover, attributable to such supplies, does not exceed a threshold fixed by those Member States for the application of this exemption.

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Member States may fix varying thresholds for different business sectors based on objective criteria. However, those thresholds shall be no higher than EUR 85 000 or the equivalent in national currency.</p> <p>2. Member States that have put in place the exemption for small enterprises shall also exempt the supplies of goods and services in their own territory made by enterprises established in another Member State, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:</p> <p>a) the Union annual turnover of that small enterprise does not exceed EUR 100 000;</p> <p>b) the value of the supplies in the Member State where the enterprise is not established does not exceed the threshold applicable in that Member State for the granting of the exemption to enterprises established in that Member State.</p> <p>3. Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that small enterprises benefiting from the exemption satisfy the conditions referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2.</p> <p>4. Prior to availing itself of the exemption in other Member States, the small enterprise shall notify the Member State in which it is established.</p> <p>Where a small enterprise avails itself of the exemption in Member States other than that in which it is established, the Member State of establishment shall take all measures necessary to ensure the accurate declaration of the Union annual turnover and the Member State annual turnover by the small enterprise and shall inform the tax authorities of the other Member States concerned in which the small enterprise carries out a supply.;</p>	<p>Member States may fix varying thresholds based on objective criteria. However, those thresholds shall be no higher than EUR 100 000 or the equivalent in national currency.</p> <p>2. Member States that have put in place the exemption for small enterprises shall also exempt the supplies of goods and services in their own territory made by enterprises established in another Member State, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:</p> <p>a) the Union annual turnover of that small enterprise does not exceed EUR 100 000;</p> <p>b) the value of the supplies in the Member State where the enterprise is not established does not exceed the threshold applicable in that Member State for the granting of the exemption to enterprises established in that Member State.</p> <p>3. Member States shall take appropriate measures to ensure that small enterprises benefiting from the exemption satisfy the conditions referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2.</p> <p>4. The Commission shall set up an online portal through which small enterprises wishing to avail themselves of the exemption in another Member State can register.</p> <p>Where a small enterprise avails itself of the exemption in Member States other than that in which it is established, the Member State of establishment shall take all measures necessary to ensure the accurate declaration of the Union annual turnover and the Member State annual turnover by the small enterprise and shall inform the tax authorities of the other Member States concerned in which the small enterprise carries out a supply.;</p>

Reason

The subsidiarity principle would require the national threshold to be a matter of national competence, which means that a threshold other than the proposed common EU threshold of EUR 100 000 should not be introduced. It is good to allow different national thresholds because this increases flexibility, but limiting the option to different business sectors could make it difficult to know where to draw the line.

Amendment 11

Article 1(15)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
the following Article 288a is inserted: <i>'Article 288a</i> Where during a subsequent calendar year the Member State annual turnover of a small enterprise exceeds the exemption threshold referred to in Article 284(1), the small enterprise shall be able to continue to benefit from the exemption for that year, provided that its Member State annual turnover during that year does not exceed the threshold set out in Article 284(1) by more than 50 % ;	the following Article 288a is inserted: <i>'Article 288a</i> Where during a subsequent calendar year the Member State annual turnover of a small enterprise exceeds the exemption threshold referred to in Article 284(1), the small enterprise shall be able to continue to benefit from the exemption for that year, provided that its Member State annual turnover during that year does not exceed the threshold set out in Article 284(1) by more than 33 % ;

Reason

The provision reduces 'cliff-edge' effects, but it could distort competition for companies that are unable to benefit from the exemption. The amount by which the threshold may be exceeded should therefore be reduced from 50 % to 33 %.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. welcomes the Commission's initiative to reform the EU's existing VAT system in order to better support a functioning internal market and ensure that VAT rules are adapted to changes in the global and digital economy;
2. notes, however, that it is important for the proposal to avoid distortions of competition and increased red tape and higher business costs for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), not to mention local and regional authorities;
3. believes that differences in VAT rules and rates have a particularly big impact on border regions and on the activities of SMEs in those regions, and that it is therefore necessary to assess the territorial impact of the proposals with a view to allowing greater flexibility in setting VAT rates as well as the thresholds proposed;

Common rules on VAT rates

4. endorses the Commission's proposal that goods and services should be taxed on the basis of the destination principle, since this involves less risk of distorting competition;
5. supports Article 98(1) and (2) of the proposal for a Directive whereby Member States may apply a maximum of two reduced tax rates of at least 5 % and one reduced tax rate for which no minimum of 5 % is required, as well as an exemption with the right to deduct input VAT;
6. welcomes the Commission's proposal for a list (Annex IIIa) of products on which the VAT rate may not be reduced, rather than, as hitherto, having a list (also including various temporary derogations) of products on which the VAT rate is allowed to be lower than the standard rate. The proposal provides greater flexibility for individual Member States and eliminates the lack of tax neutrality due to the fact that certain Member States cannot replicate the reduced VAT rates that other Member States apply to certain products. It is important to point out that the purpose of the list is to avoid distortions of competition and that it should not be used to achieve other political aims;

7. considers that the present rules not only result in a lack of fiscal neutrality between the Member States, but prevent opportunities for technological development from being exploited since the same goods/services are taxed at different rates depending on the form of distribution. A striking example of this is the prohibition of reduced VAT on digital publications such as newspapers, audio books and music streaming. This has notably hit the newspaper industry at a time when it is undergoing major structural changes, with the increasing digitisation of media consumption, and when the significance of newspapers for democracy cannot be underestimated;

8. assumes that Article 98(3) will apply for goods and services that are typically bought by individual consumers. When this has been established, it should be possible to sell goods and services with a reduced tax rate even if the transactions involve both businesses and private individuals;

9. notes that the expression 'final consumer' could lead to certain implementation problems. The final consumer in the context of VAT might be a private individual, a non-taxable legal person or a taxable person conducting an activity that is exempt without the right to deduct VAT. However, the explanatory memorandum indicates that the final consumer is the person who acquires goods and services for personal use. Given that legal persons can also be final consumers, the CoR believes that the requirement should also include such persons;

10. supports the proposal to allow the weighted average rate (WAR) to exceed 12 % in order to ensure that Member States' revenues are protected;

11. points out that greater flexibility in setting VAT rates could make things complicated, especially for SMEs, which do not have the resources and systems available to large companies to enable them to manage a number of different tax rates in their cross-border transactions;

12. urges the European Commission to set up an electronic portal, for example by further developing the existing TEDB web portal, to allow businesses to keep track of the different VAT systems in all the EU Member States and, in the framework of the conditions for exemption granted by a Member State to enterprises not established there, to provide notification of their intention to avail themselves of the exemption. This tool should be easy to access, reliable and available in all the official EU languages;

13. also calls on the Commission to extend the scope for using the Mini One Stop Shop (MOSS) scheme when this proposal is implemented. The MOSS scheme will be particularly important for the administrative processing of VAT in the country of destination;

14. believes that greater flexibility in setting VAT rates could make it more difficult to determine how a transaction involving several supplies should be taxed. This affects the applicable tax rate, the taxable amount, the type of invoice, and the country considered the country of taxation. It can lead to problems with invoicing and generate uncertainty, costs and disputes, as the issue may be dealt with in different ways in different Member States. The Commission should therefore provide clear guidelines on how transactions involving several supplies are to be managed;

Simplifying the rules for small enterprises

15. welcomes the European Commission's proposal to give Member States more scope to simplify VAT procedures for small companies. It is still important to improve tax efficiency and combat fraud so as to avoid distortions of competition and safeguard Member States' tax revenues;

16. endorses the proposed definition of a 'small enterprise' as a business with a Union annual turnover in the single market of less than EUR 2 million;

17. points out that the fragmentation and complexity of the VAT system result in major compliance costs for businesses involved in cross-border transactions. These costs are disproportionately high for SMEs, which form the backbone of the economy and the basis for employment at regional level, in particular for small businesses with a turnover of up to EUR 2 million. These companies make up about 98 % of all EU enterprises, and contribute approximately 15 % of total turnover and around 25 % of net VAT revenue;

18. points out that in relation to the supply of electronic services it can be difficult to establish in which Member State the customer is located. In some cases the red tape involved for small companies to determine this to the satisfaction of the tax authorities can be such as to deter them from doing business with customers in other Member States. To reduce the regulatory burden for small businesses with a turnover of less than EUR 2 million within the Union, these should be able as an alternative to charge the highest applicable VAT rate within the Union for a given service;
19. shares the Commission's view that the costs of complying with the VAT system should be as low as possible, and is pleased that the proposal is expected to reduce SMEs' VAT compliance costs by up to 18 % per year;
20. supports the proposal to make the exemption accessible to all small businesses that are established in another Member State, on condition that their annual turnover within the EU does not exceed EUR 100 000, but thinks it is necessary to assess the risk of growth-hampering effects. Exceeding the ceiling could represent a considerable business cost for a company that has been exempt from tax and has therefore had a considerably lower administrative burden;
21. welcomes the proposal to allow small businesses to issue simplified invoices, as well as the proposal not to require businesses that are exempt from VAT to issue invoices;
22. endorses the proposal to allow small businesses to submit VAT returns for a period of one calendar year;
23. wonders why VAT-exempt businesses are released from all accounting and storage obligations. There is a risk that such a concession could be abused because it will be difficult for Member States to check whether a company is exceeding the threshold;
24. notes that in several Member States measures are being taken to simplify the registration of new companies, with the aim of improving the business environment, although this could also increase the risk of so-called carousel fraud. During 2014 alone, the VAT leakage from carousel fraud was estimated at EUR 50 billion. It is important to improve tax efficiency and combat fraud so that leakage decreases.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

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

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Digital Education Action Plan

(2018/C 461/08)

Rapporteur-general: Domenico GAMBACORTA (IT/EPP), President of the Province of Avellino**Reference document:** Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Digital Education Action Plan

COM(2018) 22 final

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Key messages

1. underlines that education, since the Bologna process, has been playing a crucial role in creating a European space for dialogue and cooperation about the fundamental principles — freedom of expression, tolerance, freedom of research, free movement of students and staff, student involvement and the co-creation of lifelong learning — that reflect the basic values of present-day European society;
2. points out that the commitment of EU Member States to providing young people with the 'best education and training' has been confirmed in recent declarations (Bratislava, September 2016; Rome, March 2017) and summits (Tallinn, May 2017; Gothenburg, November 2017; Brussels, January 2018);
3. highlights how the digital revolution will continue to significantly change the way Europeans live, study, work and relate to one another and that digital skills and competences are fundamental alongside literacy and numeracy, in order to help citizens to meet the challenges of a constantly moving, globalised and interconnected world;
4. agrees that acquisition of digital skills and competences needs to start at an early age and carry on throughout life, as part of educational curricula for early childhood and adult education;
5. recognises that developing the digital skills of the EU workforce is essential to tackle the transformation of the labour market and to avoid skill gaps or mismatches;
6. sees digital education as a necessity and an opportunity to address educational challenges, e.g. providing scope for more personalised and inclusive teaching for persons with special educational needs and disabilities, migrants and persons in Member States' care systems;
7. points out that the development of digital competences is a wonderful tool for developing new entrepreneurial talent, for achieving autonomy in carrying out individual or complementary tasks, as well as for working in multidisciplinary or geographically diverse teams;
8. emphasises the potential of digital transformation for upward mobility, shaping better educated and informed citizens, stimulating civic engagement, democratising knowledge, enhancing access to and the consumption and production of information, with a view to ensuring a healthy digital identity and active and responsible digital citizens;
9. stresses that ill-prepared users are particularly prone to suffer from the many risks hidden in an unaware use of digital resources, including cyberbullying, phishing, 'sexting', 'sextortion', IGD (Internet Gaming Disorder), digital work-related stress symptoms, FOMO ('Fear Of Missing Out');

10. requires that a greater focus must be put on strengthening adults', children's and young people's critical thinking and media literacy so they can judge and overcome the overwhelming diffusion of fake news and the risks of an uncritical use of information available on the web or digitally accessible information;

11. indicates the risk that the massive introduction of algorithms and machine learning systems based on artificial intelligence and data analytics poses to pedagogical freedom as well as neutrality, data security and privacy concerns;

12. mentions some results provided by 'The Survey of Schools: ICT in Education' ⁽¹⁾ (2013), which found that:

— infrastructure provision at school level varies considerably between countries,

— only around 50 % of students in the EU are taught by a teacher who has a positive attitude about his or her ability to integrate digital technologies in a pedagogically valuable fashion into teaching activities,

— only around 25-30 % of students are taught by teachers for whom ICT training is compulsory;

13. points out consequently the crucial role of teachers and educators in guiding learners toward innovative practices of knowledge creation through appropriate links between formal, non-formal and informal learning, assuming that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to scaling up digital innovations in education;

14. highlights that teachers, school directors and other educational operators need support and relevant training to efficiently find their way to combine traditional education methodologies with the opportunities provided by digital technologies;

15. suggests to this aim a cooperation between private and public stakeholders, involving educational technology suppliers, via sectoral organisations where they exist, in order to provide teachers training together with free digital educational materials, also resolving cross-border copyright issues;

16. points out the risks of large digital companies, and GAFAM in particular (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple and Microsoft) imposing their standards in education, by providing their hardware and/or software and educational resources, for which it would be necessary to establish rigorous controls in relation to data protection and copyright;

17. stresses the need to reduce the existing digital divide considering the different determinants of the phenomenon, e.g. residence in different geographical and demographic contexts, languages of communication, different educational levels, gender- and age-specific differences, possible disability, belonging to disadvantaged socioeconomic groups;

18. insists on the need to better exploit EU financial support in order to ensure that schools and educational establishments — including not only establishments providing compulsory education, but also those covering other stages of education, such as early childhood and adult education establishments, schools of music, etc. so as to guarantee access to lifelong learning — can be equipped with the necessary high-speed and high quality broadband infrastructure, in particular those located in geographically, demographically or socially challenges areas;

19. suggests that, coherently with the implementation of digital innovative resources and practices, new assessment resources and techniques should be tested, such as rubrics, and then introduced in combination with more traditional ones, to exploit the potential that rapid feedback loops offer for a more personalised and efficient learning process;

⁽¹⁾ Survey of Schools: ICT in Education. Benchmarking access, use and attitudes to technology in Europe's schools. Final study report, European Commission, 2013.

20. remarks that, in accordance with the principles inspiring the Lifelong Learning Platform, in order to achieve enhanced learning experiences and outcomes, the place of the learner must be at the centre, sharing goals on the basis of his views and values, so avoiding the risk of a role of passive technology consumers;

21. welcomes the Digital Education Action Plan (DEAP) as short-medium term tool for the stimulation, implementation and scaling up of purposeful use of digital and innovative education practices in schools, VET and higher education as part of the 'European Education Area' and the 'New Skills Agenda for Europe' ⁽²⁾, complementing the 'Recommendations on Common Values and Key Competences';

22. recognises that the priorities set out in the DEAP are in line with the complex and numerous challenges posed by the digital revolution;

23. believes that the DEAP Plan should be adequately supported by the new Multiannual Financial Framework as well as from resources from national budgets to be allocated not only to connectivity and infrastructures but also to development of digital skills and competences at all levels of education;

24. emphasises that, to integrate digital technology into our educational systems and to actually achieve the goals of the DEAP, a more fruitful cooperation of all the involved and potential stakeholders is a prerequisite, ensuring convergence, synergies and a cross-disciplinary expertise as well as interoperability of the various systems;

25. considers it vital to ensure a significant effort to coordinate and to integrate all the initiatives and actions also improving dissemination policies, in order to avoid that available opportunities are mainly exploited by educational and political institutions which are better capable to cope with the 'jungle' of calls for funding supports;

26. recalls the fundamental role of local and regional authorities in the implementation of education and training policies and that therefore the process of adapting the education systems to the standards of the digital era should involve all levels of governance (European, national, regional and local).

Making better use of digital technology for teaching and learning: digital competences and skills for the digital transformation

27. points out that, even if the access to digital infrastructure is only one aspect of the digital divide, the lack of funding and insufficient and inoperative equipment and bandwidth still represent a barrier for the use of ICT for teaching and learning;

28. calls for support for the creation of national strategies and frameworks, for more dialogue between stakeholders, and for more support for teachers to gain new methodological expertise;

29. hopes for the launch of a vast campaign of training initiatives for teachers and educational operators to strengthen their actual digital skills, with particular reference to those with low aptitude and experience in digital technologies;

30. welcomes EU support for the digital readiness of both general and vocational schools by strengthening their digital competences and by making the SELFIE self-assessment tool reach one million teachers, trainers and learners by end of 2019, in synergy with any assessment tools adopted by individual Member States;

31. points out that ICT contributes to innovation in processes and organisational arrangements, and considers tools such as the European e-Competence Framework (e-CF) useful for referencing ICT competences and skills across Europe;

32. recognises the added value of a voucher scheme, focusing on disadvantaged areas, and of implementation of an appropriate toolkit for rural areas;

⁽²⁾ COM(2016) 381.

33. approves of a framework for issuing digitally-certified qualifications and validating digitally-acquired skills that are trusted and multilingual and considers it crucial that the framework be fully aligned with the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and the European Classification of Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO);

34. encourages cooperation between industry and education and other forms of public-private partnerships in order to develop digital competency training programmes and to ensure that digital careers are equally accessible, regardless of socioeconomic background or physical disabilities.

Developing relevant digital competences and skills for the digital transformation

35. points out that school communities need to support all learners and respond to their specific needs in order to ensure full inclusion;

36. considers it crucial to reduce the learning gap between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds and to capitalise on the potential of personalised teaching and new learning tools, and to benefit fully from open educational resources and open science;

37. hopes for the development of a Europe-wide platform for digital higher education offering learning, blended mobility, virtual campuses and exchange of best practices among higher education institutions;

38. welcomes the new European Digital Competence Framework for Educators offering guidance in developing digital competence models;

39. underlines the importance of promoting and facilitating the development of teachers' digital skills from an integrated perspective and within a Framework of Professional Skills for Teachers, covering the initial, access and ongoing training of teachers;

40. acknowledges the importance of mobility and therefore calls to strengthen the focus of the next Erasmus+ programme and other relevant EU funding programmes to support the adaptation of education and training to the digital age;

41. underlines the importance of cooperation in education and of concerted efforts. Calls for a joint European platform open to various stakeholders, in order to develop benchmarks and indicators to monitor more closely progress in ICTs by various education providers in schools and other learning environments. This work needs to be undertaken in close cooperation between the Member States, in order to capitalise on past experience, identify existing monitoring methods, etc.;

42. stresses the importance of digital competences for all citizens as in the revised European Reference Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, including the Digital Competence Framework for Citizens in five areas (information and data literacy; communication and collaboration; digital content and creation; safety and well-being; and problem-solving); and encourages teaching and learning in which digital competences are integrated into the other skills to be developed;

43. supports the proposed (i) EU-wide awareness-raising campaign targeting educators, families and learners to foster online safety, cyber hygiene and media literacy; and (ii) the cyber-security teaching initiative building on the Digital Competence Framework for Citizens, to empower people; and (iii) efforts to promote and disseminate good practices in order to be able to use technology confidently and responsibly;

44. encourages the entrepreneurial spirit of regions and cities and the move towards open innovation, within a human-centred vision of partnerships between public and private sector actors, universities and citizens;

45. expects to be kept updated on the policy lessons from how the actions are implemented and to be invited to contribute to the emerging discussion on future European cooperation in education and training.

Improving education through better data analysis and foresight

46. hopes for the adoption of a shared and common methodological framework for the definition of indicators able to capture the digital divide and calls for a significant effort to build and collect reliable and easily accessible data for its evaluation and monitoring;
47. draws attention to issues that arise when personal data and student files are stored with private operators, often in another part of the world. In particular, specific attention has to be paid to whether these operators are prepared to sign user agreements with numerous local, regional and national authorities;
48. also raises concerns about 'data mining', i.e. how to respond to businesses using pupils' and school employees' data to be sold to others, and notes that it is also important, not least for local and regional authorities, to clarify how long relevant administrative data and similar documents can be kept publicly accessible;
49. looks forward to the launch of planned pilots to leverage the available data and to help the implementation and monitoring of education policy and also welcomes the planned toolkit and guidance for Member States;
50. considers it important to initiate strategic foresight on key trends arising from digital transformation for the future of education systems, in close cooperation with Member State experts — and including the local and regional level representatives — and making use of existing and future channels of EU-wide cooperation on education and training;
51. encourages user-driven innovation as key for early adoption of innovation solutions that tackle educational challenges. The user's perspective is often not sufficiently considered, which could limit the possible solutions to a challenge; and welcomes, in this context, the exploration of ways of promoting citizen engagement, participation and user-driven innovation;
52. highlights that this Action Plan should also support the European Semester, a key driver for reform through the education- and training-related country-specific recommendations;
53. supports the efforts to advance governance of school education systems and recalls that good Multi-Level Governance (MLG) can improve performance in education and training, strengthen participation, nurture the establishment of innovative mechanisms, promote an inclusive education system designed to look at the whole person and develop lifelong learning systems;
54. welcomes the dialogue announced by the EU Commission on the implementation of the proposed actions and measures and expresses its availability to engage and continue to cooperate with the EU Commission, along with Member States, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the European Investment Bank Group, to take forward the proposed agenda and ensure alignment with priorities in current and future EU funding programmes.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

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

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Building a stronger Europe: the role of youth, education and culture policies

(2018/C 461/09)

Rapporteur-General: Gillian FORD (UK/EA), Member of London Borough of Havering

Reference documents: 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 — Building a stronger Europe: the role of youth, education and culture policies,

COM(2018) 268 final

and

Proposals for Council recommendations on

Promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education diplomas and the outcomes of learning periods abroad,

COM(2018) 270 final;

High quality early childhood education and care systems,

COM(2018) 271 final;

Comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages,

COM(2018) 272 final

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education diplomas and the outcomes of learning periods abroad

Article 5

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	(d) developing quality assurance instruments in online education and training.

Reason

In some areas, particularly more remote or sparsely populated regions, education, learning and qualifications are increasingly accessed digitally; it is essential that these qualifications are quality assured to enable automatic mutual recognition.

Amendment 2

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education diplomas and the outcomes of learning periods abroad

Article 6

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>6. Facilitate mobility and recognition of the outcomes of learning periods abroad during secondary education and training by:</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>(c) promoting the benefits of mobility among secondary education and training institutions and learners and their families and promoting the benefits of hosting mobility among employers.</p>	<p>6. Facilitate mobility <i>of all students — regardless of the country where they live</i> — and recognition of the outcomes of learning periods abroad during secondary education and training by:</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>(c) promoting the benefits of mobility among secondary education and training institutions, learners and their families and promoting the benefits of hosting mobility among employers.</p>

Reason

Self-explanatory.

Amendment 3

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education diplomas and the outcomes of learning periods abroad

Article 8

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>8. Explore good practice with regard to the recognition of prior learning and permeability between education and training sectors, in particular between vocational education and training and higher education.</p>	<p>8. Explore <i>and promote</i> good practice with regard to the recognition of prior learning and permeability between:</p> <p>(a) education and training sectors, in particular between vocational education and training and higher education; <i>and</i></p> <p>(b) <i>education and training sectors and the labour market.</i></p>

Reason

Qualifications and learning periods abroad should be recognised by employers to improve labour mobility and life chances and opportunities.

Amendment 4

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education diplomas and the outcomes of learning periods abroad

Article 9

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Improve the evidence base by collecting and disseminating data on the number and type of recognition cases.	Improve the evidence base by collecting and disseminating data on the number, type, and outcomes of recognition cases.

Reason

Outcome learning can enhance and improve the recognition process.

Amendment 5

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care systems

Recital (8)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(8) The availability, accessibility and affordability of high quality childcare facilities are furthermore key factors that allow women, and also men, with care responsibilities to participate in the labour market, as recognised by the 2002 Barcelona European Council, the European Pact for Gender Equality and the Commission's Work-Life Balance Communication adopted on 26 April 2017. Women's employment is directly contributing to improving the socioeconomic situation of the household and to economic growth.	(8) The availability, accessibility and affordability of high quality childcare facilities are furthermore key factors that allow women, and also men, with care responsibilities to participate in the labour market, as recognised by the 2002 Barcelona European Council, the European Pact for Gender Equality and the Commission's Work-Life Balance Communication adopted on 26 April 2017, and should be promoted in line with principle 2 of the European Pillar of Social Rights . Women's employment is directly contributing to improving the socioeconomic situation of the household and to economic growth.

Reason

Self-explanatory.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care systems

Recital (23)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(23) This Recommendation seeks to establish a shared understanding of what quality means in the early childhood education and care system. It sets out possible actions for governments to consider, according to their specific circumstances. This Recommendation also addresses parents, institutions and organisations, including social partners and civil society organisations seeking to enhance the sector.	(23) This Recommendation seeks to establish a shared understanding of what quality means in the early childhood education and care system. It sets out possible actions for all the relevant levels of governance, including local and regional , to consider, according to their specific circumstances. This Recommendation also addresses parents, institutions and organisations, including social partners and civil society organisations seeking to enhance the sector.

Reason

Self-explanatory.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care systems

Article 2

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
2. Work towards ensuring that early childhood education and care services are accessible, affordable and inclusive. Consideration could be given to:	2. Ensure that early childhood education and care services are accessible, affordable, sufficient and inclusive. Consideration could be given, at all levels of governance including regional and local , to:

Reason

Strengthening the recommendation and emphasising the key role played here by local and regional governments.

Amendment 8

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care systems

Article 3

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
3. Support the professionalisation of early childhood education and care staff. Depending on the existing level of professional qualification and working conditions, successful efforts can include:	3. Support the professionalisation of early childhood education and care staff. Depending on the existing level of professional qualification and working conditions, successful efforts can include:

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
[...]	[...]
(d) aiming at equipping staff with the competences to respond to the individual needs of children from difference background and with a special educational need or disability, preparing staff to manage diverse groups.	(d) equipping staff with the competences to respond to the individual needs of children from difference background and with a special educational need or disability, preparing staff to manage diverse groups.

Reason

Strengthening the recommendation.

Amendment 9

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care systems

Article 4

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>4. Enhance the development of early years' curricula in order to meet the wellbeing and educational needs of children. Approaches supporting curriculum development and social, emotional, learning and linguistic competences of children could include:</p> <p>(a) ensuring a balance in the provision of social-emotional, wellbeing and learning, acknowledging the importance of play, contact with nature, the role of music, arts and physical activity;</p> <p>(b) fostering empathy, compassion and awareness in relation to equality and diversity;</p> <p>(c) offering opportunities for early language exposition and learning through playful activities; and considering bilingual early childhood programmes;</p> <p>(d) offering guidance for providers on the age-appropriate use of digital tools and emerging new technologies;</p>	<p>4. Enhance the development of early years' curricula in order to meet the health, wellbeing and educational needs of all children. Approaches supporting curriculum development and social, emotional, learning and linguistic competences of children could include:</p> <p>(a) ensuring a balance in the provision of social-emotional, wellbeing and learning, acknowledging the importance of play, contact with nature, the role of music, arts and physical activity;</p> <p>(b) fostering empathy, compassion and awareness in relation to equality and diversity;</p> <p>(c) offering opportunities for early language exposition and learning through playful activities; and considering bilingual early childhood programmes;</p> <p>(d) offering guidance for providers on the age-appropriate use of digital tools and emerging new technologies;</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(e) promoting further integration of early childhood education and care in the education continuum and supporting collaboration of early childhood education and care and primary school staff and smooth transition for children to primary school.	<p>(e) promoting further integration of early childhood education and care in the education continuum and supporting collaboration of early childhood education and care and primary school staff and smooth transition for children to primary school;</p> <p>(f) providing dedicated support and learning opportunities to those children with special educational needs and disabilities;</p> <p>(g) providing dedicated support and learning opportunities to migrant children, including the situation whereby large numbers of Europeans are returning due to political and humanitarian crises;</p> <p>(h) providing dedicated support and learning opportunities to children in Member State care systems;</p> <p>(i) promoting the early care model for children of 0-6 years.</p>

Reason

Children with special educational needs and disabilities, as well as migrant children, may need dedicated support to access the full range of opportunities provided by the early years curricula and Member States should be encouraged to ensure this is provided.

Amendment 10

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care systems

Article 6

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>6. Aim at ensuring adequate funding and a legal framework for the provision of early childhood education and care services. Consideration could be given to:</p> <p>(a) scaling up investment in early childhood education and care with a focus on availability, quality and affordability, including making use of the funding opportunities offered by the European structural and investment funds;</p>	<p>6. Aim at ensuring adequate funding and a legal framework for the provision of early childhood education and care services. Consideration could be given to:</p> <p>(a) scaling up investment in early childhood education and care with a focus on availability, accessibility, quality and affordability, including making use of the funding opportunities offered by the European structural and investment funds;</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(b) creating and maintaining tailored national or regional Quality Frameworks;	(b) creating and maintaining tailored national or regional Quality Frameworks;
(c) promoting further integration of services for families and children, most importantly with social and health services;	(c) promoting further integration of services for families and children at a local and regional level , most importantly with social and health and wellbeing services;
(d) embedding robust child protection/safeguarding policies within the early childhood education and care system to help protect children from all forms of violence.	(d) embedding robust child protection/safeguarding policies within the early childhood education and care system to help protect children from all forms of abuse and violence.

Reason

Self-explanatory.

Amendment 11

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care systems

Article 8

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
8. Facilitate the exchange or experiences and good practices among Member States in the context of the Strategic Framework of cooperation in education and training and successor schemes, as well as in the Social Protection Committee.	8. Facilitate the exchange or experiences and good practices among Member States, at all levels of governance , in the context of the Strategic Framework of cooperation in education and training and successor schemes, as well as in the Social Protection Committee.

Reason

Self-explanatory.

Amendment 12

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care systems

Article 9

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
9. Support the cooperation of Member States, based on their demand, by organising peer learning and peer counselling.	9. Support the cooperation of Member States at all levels of governance , based on their demand, by organising peer learning and peer counselling.

Reason

Self-explanatory.

Amendment 13

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages

Recital (1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(1) In the Communication ‘Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture’ the European Commission sets out the vision of a European Education Area in which high-quality, inclusive education, training and research are not hampered by borders; spending time in another Member State to study, learn or work has become the standard; speaking two languages in addition to one’s mother tongue is far more widespread; and people have a strong sense of their identity as Europeans, as well as an awareness of Europe’s cultural heritage and its diversity.	(1) In the Communication ‘Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture’ the European Commission sets out the vision of a European Education Area in which high-quality, inclusive education, training and research are not hampered by borders; spending time in another Member State to study, learn or work has become the standard; speaking two languages in addition to one’s mother tongue is far more widespread; and people have a strong sense of their identity as Europeans, as well as an awareness of Europe’s cultural heritage and its diversity and opportunities.

Reason

Important to highlight here that the value of the European Education Area includes its ability to pave the way for more opportunities.

Amendment 14

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages

Article (1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(1) Explore ways to help all young people to acquire — in addition to the language of schooling — proficient user level in at least one other European language before the end of upper secondary education and training and encourage the acquisition of an additional (third) language to the level of independent user.	(1) Explore ways to help all young people to acquire — in addition to the language of schooling — proficient user level in at least one other European language before the end of upper secondary education and training and encourage the acquisition of an additional (third) language to the level of independent user, including particular emphasis on oral language practice and experience, and ensuring adequate access to quality tuition for all learners.

Reason

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of speaking additional languages in addition to reading and writing, with this being key to unlocking mobility and opportunities. It was also noted that, where quality language tuition is not available, those with more resources may turn to private language lessons which is not possible for those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, reinforcing the opportunity gap between different social groups.

Amendment 15

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages

Article (4)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(4) As part of such comprehensive strategies, support the development of language awareness in schools and training centres by:</p> <p>(a) actively supporting the mobility of learners, including by making use of opportunities provided by the relevant EU funding programmes;</p> <p>(b) enabling teachers to address the use of specific language in his or her respective subject area;</p> <p>(c) strengthening the competence in the language of schooling as the basis for further learning and educational achievement in school for all learners, and especially those from migrant or disadvantaged backgrounds;</p> <p>(d) valuing linguistic diversity of learners and using it as a learning resource including involving parents and the wider local community in language education;</p> <p>(e) offering opportunities to assess and validate languages competences that are not part of the curriculum, but have been acquired by learners elsewhere, including through expanding the range of languages that can be added to learners' school leaving qualifications.</p>	<p>(4) As part of such comprehensive strategies, support the development of language awareness in schools and training centres by:</p> <p>(a) actively supporting the mobility of learners, including by making use of opportunities provided by the relevant EU funding programmes;</p> <p>(b) enabling teachers to address the use of specific language in his or her respective subject area;</p> <p>(c) strengthening the competence in the language of schooling as the basis for further learning and educational achievement in school for all learners, and especially those from migrant backgrounds, including the situation whereby large numbers of Europeans are returning due to political and humanitarian crises, or disadvantaged backgrounds or those with special educational needs and disabilities;</p> <p>(d) valuing linguistic diversity of learners and using it as a learning resource including involving parents and the wider local community in language education;</p> <p>(e) offering opportunities to assess and validate languages competences that are not part of the curriculum, but have been acquired by learners elsewhere, including through expanding the range of languages that can be added to learners' school leaving qualifications.</p>

Reason

Self-explanatory.

Amendment 16

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages

Article (5)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(5) Support teachers, trainers and school leaders in the development of language awareness by:</p>	<p>(5) Support teachers, trainers and school leaders in the development of language awareness by:</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(a) investing in the initial and continuing education of language teachers to maintain a broad language offer in compulsory education and training;	(a) investing in the initial and continuing education of language teachers to attract and retain staff in order to maintain a broad language offer in compulsory education and training;
(b) including preparation for linguistic diversity in the classroom in initial education and continuous professional development of teachers and school leaders;	(b) including preparation for linguistic diversity in the classroom in initial education and continuous professional development, including informal and non-formal learning , of teachers and school leaders;

Reason

Local communities provide a wealth of opportunity for improving language awareness amongst teachers, for example through parents and carers, faith groups and community organisations.

Amendment 17

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages

Article (6)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
6) Encourage research in and use of innovative, inclusive and multilingual pedagogies, including the use of digital tools and Content and Language Integrated Learning.	(6) Encourage research in and use of innovative, inclusive and multilingual pedagogies, including the use of digital tools, audiovisual, cinematographic and musical works and Content and Language Integrated Learning.

Reason

Europe has a rich cultural body of audiovisual, cinematographic and musical works which can help people learn another language and also, even more importantly, to understand other cultures and common values.

Amendment 18

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages

Article (8)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	(8) Improve access to high quality digital teaching programmes for both teachers and citizens, in particular for those in more remote or more sparsely populated areas and in the outermost regions.

Reason

Higher quality digital language programmes can be more expensive to access than more basic programmes, while broadband connectivity is neither fast enough nor reliable enough in some areas to facilitate online language learning where there is a lack of teachers.

Amendment 19

Proposal for a Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages

Intention (1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(1) Support the follow-up of this Recommendation by facilitating mutual learning among Member States and developing in cooperation with Member States:	(1) Support the follow-up of this Recommendation by facilitating mutual learning among Member States and developing in cooperation with Member States and drawing on the experience of relevant cross-border and territorial cooperation projects implemented by local and regional authorities, where appropriate:

Reason

Self-explanatory.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

General comments

1. Reiterates its calls for an encompassing and forward-looking approach to the future of education across the EU, including strengthened cooperation of public and private sectors, to support citizens in adapting to an increasingly complex and diverse society, developing a 'European identity' that should complement national, regional, local and individual identity, gaining the skills needed in a society that is mobile and increasingly digital;
2. Supports the intention of the European Commission to coordinate progress towards the European Education Area by 2025 around key challenges including improving early years provision, facilitating the mutual recognition of higher education and school leaving diplomas, improving language learning, promoting life-long learning, student mobility and investing in digitalisation opportunities;
3. Believes that education policy strategies in Member States and regions should prioritise cooperation at all levels of governance, including local and regional authorities, with a view to aligning high quality learner-centred education, featuring strong teaching, innovation and digitalisation, with the needs of the dynamically evolving labour market, in the context of principle 1 of the European Pillar of Social Rights;
4. Stresses that more work needs to be done at all levels of governance to anticipate labour market skills needs and deliver appropriate education, general knowledge, vocational training and life-long learning in order to stimulate the creation of jobs and find solutions for unemployment;
5. Requires the consistency of lifelong learning and endorses the principles set out in the 2017 Unesco Global Network of Learning Cities; Cork Call to Action for Learning Cities, recognising that lifelong learning is at the heart of Sustainable Development Goals ⁽¹⁾;

⁽¹⁾ <http://uil.unesco.org/lifelong-learning/learning-cities/cork-call-action-learning-cities>

6. Requires that the EU institutions and Member States, with the support of local and regional authorities in consultation with stakeholders, implement the current proposals within the context of broader EU policies for economic development, employment and social protection by making strategic use of the Multi-Annual Financial Framework after 2020, where specific education policies should be more clearly and more ambitiously articulated, and emphasises the importance of upholding the proportionality principle to ensure that no new financial or administrative burdens are generated for Member States;

7. Similarly, welcomes the introduction of the European Student Card and the opportunities this will provide to facilitate student mobility and promote automatic recognition of qualifications, and calls upon the Commission to consider the extension of this to all learners, not only those in higher education, to expand opportunities for lifelong learning;

8. Acknowledges the fact that primary responsibility for education policy lies with the Member States who have involved their regional and local authorities to different extents in accordance with their respective constitutional systems, and that EU action in line with Article 6 of the TFEU should only complement, support or coordinate the action of Member States; any EU action in this area must be fully justified from a subsidiarity and proportionality standpoint and should align with existing frameworks, tools and procedures;

Mutual recognition

9. Notes with regret the persistent obstacles to mobility in the area of education and joins its voice with the call of the European Commission for a Europe in which learning, studying and research are not hampered by borders but where spending time in another Member State to study, learn or work is the norm;

10. Emphasises the need to give additional support to regions where the mobility of learners may be hindered by additional obstacles such as population deficit, rurality or poverty;

11. Welcomes the European Commission's support for the exchange of best practice among Member States, and encourages the involvement of local and regional level representatives in this in recognition of the value of regional knowledge and experience;

12. Welcomes the proposal of the European Commission on promoting automatic mutual recognition of higher education and upper secondary education diplomas and the outcomes of learning periods abroad, and invites the Commission to take into account in its future work the links with territorial development, notably where local and regional projects involve mobility of skilled workers and staff;

Early childhood

13. Recalls that the meaning of the term 'early childhood education and care' goes beyond what some refer to as pre-school education, having the purpose of preparing children not only for school, but also for life in the same way that all other parts of the education system contribute to this process;

14. Reiterates the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, and suggests that the EU and national decision-makers pay particular attention to the potential, in this context, of partnerships that could be developed between national, regional and local authorities, companies, employees and employee associations, as well as civil society players, to take such skills and qualifications into account;

15. In this context, notes its disappointment that the recommendation makes only limited reference to family life or local-level interventions that can have a significant impact on a child's early development, and emphasises the vital importance of a holistic, integrated approach;

16. Believes that well-educated professionals are a prerequisite for high quality early childhood education, and consequently all levels of government, including local and regional, should be encouraged to invest adequately not only in initial teacher education, but also in continuous professional development;

17. Stresses the need to work towards continuous improvement of the 'care' component of early childhood education and care, including the role of early childhood teachers in nurturing positive relations with children, parents and one another; ensuring the affordability of early childhood services for low-income families in accordance with principle 11 of the European Pillar of Social Rights; and recognising the principle in the Convention on the Rights of the Child which states that the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children;

18. Highlights the needs of children with special educational needs and disabilities, who should receive a good education with access to the general education system where appropriate and be provided with individual support as necessary;
19. Notes the multiple benefits arising from the promotion of measures to facilitate a positive dialogue between teachers and parents/carers to strengthen the connections between the school and home environments and support learners' successful integration into the school environment and their overall socialisation and development opportunities;
20. Welcomes the Commission's recognition of the role of local and regional partners in the improvement of teaching and learning, however notes a lack of acknowledgement that some communities will experience greater challenges than others, for example more remote communities or those with a greater number of mother tongue languages, which will require greater resources and funding to improve teaching and learning for all;
21. Stresses that the Commission must take into consideration related Committee opinions and Council conclusions, including the Council conclusions on integrated early childhood development policies as a tool for reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion ⁽²⁾.

Language learning and teaching

22. Expresses disappointment that poor language skills are considered one of the major obstacles to the free movement of people and the creation of a workforce relevant to the needs of the European economy, and therefore emphasises its support for a stronger role for language learning;
23. Notes that funding for Cohesion Policy is expected to reduce in the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework, and consequently expresses its concerns over the available funding through the European Social Fund for delivery of the ambitions within the Recommendation;
24. In this context, is disappointed to see a focus in the Recommendation on learning within statutory education rather than recognising languages as an important part of lifelong learning, including early years, to promote integration and mobility, and in which local community partners and businesses can engage;
25. Emphasises the importance of actively promoting opportunities provided by relevant EU funding programmes, and simplifying application processes, so that schools and training centres across the Member States are able to take advantage of these.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

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

⁽²⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1530526890119&uri=CELEX:52018DC0270>

III

(Preparatory acts)

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

131ST COR PLENARY SESSION AND OPENING SESSION OF THE EWRC WEEK, 8.10.2018-10.10.2018**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — The Multiannual Financial Framework package for the years 2021-2027**

(2018/C 461/10)

Rapporteur-general: Nikola DOBROSLAVIĆ (HR, EPP), Prefect of Dubrovnik-Neretva County**Reference documents:** 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 — A Modern Budget for a Union that Protects, Empowers and Defends The Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021-2027

COM(2018) 321 final

Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027

COM(2018) 322 final

Proposal for a Interinstitutional Agreement between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline, on cooperation in budgetary matters and on sound financial management

COM(2018) 323 final

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of the Union's budget in case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States

COM(2018) 324 final

Proposal for a Council Decision on the system of Own Resources of the European Union

COM(2018) 325 final

Proposal for a Council Regulation on the methods and procedure for making available the Own Resources based on the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base, on the European Union Emissions Trading System and on Plastic packaging waste that is not recycled, and on the measures to meet cash requirements

COM(2018) 326 final

Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down implementing measures for the system of Own Resources of the European Union

COM(2018) 327 final

Proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EEC, Euratom) No 1553/89 on the definitive uniform arrangements for the collection of own resources accruing from value added tax

COM(2018) 328 final

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the protection of the Union's budget in case of generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law in the Member States

COM(2018) 324 final

Amendment 1

Article 2, point (c)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
(c) 'government entity' means all <i>public authorities at all levels of government, including national, regional and local authorities</i> , as well as Member State organisations within the meaning of [point 42 of Article 2] of Regulation (EU, Euratom) xx/xx (the 'Financial Regulation').	(c) 'government entity' means all <i>central government</i> authorities, as well as Member State organisations within the meaning of [point 42 of Article 2] of Regulation (EU, Euratom) xx/xx (the 'Financial Regulation').

Reason

Need to exclude *all directly elected local or regional authorities' administrative bodies and entities* from the application of the regulation.

Amendment 2

Article 3, point (1)(f)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
(f) the effective and timely cooperation with the European Anti-fraud Office and with the European Public Prosecutor's Office in their investigations or prosecutions pursuant to their respective legal acts and to the principle of loyal cooperation.	(f) the effective and timely cooperation with the European Anti-fraud Office and, <i>where applicable</i> , with the European Public Prosecutor's Office in their investigations or prosecutions pursuant to their respective legal acts and to the principle of loyal cooperation.

Reason

The provisions relating to the European Public Prosecutor's Office can, after its establishment, only be applicable to the participating Member States.

Amendment 3

Article 4, point (1)(b)(1)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
(1) <i>a suspension of the approval of one or more programmes or an amendment thereof;</i>	

Reason

A suspension of the approval of one or more programmes or of an amendment thereof would have no direct punishing financial effects on a Member State concerned. On the contrary, a suspension of commitments and/or payments, while keeping the obligation of government entities to implement the programmes and to make payments to final recipients or beneficiaries pursuant to Article 4(2) of the proposed regulation, would have imminent effects on national budgets. In addition, a lifting of a suspension of the approval of one or more programmes or of an amendment thereof would considerably delay the implementation of concerned programmes, because all subsequent procedures would be put on hold as well.

Amendment 4

Article 5(6)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
6. Where the Commission considers that the generalised deficiency as regards the rule of law is established, it shall submit a proposal for an implementing act on the appropriate measures to the Council.	6. Where the Commission considers that the generalised deficiency as regards the rule of law is established, it shall submit a proposal for an implementing act on the appropriate measures to the Council. <i>The Commission shall attach to this proposal an indicative financial programming of the EU budget concerned by the proposed measure, for the following years, structured by category of expenditure, policy area and budget line. Such indicative programming shall be the basis of an impact assessment of budgetary implications on the national and subnational budgets of the Member State concerned.</i>

Reason

The European Commission should assess the possible budgetary implications of a reduction in EU funding for the national and subnational budgets of the Member State concerned with due regard to the principles of proportionality and non-discrimination.

Amendment 5

Article 6(2)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
2. The Commission shall assess the situation in the Member State concerned. Once the generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law which on the grounds of which the appropriate measures were adopted cease to exist in full or in part, the Commission shall submit to the Council a proposal for a decision lifting those measures in full or in part. The procedure set out in paragraphs 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Article 5 shall apply.	2. The Commission shall assess the situation in the Member State concerned. Once the generalised deficiencies as regards the rule of law which on the grounds of which the appropriate measures were adopted cease to exist in full or in part, the Commission shall submit to the Council a proposal for a decision lifting those measures in full or in part. The procedure set out in paragraphs 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of Article 5 shall apply. <i>In order to gather substantial evidence for the lifting of measures, the Court of Auditors shall, through a fast procedure, issue a special report on the matter concerned pursuant to paragraph 4, second subparagraph of Article 287 TFEU.</i>

Reason

The lifting of measures needs to be accompanied by solid, impartial and timely evidence in order to proceed with the implementation of programmes concerned without any unnecessary delays.

Amendment 6

Article 6(3)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
3. Where measures concerning the suspension of the approval of one or more programmes or amendments thereof referred to in point (i) of Article 4(2)(b) or the suspension of commitments referred to in point (ii) of Article 4(2)(b) are lifted, amounts corresponding to the suspended commitments shall be entered in the budget subject to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) xx/xx (MFF Regulation). Suspended commitments of year n may not be entered in the budget beyond year n+2.	3. Where measures concerning the suspension of the approval of one or more programmes or amendments thereof referred to in point (i) of Article 4(2)(b) or the suspension of commitments referred to in point (ii) of Article 4(2)(b) are lifted, amounts corresponding to the suspended commitments shall be entered in the budget subject to Article 7 of Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) xx/xx (MFF Regulation). Suspended commitments of year n may not be entered in the budget beyond year n+3.

Reason

This solution will make it easier to use the resources unblocked from the suspension procedure, and will mean that these resources are not lost.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

General comments

1. welcomes the Commission's proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the post-2020 period, which, in view of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU and other internal and external challenges, provides a sound basis for negotiations; acknowledges the work carried out, but is of the view that, before it is adopted, the proposal must be developed further and improved in order to meet the expectations of EU citizens and the needs of local and regional authorities;

2. notes that there is no obvious successor to the Europe 2020 strategy, meaning that the strategic objectives of the individual programmes are not sufficiently clear and the link between the overall MFF and the sustainable development goals is inadequate; therefore calls on the Commission, in the context of the discussions on the proposed MFF, to spell out the strategic objectives for the various EU policies and their expected impact. A structured approach at national, regional and local level will be needed to make a clear link between local and regional strengths and efforts and common European objectives;

3. notes with regret that, in view of the imbalance between obligations arising from the objectives laid down in the Treaty, as well as current and future challenges, on the one hand, and the scope of the future MFF, on the other, the Commission proposal is not ambitious enough; reiterates the Committee's position, which is shared by the European Parliament, that the future MFF should be set at at least 1,3 % of GNI; notes with concern that in previous cases the final size of the MFF turned out to be smaller than the Commission proposal, which, if repeated, would further erode the final desired impact in individual EU policy fields;

4. considers it unacceptable that the financing of additional priorities is to be at the expense of existing EU policies with proven EU added value, such as the Cohesion Policy, the Common Agricultural Policy and, in particular, rural development policy. The proposed cuts are the wrong way of resolving the issue of how to finance the additional priorities and challenges;

5. welcomes the Commission's proposal to make rules more coherent and drastically reduce the administrative burden for beneficiaries and managing authorities in order to facilitate participation in EU programmes and accelerate implementation;

6. regrets the Commission's lack of transparency as regards the comparison between the figures of the current and future financial framework; welcomes, in this context, the efforts of the European Parliamentary Research Service to produce a comparative financial analysis of both MFFs;

7. takes note of the results-focused approach of the newly proposed MFF structure, which seeks to answer needs on the ground and provide greater European added value; opposes the removal of the common heading for economic, social and territorial cohesion, since this will further weaken the position of the Cohesion Policy within the MFF and pave the way for a possible separation of the ESF+ from Cohesion Policy. If such outcome would occur, the synergies and the link between various funding sources, which are of particular importance for local and regional authorities, would be further diminished;

8. notes with concern that the Commission's proposals point towards further strengthening programmes under direct or indirect management at the expense of programmes under shared management by the Commission and the Member States. In the long term, this will make implementation of EU policies less transparent at local and regional level; stresses that the principles of partnership and multi-level governance have to be fully respected, and put in place in order to ensure that the local and regional authorities are involved in all relevant stages from the design until the implementation of EU policies;

9. regrets the mismatch between the adoption of an 8th EU Environment Action Programme (EAP) and the MFF post 2020. The decision-making process of the future EAPs and the duration of the programmes should be aligned with the timeframes of the MFF so that the allocated funding well reflects the sustainability priorities and objectives;

10. is concerned about the lack of planning certainty with regard to the MFF in case there is no timely, clear and workable agreement on the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union;

11. supports the Commission's proposal to establish closer links between regional funds and the European Semester as long as a regional perspective is added to the European Semester, because this is the only viable way to establish clear and meaningful links between them;

Reform of the own resources system

12. welcomes the Commission's proposal to introduce three new own resources, but notes with regret that the Commission, on the basis of proposal of the High Level Group on Own Resources, has accepted only two further sources, and takes the view that the Commission proposal could have been more ambitious in this respect; therefore suggests that work to seek out new sources to finance the budget be continued as a matter of urgency;

13. welcomes the Commission's efforts to simplify the revenue side of the budget, and in particular the proposal to phase out all rebates linked to Member States and to streamline VAT-based revenue;

14. finds it regrettable that the Commission proposal to introduce new own resources does not provide a sufficient assessment of compliance with the subsidiarity principle and the proposal's potential impact on the financial situation of local and regional authorities has not been evaluated;

15. emphasises that the proposal for a Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) has considerable potential to increase the proportion of own resources, provided that it is made binding for a large number of companies. This is not the case at present, however, and it is also unclear when this source of own resources is expected to be introduced; has concerns relating to income based on non-recycled plastic packaging waste, since one of the EU's main objectives is to avoid such packaging waste altogether, which would lead to a loss of revenue from this own resource or more fluctuations in budgetary income;

16. welcomes the proposed cut to the amounts retained by Member States to meet the costs of collecting traditional own resources, but calls on the Commission to go even further and not to set the amounts for collection costs at 10 %, as proposed, but in accordance with actual costs;

Rule of law, flexibility and stability

17. takes the view that respecting the rule of law is a necessary condition for sound financial management and efficient use of the EU budget; welcomes in this context the Commission's efforts to put in place effective mechanisms to ensure respect for the rule of law, legal certainty in all Member States and effective measures against fraud and corruption;

18. agrees with the Court of Auditor's opinion that the proposed mechanism for ensuring compliance with the rule of law goes further than the procedure under Article 7 TEU and can be implemented more quickly;

19. welcomes the European Commission's efforts to ensure seamless financing for EU final beneficiaries, by making sure that the EU Member States also meet their financial obligations to beneficiaries in the event that a procedure to safeguard the EU's financial interests is initiated; expects the Commission to develop further resources to protect final beneficiaries' interests;

20. recommends that the Commission consider introducing additional procedures with uniform effect across the various Member States, such as one-off fines, in order to safeguard the financial interests of the Union;

21. considers, having regard to the opinion of the European Court of Auditors, that the Commission's current legislative solution allows too much discretion in relation to the initiation of procedures, and calls on the Commission to set clear criteria to determine what constitutes a generalised deficiency as regards the rule of law which puts sound financial management at risk;

22. recommends a stronger role for the European Court of Auditors in implementing the proposed procedure, in conformity with Article 287 TEU;

23. welcomes the Commission's proposals to make the MFF more flexible, which will certainly help address new and unforeseen challenges in a timely fashion; stresses, however, that greater flexibility in the use of funds must not be at the expense of long-term planning certainty and the strategic direction of programmes, especially those under shared management; therefore calls for an assessment of whether greater flexibility in the section relating to the Commission's enhanced powers to reallocate funds, is not at odds with the principle of subsidiarity and multi-level governance, also calls for the involvement of regional and local authorities in the decision making whenever funds that are under shared management are to be reallocated;

The individual EU budget headings

24. welcomes the proposals to increase the budget for policies relating to major new challenges such as migration and border management, as well as the creation of a specific heading for security and defence;

25. supports the increase in resources for research and innovation, the continuation and expansion of the current EFSI to include the new 'InvestEU' fund, the increase in funding for the Erasmus+ programme, and the further increase in investment in climate protection across all EU policies; reiterates, however, that the proposed increase in resources should not be at the expense of the Cohesion Policy and rural development policy;

26. strongly opposes the proposed 10 % cut to the Cohesion Policy budget, in particular in relation to the Cohesion Fund, whose funding is to be reduced by as much as 45 %; also views the proposed cuts to the Common Agricultural Policy — particularly the cuts of 28 % to the EAFRD and of 13 % to the EMFF — as unacceptable. Such a steep reduction in areas that continue to demonstrate European added value and that, for citizens, are among the EU's most visible policies, would ultimately be extremely detrimental to the growth and development of the European regions;

27. instead, and in line with the declaration on rural development adopted in Cork in September 2016, calls for the EU's overall financial support for rural development to be increased above 5 % of the EU budget for the benefit of rural and intermediate areas, which account for over 90 % of the EU's area, are home to 58 % of its population and account for 56 % of its jobs;

28. stresses that the proposed cut to Cohesion Policy resources would call into question the achievement of one of the key objectives of the Treaty, namely the creation of economic, social and territorial cohesion. As a result of such an approach, the disparities between Europe's regions would increase further, affecting in particular less developed regions, and those regions which have serious structural and demographic problems. Such an approach also underestimates the Cohesion Policy's important role to date in fields such as innovation, digitalisation and climate protection; warns that cuts to funds for territorial cooperation programmes put at stake the objective of strengthening territorial cohesion and the most important instruments in this area, such as the EGTCs and macro-regional strategies;

29. regrets that despite the fact that more than one third of EU citizens live in border regions and given that these regions face numerous territorial challenges, the budget allocation for cross-border cooperation is projected to decrease in real terms despite its proven European added value;

30. highlights the extremely detrimental effects of the MFF proposal for European farmers and the inhabitants of rural areas. If the proposed cuts to funds under the second pillar of the CAP were to be accepted, rural development policy would no longer be able to fulfil its mission, notably in terms of reducing differences in living standards between rural and urban areas; in addition, calls for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development to remain under the management system provided in the Common Provisions Regulation so as to continue to ensure consistency between the different funding sources and strengthen the CAP's territorial dimension;

31. is opposed in particular to the proposal to reduce allocations to the POSEI programme which assists the outermost regions, undermining its objective of providing a targeted response to the specific challenges faced by agriculture in each region, in its role as a financial instrument for direct support to farmers;

32. finds it regrettable that the commitments for the ESF+ have not been increased in real terms, although this is supposed to cover additional tasks such as the integration of third-country nationals; points out that the European Social Fund (see CoR opinion on the ESF+ ⁽¹⁾) should remain anchored in cohesion policy, the EU's main instrument for investing in people and human capital, promoting gender equality and improving the lives of millions of EU citizens;

33. notes that the European Globalisation Fund (EGF), despite the existing overlaps and trade-offs with the ESF+, has not been incorporated into the latter; holds the view that the added-value of the measures financed by the EGF is contingent on whether these measures will be complemented by conversion and restructuring processes implemented through long-term regional development programmes, particularly anticipative measures as those offered by the ESF+;

34. is opposed to introducing the n+2 rule instead of n+3 rule as the timeframe for the use of amounts transferred annually, as there is a considerable risk that legislation could be adopted late. In the event that the n+2 rule is applied, this could undermine the absorption of transferred funds;

35. strongly rejects the proposed solutions, which will further exacerbate the situation of local and regional authorities compared with today when it comes to the time limit for using annual allocations from EU programmes and to the level of pre-financing and, in particular, co-financing of projects, as many local and regional authorities do not have the financial capacity to raise the necessary proportion of own funds;

36. calls on the Commission to calculate the transfer of Cohesion Policy funds to Member States on the basis of the latest breakdown of NUTS-2 regions, for which Eurostat can provide the necessary data, in order to ensure a better match between the socioeconomic conditions in NUTS-2 regions and the calculation of the national transfers;

⁽¹⁾ CoR opinion 3597/2018, not yet adopted.

37. also urges the European Commission to consider factors other than GDP per capita when amending the criteria for cofinancing and allocating Cohesion Policy funds, since it is not an accurate measure of a society's ability to tackle issues that concern it, such as demographic change, and calls for the establishment of international, national, local and regional indices to measure progress beyond GDP. In terms of addressing the demographic challenge, the following may be considered possible: changes in the population (intense and sustained loss), territorial dispersion, ageing, over-ageing, emigration of young people and the adult population and a resulting fall in birth rates;

38. rejects the proposed cuts to the budgets of transport infrastructure under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), especially in light of the unfounded reduction in the Cohesion Fund budget, since these are unjustified given the objectives and requirements to ensure a green, secure and well connected transport system;

39. considers that the proposed allocation for the new instrument 'European Investment Stabilisation Function' — in the form of a budget heading within the EU budget enabling up to EUR 30 billion in loans so as to be able to respond appropriately in the event of any new economic and financial market shocks that affect Member States that are part of the euro area or the exchange-rate mechanism (ERM II) — is too small. The CoR therefore proposes a substantial increase in relevant funds to protect the EU's investment potential and that this should be outside the EU budget;

40. has concerns about the proposed Reform Support Programme for structural reforms. Given that the proposal is based on Article 175 of the Treaty, which deals with cohesion, the programme should be confined to reforms that bolster economic, social and territorial cohesion and deliver European added value. The programme should also be part of a new long-term EU development strategy following on from the Europe 2020 strategy and structured around the Sustainable Development Goals; furthermore, the same requirements as for the structural and investment funds — in terms of partnership and the involvement of local and regional authorities in the planning and implementation of reforms — should apply; finally, is not in favour of the option provided for in the framework regulation on the structural and investment funds of transferring up to 5 % of the allocations to EU funds and financial instruments that are unrelated to the cohesion objectives and, moreover, are for the most part under direct management without local and regional authority involvement;

41. stresses that the cuts to Cohesion Policy, rural development policy and the CAP will have a significant detrimental effect on efforts to meet territorial cohesion and environmental protection objectives. Despite the almost 60 % increase in funds for the LIFE programme, the proposed overall budget for climate protection and adaptation in the energy field is smaller than that of the current financial perspective. Instead of tapping the considerable potential of agricultural and especially cohesion policy in promoting investments with positive effects for the environment and climate protection, the proposed MFF cuts funds for the cohesion and agricultural policies and thus calls in question the achievement of EU environment policy objectives;

42. notes the proposal to increase the funding for the LIFE Programme (see CoR opinion on the LIFE Programme ⁽²⁾), which is of crucial importance to local and regional authorities in terms of helping them to combat biodiversity loss, develop a green infrastructure solution and promote sustainability; regrets, however, that the proposed increase is partly cancelled out by the inclusion of measures previously funded by Horizon 2020 on the clean-energy transition; calls, therefore, for the total funding for the LIFE Programme to be increased by the corresponding amount; also calls for actions for capacity building supporting the clean energy transition to retain the same co-financing rate as they have under Horizon 2020;

43. points out that the planned objective, namely to use 25 % of the EU budget to help meet climate change goals, is not enough to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Efforts should be made under the next financial framework to ensure the possibility of increasing the share of expenditure that goes towards the decarbonisation of the energy sector, industry and transport to over 30 % and towards the transition to a circular economy;

44. welcomes the increase in funds for the 'Horizon Europe' sub-heading, as compared to the current budget; furthermore, recommends that a framework be established to govern the options regarding budgetary transfers from other instruments under the MFF to Horizon Europe, with due regard, in particular, for the freedom of initiative of the managing authority concerned, the joint framing of measures co-financed in this way, and the return of funds to the territory of the managing authority;

⁽²⁾ CoR opinion 3653/2018.

45. welcomes the inclusion of a specific heading on migration and border management and the substantial increase in funding to carry out measures in these areas; regrets that the issue of border security is given much greater importance than other issues relating to migration such as the granting of protection and asylum for migrants, support for legal migration and integration. The CoR therefore calls for the budget allocated to the Asylum and Migration Fund (see CoR opinion on the Asylum and Migration Fund ⁽³⁾) to be increased by the same percentage (240 %) as for the budget for the protection of external borders, in order to ensure that it is sufficient to adequately deal with the challenges of integration;
46. points out — in view of the unambitious overall size of the MFF, which limits even more so the scope for action in this extremely important area for the EU's political and social stability and security — that this is particularly important for local and regional authorities, which are responsible for many of these measures; also points out here that the budget for the European Social Fund (ESF+), which should cover the long-term integration measures for migrants, should consequently be increased to cover this new task;
47. also draws attention to the fact that the new Rights and Values programme, which is to fund efforts to protect the EU's fundamental rights and values and encourage active European citizenship, is of great importance to local and regional authorities in these areas. For this reason, the CoR proposes that the general basis of that programme be increased to meet the huge challenges in this regard;
48. welcomes the simplification of the external action instruments and the allocation of resources, which contribute to a more efficient and effective EU external and development policy; highlights in this regard the important role of local and regional authorities in improving cooperation with neighbouring and third countries in a whole range of areas and in achieving Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development as a whole; calls for this role to be taken into account in the MFF more explicitly, preferably through directly allocated budget;
49. considers that a strong, efficient and high-quality European public administration is indispensable to the delivery of Union policies and to restore trust in the EU added value and strengthen dialogue with citizens at all levels; underlines the important role of the institutions made up by democratically elected members in that respect;
50. calls on all EU bodies to reach swift agreement on the next multiannual financial framework so that EU programmes can be adopted in good time before the beginning of the next MFF.

Brussels, 9 October 2018.

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

⁽³⁾ CoR opinion 4007/2018.

**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Horizon Europe: the Framework Programme
9 for Research and Innovation**

(2018/C 461/11)

Rapporteur-general: Christophe CLERGEAU (FR/PES), member of the Pays-de-la-Loire Regional Council

Reference documents: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon Europe — the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination

COM(2018) 435 final — 2018/0224 (COD)

Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe — the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

(COM(2018) 436 final — 2018/0225 (COD))

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon Europe — the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination

(COM(2018) 435 final — 2018/00224 (COD))

Amendment 1

Recital 2

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
To deliver scientific, economic and societal impact in pursuit of this general objective, the Union should invest in research and innovation through Horizon Europe — a Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2021-2027 (the 'Programme') to support the creation and diffusion of high-quality knowledge and technologies, to strengthen the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing Union policies, to support the uptake of innovative solutions in industry and society to address global challenges and promote industrial competitiveness; foster all forms of innovation, including breakthrough innovation, and strengthen market deployment of innovative solutions; and optimise the delivery of such investment for increased impact within a strengthened European Research Area.	To deliver a scientific, economic and territorial impact in pursuit of this general objective, the Union should invest in research and innovation through Horizon Europe — a Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2021-2027 (the 'Programme') to support the creation and diffusion of high-quality knowledge and technologies, to strengthen the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing Union policies, to support the uptake of innovative solutions in industry and society to address global challenges and promote industrial competitiveness; foster all forms of innovation, including breakthrough innovation, and strengthen market deployment of innovative solutions; and optimise the delivery of such investment for increased impact within a strengthened European Research Area.

Amendment 2

Recital 9

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Research activities carried out under the pillar 'Open Science' should be determined according to the needs and opportunities of science. The research agenda should be set in close liaison with the scientific community. Research should be funded on the basis of excellence.	Research activities carried out under the pillar 'Open Science' should be determined according to the needs and opportunities of science. The research agenda should be set in close liaison with the scientific community. Research should be funded on the basis of excellence and of the expected impacts.

Amendment 3

Recital 13

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Programme should support research and innovation in an integrated manner, respecting all relevant provisions of the World Trade Organisation. The concept of research, including experimental development should be used in accordance with the Frascati Manual developed by the OECD, whereas the concept of innovation should be used in accordance with the Oslo Manual developed by the OECD and Eurostat, following a broad approach that covers social innovation.</p> <p>The OECD definitions regarding Technological Readiness Level (TRL) should continue, as in the previous Framework Programme Horizon 2020, to be taken into account in the classification of technological research, product development and demonstration activities, and the definition of types of action available in calls for proposals. <i>In principle grants should not be awarded for actions where activities go above TRL 8.</i> The work programme for a given call under the pillar 'Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness' could allow grants for large-scale product validation and market replication.</p>	<p>The Programme should support research and innovation <i>in all its forms</i> in an integrated manner, respecting all relevant provisions of the World Trade Organisation. The concept of research, including experimental development should be used in accordance with the Frascati Manual developed by the OECD, whereas the concept of innovation should be used in accordance with the Oslo Manual developed by the OECD and Eurostat, following a broad approach that covers social innovation. The OECD definitions regarding Technological Readiness Level (TRL) should continue, as in the previous Framework Programme Horizon 2020, to be taken into account in the classification of technological research, product development and demonstration activities, and the definition of types of action available in calls for proposals. The work programme for a given call under the pillar 'Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness' could allow grants for large-scale product validation and market replication.</p>

Reason

The possibility of grants being awarded should not be removed in the stages closest to products being placed on the market.

Amendment 4

Recital 15

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p><i>The Programme should seek</i> synergies with other Union programmes, from their design and strategic planning, to project selection, management, communication, dissemination and exploitation of results, to monitoring, auditing and governance. With a view to avoiding overlaps and duplication and increasing the leverage of Union funding, transfers from other Union programmes to Horizon Europe activities can take place. In such cases they will follow Horizon Europe rules.</p>	<p><i>In its strategic planning, Horizon Europe will commit to seeking</i> synergies with other Union programmes, from their design and strategic planning, taking into account national strategies and smart specialisation strategies (S3s), to project selection, management, communication, dissemination and exploitation of results, to monitoring, auditing and governance. With a view to avoiding overlaps and duplication and increasing the leverage of Union funding, combining with regional and national public funding and transfers from other Union programmes to Horizon Europe activities can take place, in line with existing S3s. In such cases they will follow Horizon Europe rules.</p>

Amendment 5

Recital 16

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>In order to achieve the greatest possible impact of Union funding and the most effective contribution to the Union's policy objectives, the Programme should enter into European Partnerships with private and/or public sector partners. Such partners include industry, research organisations, bodies with a public service mission at local, regional, national or international level, and civil society organisations such as foundations that support and/or carry out research and innovation, provided that desired impacts can be achieved more effectively in partnership than by the Union alone.</p>	<p>In order to achieve the greatest possible impact of Union funding and the most effective contribution to the Union's policy objectives, the Programme should enter into European Partnerships with private and/or public sector partners. Such partners include industry, research organisations, universities, regions and cities, bodies with a public service mission at local, regional, national or international level, and civil society organisations such as foundations that support and/or carry out research and innovation, provided that desired impacts can be achieved more effectively in partnership than by the Union alone.</p>

Amendment 6

Recital 19

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The pillar ‘Open Innovation’ should establish a series of measures for integrated support to the needs of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship aiming at realising and accelerating breakthrough innovation for rapid market growth. It should attract innovative companies with potential for scaling up at international and at Union level and offer fast, flexible grants and co-investments, including with private investors. These objectives should be pursued through the creation of a European Innovation Council (EIC). This Pillar should also support the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and European innovation ecosystems at large, notably through co-funding partnerships with national and regional innovation support actors.</p>	<p>The pillar ‘Open Innovation’ should establish a series of measures for integrated support to the needs of innovators, entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship aiming at realising and accelerating breakthrough innovation for rapid market growth. It should attract innovative companies with potential for scaling up at international and at Union level and offer fast, flexible grants and co-investments, including with private and public investors. These objectives should be pursued through the creation of a European Innovation Council (EIC). This Pillar should also support the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and local, regional, national and European innovation ecosystems, notably through co-funding partnerships with national and regional innovation support actors.</p>

Reason

The aims of the Open Innovation pillar should more clearly reflect the target public, which does not consist only of entrepreneurs, and should include the possibility of involving public, as well as private investors.

Amendment 7

New text after Article 2(3)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<p><i>‘regional ecosystems and innovation hubs’ bring together public and private actors from quadruple-helix networks (academia, industry, public policymakers, civil society), structured at regional and local level. These actors coordinate research, innovation and training activities and speed up the dissemination among themselves of the results, knowledge transfer, innovation and the development of new economic activities and services that create sustainable jobs, by working closely with citizens and their needs at local level, bringing the results of research and innovation as near as possible to society and the market;</i></p>

Reason

A formal definition of ‘regional ecosystems and innovation hubs’, encompassing the realities of both cities and regions is needed to ensure that they are fully taken into account and recognised in all strands of Horizon Europe.

Amendment 8

Article 2(5)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(5) 'mission' means a portfolio of actions intended to achieve a measurable goal within a set timeframe, and impact for science and technology and/or society and citizens that could not be achieved through individual actions;	(5) 'mission' means a portfolio of actions intended to achieve a measurable goal within a set timeframe, and impact for science and technology and/or society and citizens and their territory that could not be achieved through individual actions;

Amendment 9

Article 3(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The Programme's general objective is to deliver scientific, economic and societal impact from the Union's investments in research and innovation so as to strengthen the scientific and technological bases of the Union and foster its competitiveness, including in its industry, deliver on the Union strategic priorities, and contribute to tackling global challenges, including the Sustainable Development Goals.	The Programme's general objective is to deliver scientific, economic and territorial impact from the Union's investments in research and innovation so as to strengthen the scientific and technological bases of the Union and foster the competitiveness of each of its Member States and their regions , including in their industry, especially by helping to build a knowledge and innovation society , deliver on the Union strategic priorities, and contribute to tackling global challenges, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

Amendment 10

Article 3(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(b) to strengthen the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing Union policies, and support the uptake of innovative solutions in industry and society to address global challenges;	(b) to strengthen the impact of research and innovation in developing, supporting and implementing Union policies, and support the uptake of innovative solutions in industry and society and their dissemination throughout the EU, its Member States and their regions , to address local and global challenges;

Amendment 11

Article 6(6)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The implementation of the specific programme shall be based on a transparent and strategic multiannual planning of research and innovation activities, in particular for the pillar 'Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness', following consultations with stakeholders about priorities and the suitable types of action and forms of implementation to use. This shall ensure alignment with other relevant Union programmes.	The implementation of the specific programme shall be based on a transparent and strategic multiannual planning of research and innovation activities, in particular for the pillar 'Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness', following consultations with the Member States, the European Parliament, local and regional authorities, stakeholders and civil society about priorities and the suitable types of action and forms of implementation to use. This shall ensure alignment with other relevant Union programmes and shall take account of national strategic priorities and those concerning smart specialisation.

Reason

Strategic planning will be at the heart of the future governance of the programme, and must therefore involve local and regional authorities and take into account regional smart specialisation strategies.

Amendment 12

Article 6(9)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
9. The Programme shall ensure the effective promotion of gender equality and the gender dimension in research and innovation content. Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring gender balance, subject to the situation in the field of research and innovation concerned, in evaluation panels and in bodies such as expert groups.	9. The Programme shall ensure the effective promotion of gender equality and the gender dimension in research and innovation content. Particular attention shall be paid to ensuring gender balance, subject to the situation in the field of research and innovation concerned, in evaluation panels and in bodies such as expert groups. <i>In accordance with Article 349 of the TFEU, the Programme should take into account the specific characteristics of the outermost regions in line with the Commission's Communication on 'A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions', as endorsed by the Council on 12 April 2018.</i>

Reason

Recital 27 of the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon Europe explicitly states that specific measures for the outermost regions are justified, and that the programme must take account of their specific characteristics: however, no mention is made of the outermost regions in the articles.

Amendment 13

Article 7(3)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>3. Missions</p> <p>(a) have a clear EU-added value and contribute to reaching Union priorities;</p> <p>(b) be bold and inspirational, and hence have wide societal or economic relevance;</p> <p>(c) indicate a clear direction and be targeted, measurable and time-bound;</p> <p>(d) be centered on ambitious but realistic research and innovation activities;</p> <p>(e) spark activity across disciplines, sectors and actors;</p> <p>(f) be open to multiple, bottom-up solutions.</p>	<p>3. Missions</p> <p>(a) have a clear EU-added value and contribute to reaching Union priorities;</p> <p>(b) be bold and inspirational, and hence have wide societal or economic relevance;</p> <p>(c) indicate a clear direction and be targeted, measurable and time-bound;</p> <p>(d) be centered on ambitious but realistic research and innovation activities;</p> <p>(e) spark activity across disciplines, sectors and actors;</p> <p>(f) be open to multiple, bottom-up solutions;</p> <p>(g) help strengthen the European Research Area and the implementation of smart specialisation strategies.</p>

Amendment 14

Article 8(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Parts of Horizon Europe may be implemented through European Partnerships. The involvement of the Union in European Partnerships may take any of the following forms:</p>	<p>The different parts of Horizon Europe may be implemented through European Partnerships. The involvement of the Union in European Partnerships may take any of the following forms:</p>

Amendment 15

Article 7, add a paragraph 4

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<p>4. Missions should be developed through an open and participatory process, involving all stakeholders at local, regional, European and global level.</p>

Amendment 16

Article 9(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(c) EUR 13 500 000 000 for Pillar III 'Open Innovation' for the period 2021-2027, of which</p> <p>(1) EUR 10 500 000 000 for the European Innovation Council, including up to EUR 500 000 000 for European Innovation Ecosystems;</p> <p>(2) EUR 3 000 000 000 for the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT);</p>	<p>(c) EUR 13 500 000 000 for Pillar III 'Open Innovation' for the period 2021-2027, of which</p> <p>(1) EUR 10 500 000 000 for the European Innovation Council, including EUR 500 000 000 for European Innovation Ecosystems, with a further EUR 1 500 000 000 transferred from Pillar II to be used in its thematic priorities. At least EUR 1 000 000 000 should take the form of co-financing joint support programmes for SMEs, particularly for incremental innovation;</p> <p>(2) EUR 3 000 000 000 for the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT);</p>

Reason

Support for European innovation ecosystems will closely concern regional ecosystems and innovation hubs. The amount provided for is conditional, which is not acceptable, and too low to have a significant overall or territorial impact. Boosting the budget for these activities means regions will be able to take their rightful place in the next framework programme by devising medium- to long-term structural policies essential for strengthening the Union's innovation capacity.

Amendment 17

Article 9(8)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p><i>Resources allocated to Member States under shared management and transferrable in accordance with Article 21 of Regulation (EU) xx/xx (... Common Provisions Regulation) may, at their request, be transferred to the Programme. The Commission shall implement those resources directly in accordance with point (a) of Article 62(1) of the Financial Regulation or indirectly in accordance with point (c) of that Article. Where possible, those resources shall be used for the benefit of the Member State concerned.</i></p>	

Reason

Moved to Article 11.

Amendment 18*Article 11*

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Actions awarded a Seal of Excellence certification, or which comply with the following cumulative, comparative, conditions:</p> <p>(a) they have been assessed in a call for proposals under the Programme;</p> <p>(b) they comply with the minimum quality requirements of that call for proposals;</p> <p>(c) they may not be financed under that call for proposals due to budgetary constraints,</p> <p>may receive support from the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund+ or the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, in accordance with paragraph 5 of Article [67] of Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Common Provisions Regulation) and Article [8] or Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Financing, management and monitoring of the Common Agricultural Policy), provided that such actions are consistent with the objectives of the programme concerned. <i>The rules of the Fund providing support shall apply.</i></p>	<p><i>1. Horizon Europe should be implemented in synergy with other EU programmes. Complementary and combined funding, additional to funding for Horizon Europe, should be deployed in accordance with the same rules of application as apply to the current programme.</i></p> <p><i>If appropriate, joint calls may be established with other EU programmes, in which case the rules of participation of only one of the programmes shall apply. Although these actions fall under the Horizon Europe programme, its rules shall apply to all contributions that fund them.</i></p> <p>2. Actions awarded a Seal of Excellence certification, or which comply with the following cumulative, comparative, conditions:</p> <p>(a) they have been assessed in a call for proposals under the Programme;</p> <p>(b) they comply with the minimum quality requirements of that call for proposals;</p> <p>(c) they may not be financed under that call for proposals due to budgetary constraints,</p> <p>may receive support from the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund+ or the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, in accordance with paragraph 5 of Article [67] of Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Common Provisions Regulation) and Article [8] or Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Financing, management and monitoring of the Common Agricultural Policy), provided that such actions are consistent with the objectives of the programme concerned.</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<p>3. <i>Actions carried out under the European partnerships referred to in Article 8 may also receive contributions from other programmes of the EU, its Member States and their local and regional authorities, in which case the rules of participation of only one of the programmes may apply. If these actions fall under the Horizon Europe programme, its rules may apply to all contributions that fund them, subject to rules relating to Community guidelines on State aid.</i></p> <p>4. <i>Resources allocated to Member States under shared management and transferrable in accordance with Article 21 of Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Common Provisions Regulation) may, at the request of the managing authority,</i></p> <p>(a) <i>be transferred to the Horizon Programme. The Commission shall implement those resources directly, in accordance with point (a) of Article 62(1) of the Financial Regulation or indirectly, in accordance with point (1)(c) of that Article. Those resources shall be used for the benefit of the geographical area corresponding to the managing authority concerned, in line with Articles 18(7) and 19(1), second subparagraph;</i></p> <p>(b) <i>be deemed transferred to Horizon Europe when they are directly allocated by the managing authority to a joint programme co-financed by Horizon Europe. The Horizon Europe rules permit payments to be made to third parties by a joint programme co-financed in this way, subject to the rules on Community guidelines on State aid.</i></p>

Reason

The old debate on synergies requires a clear and comprehensive conclusion that will allow for combined financing beyond the Seal of Excellence, and for fully tapping the potential of European partnerships. However, this arrangement must also be elastic and leave regions able to react and adapt swiftly to initiatives and developments in the European ecosystem. This amendment achieves its purpose by enabling Managing Authorities to make a virtual transfer via a direct allocation to a programme co-financed by the Framework Programme. In this way they would decide to participate without prior programming and an actual transfer.

Amendment 19

Article 20(5)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The work programme shall specify calls for which 'Seals of Excellence' will be awarded. With prior authorisation from the applicant, information concerning the application and the evaluation may be shared with interested financing authorities, subject to the conclusion of confidentiality agreements.	The work programme shall specify calls for which 'Seals of Excellence' will be awarded. The award of the 'Seal of Excellence' shall be subject to the consent of the applicant to provide access to relevant funding authorities, and to information on the application and assessment , subject to confidentiality agreements.

Amendment 20*Article 23*

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>An action that has received a contribution from another Union programme may also receive a contribution under the Programme, provided that the contributions do not cover the same costs. <i>The rules of each contributing Union programme shall apply to its respective contribution to the action.</i> The cumulative funding shall not exceed the total eligible costs of the action and the support from the different Union programmes may be calculated on a pro-rata basis in accordance with the documents setting out the conditions for support.</p>	<p>An action that has received a contribution from another Union programme may also receive a contribution under the Programme, provided that the contributions do not cover the same costs.</p> <p><i>If these contributions are allocated jointly to cover the same activities and their costs,</i></p> <p><i>(a) This action should be implemented under the same set of implementing and eligibility rules.</i></p> <p>The cumulative funding shall not exceed the total eligible costs of the action and the support from the different Union programmes may be calculated on a pro-rata basis in accordance with the documents setting out the conditions for support;</p> <p><i>(b) the action should be implemented under the rules of the programme providing the main contribution, subject to the rules relating to Community guidelines on State aid in the case referred to in Article 11(4)(b).</i></p>

Amendment 21*Article 30*

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>1. A single funding rate per action shall apply for all activities it funds. The maximum rate shall be fixed in the work programme.</p> <p>2. The Programme may reimburse up to 100 % of total eligible costs of an action, except for:</p> <p>(a) innovation actions: up to 70 % of the total eligible costs, except for non-profit legal entities where the Programme may reimburse up to 100 % of the total eligible costs;</p>	<p>1. A single funding rate per action shall apply for all activities it funds. The maximum rate shall be fixed in the work programme.</p> <p>2. The Programme may reimburse up to 100 % of total eligible costs of an action, except for:</p> <p>(a) innovation actions: up to 70 % of the total eligible costs, except for non-profit legal entities where the Programme may reimburse up to 100 % of the total eligible costs;</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(b) programme co-fund actions: at least 30 % of the total eligible costs, and in identified and duly justified cases up to 70 %.</p> <p>3. The funding rates determined in this Article shall also apply for actions where flat rate, unit or lump sum financing is fixed for the whole or part of the action.</p>	<p>(b) programme co-fund actions: at least 50 % of the total eligible costs, and in identified and duly justified cases up to 70 %.</p> <p>3. The funding rates determined in this Article shall also apply for actions where flat rate, unit or lump sum financing is fixed for the whole or part of the action.</p>

Reason

Consistent with the principle of co-financing.

Amendment 22

Article 43(4)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>1. The beneficiary of the EIC Accelerator shall be a legal entity qualifying as a start-up, an SME or as a mid-cap, established in a Member State or associated country. The proposal may be submitted by the beneficiary, or by one or more natural persons or legal entities intending to establish or support that beneficiary.</p> <p>2. A single award decision shall cover and provide funding for all forms of Union contribution provided under EIC blended finance.</p> <p>3. Proposals shall be evaluated on their individual merit by independent experts and selected in the context of an annual open call with cut-off dates, based on Articles 24 to 26, subject to paragraph 4.</p> <p>4. Award criteria shall be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — excellence; — impact; — the level risk of the action and the need for Union support. 	<p>1. The beneficiary of the EIC Accelerator shall be a legal entity qualifying as a start-up, an SME or as a mid-cap, established in a Member State or associated country. The proposal may be submitted by the beneficiary, or by one or more natural persons or legal entities intending to establish or support that beneficiary.</p> <p>2. A single award decision shall cover and provide funding for all forms of Union contribution provided under EIC blended finance.</p> <p>3. Proposals shall be evaluated on their individual merit by independent experts and selected in the context of an annual open call with cut-off dates, based on Articles 24 to 26, subject to paragraph 4.</p> <p>4. Award criteria shall be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — excellence; — impact; — the level risk of the action, <i>the quality of national, regional or local assistance</i> and the need for Union support.

Reason

Even if companies benefiting from the accelerator are supposed to target a wide market, their success depends not only on their financial structure but also on the assistance they receive within a favourable ecosystem at the European, national and local level.

Amendment 23

Annex I — Broad lines of activities, Part (3) (b)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(b) <u>European innovation ecosystems</u></p> <p>Areas of intervention: Connecting with regional and national innovation actors and supporting the implementation of joint cross-border innovation programmes by Member States and associated countries, from the enhancement of soft skills for innovation to research and innovation actions, to boost the effectiveness of the European innovation system. This will complement the ERDF support for innovation ecosystems and interregional partnerships around smart specialisation topics.</p>	<p>(b) <u>European innovation ecosystems</u></p> <p><i>Areas of intervention:</i> Connecting with regional and national innovation actors and supporting the implementation of joint cross-border innovation programmes by regional ecosystem players and innovation hubs, by Member States and associated countries, such programmes ranging from the enhancement of soft skills for innovation to research and innovation actions, to boost the effectiveness of the European innovation system. This will complement the ERDF support for innovation eco-systems and interregional partnerships around smart specialisation topics.</p>

Reason

This is essential to allow for the funding of trans-regional projects.

Amendment 24

Annex II — Types of Action, sixth indent

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>— Programme co-fund action: action to provide co-funding to a programme of activities established and/or implemented by entities managing and/or funding research and innovation programmes, other than Union funding bodies. Such a programme of activities may support networking and coordination, research, innovation, pilot actions, and innovation and market deployment actions, training and mobility actions, awareness raising and communication, dissemination and exploitation, or a combination thereof, directly implemented by those entities or by third parties to whom they may provide any relevant financial support such as grants, prizes, procurement, as well as Horizon Europe blended finance;</p>	<p>— Programme co-fund action: action to provide co-funding to a programme of activities established and/or implemented by entities managing and/or funding research and innovation programmes, other than Union funding bodies. This type of action could in particular support the action programmes of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs and cooperation between them. Such a programme of activities may support networking and coordination, research, innovation, pilot actions, and innovation and market deployment actions, training and mobility actions, awareness raising and communication, dissemination and exploitation, or a combination thereof, directly implemented by those entities or by third parties to whom they may provide any relevant financial support such as grants, prizes, procurement, as well as Horizon Europe blended finance;</p>

Reason

This is essential to allow for the funding of trans-regional projects.

Amendment 25

Annex III — Partnerships, Part 1, (a)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(a) Evidence that the European Partnership is more effective in achieving the related objectives of the Programme, in particular in delivering clear impacts for the EU and its citizens, notably in view of delivering on global challenges and research and innovation objectives, securing EU competitiveness and contributing to the strengthening of the European Research and Innovation Area and international commitments;	(a) Evidence that the European Partnership is particularly effective in achieving the related objectives of the Programme, in particular in delivering clear impacts for the EU and its citizens, notably in view of delivering on global challenges and research and innovation objectives, securing EU competitiveness and contributing to the strengthening of the European Research and Innovation Area and international commitments;

Reason

The current wording is very restrictive and could considerably limit the scope of European partnerships.

Amendment 26

Annex IV — Synergies with other programmes, point 4(a)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
4. Synergies with the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) will ensure that: (a) the ESF+ can mainstream and scale up innovative curricula supported by the Programme, through national or regional programmes, in order to equip people with the skills and competences needed for the jobs of the future;	4. Synergies with the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) will ensure that: (a) the ESF+ can mainstream and scale up innovative curricula supported by the Programme, through national, regional or trans-regional programmes, in order to equip people with the skills and competences needed for the jobs of the future;

Amendment 27

Annex IV — Synergies with other programmes, point 6(b)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
6. Synergies with the Digital Europe Programme (DEP) will ensure that: (a) whereas several thematic areas addressed by the Programme and DEP converge, the type of actions to be supported, their expected outputs and their intervention logic are different and complementary;	6. Synergies with the Digital Europe Programme (DEP) will ensure that: (a) whereas several thematic areas addressed by the Programme and DEP converge, the type of actions to be supported, their expected outputs and their intervention logic are different and complementary;

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(b) research and innovation needs related to digital aspects are identified and established in the Programme's strategic research and innovation plans; this includes research and innovation for High Performance Computing, Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, combining digital with other enabling technologies and non-technological innovations; support for the scale-up of companies introducing breakthrough innovations (many of which will combine digital and physical technologies; the integration of digital across all the pillar 'Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness'; and the support to digital research infrastructures;	(b) research and innovation needs related to digital aspects are identified and established in the Programme's strategic research and innovation plans; this includes research and innovation for High Performance Computing, Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, combining digital with other enabling technologies and non-technological innovations; support for the scale-up of companies introducing breakthrough innovations (many of which will combine digital and physical technologies; the integration of digital across all the pillar 'Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness'; assistance for digital innovation clusters and the support to digital research infrastructures;

Amendment 28

Add a new paragraph at the end of Annex V — Indicators for key impact pathways, page 16

Text proposed by the Commission		CoR amendment	
		<p><i>Indicators for territorial impact pathways</i></p> <p><i>The programme should have an impact on development and economic transformation at local, regional and national level, helping strengthen the Union’s technological base and competitiveness.</i></p> <p>(see the table below, which is an integral part of this amendment)</p>	
For a territorial impact	Short-term	Medium-term	Longer-term
<p><i>Contribute to territories’ growth and economic transformation</i></p>	<p><u><i>Synergies between funding sources</i></u></p> <p><i>Amount of public and private co-financing harnessed for projects under the FP before, during and after its implementation</i></p>	<p><u><i>Contribution to policy priorities</i></u></p> <p><i>Proportion of FP projects contributing to smart specialisation at regional and national level</i></p>	<p><u><i>Contribution to growth and economic transformation</i></u></p> <p><i>Business creation and market share growth in the smart specialisation sectors of ecosystems</i></p>

<i>For a territorial impact</i>	<i>Short-term</i>	<i>Medium-term</i>	<i>Longer-term</i>
<i>Dissemination and uptake of research and innovation in and by territories for the benefit of citizens</i>	<u>Adoption</u> Proportion of FP research and innovation adopted by local stakeholders, including in the public sector	<u>Deployment</u> Number of innovations deployed, disseminated to all partners in the territories concerned, with the involvement of the public sector	<u>Replication</u> Dissemination and influence of innovations to other territories
<i>Support the development of and investment in networks of excellence and innovation hubs</i>	<u>Collaboration between regional ecosystems and innovation hubs and pockets of excellence across the EU</u> Number of projects or the proportion of projects funded by the FP that have led to further collaborations between bodies from different territories and actors in these categories	<u>Development of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs</u> Estimated effects of collaborations based on outcomes funded by the FP on the development of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs	<u>Contribution to bridging the innovation gap</u> Estimated cumulative effects deriving from outcomes funded by the FP in reducing the innovation gap in the EU

Reason

Explicit reference to *territorial impact indicators* among other key impact indicators proposed by the Commission. This proposal is in line with the wording (title, explanatory text and table) of Annex V as proposed by the Commission.

Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing the specific programme implementing Horizon Europe — the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

(COM(2018) 436 final — 2018/0225 (COD))

Amendment 29

Recital 7

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Reflecting the important contribution that research and innovation should make to address challenges in food, agriculture, rural development and the bioeconomy, and to seize the corresponding research and innovation opportunities in close synergy with Common Agricultural Policy, relevant actions under the Specific Programme will be supported with EUR 10 billion for the cluster 'Food and Natural Resources' for the period 2021-2027.	Reflecting the important contribution that research and innovation should make to address challenges in food, agriculture, rural development, the sea, fisheries and the bioeconomy, and to seize the corresponding research and innovation opportunities in close synergy with Common Agricultural Policy, the Integrated Maritime Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy , relevant actions under the Specific Programme will be supported with EUR 10 billion for the cluster 'Food and Natural Resources' for the period 2021-2027.

Reason

The seas and fisheries are crucial sectors for the EU: mention of these sectors is therefore essential.

Amendment 30

New recital (7a)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	(7a) <i>In view of the major challenges that maritime issues represent for employment (the blue economy), the quality of the environment and the fight against climate change, these challenges will be a cross-cutting priority of the programme, which will be the subject of specific monitoring and for which a target objective will be set to mobilise the programme as part of the strategic programming.</i>

Amendment 31

Article 2

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The Specific Programme has the following operational objectives:	The Specific Programme has the following operational objectives:
(a) reinforcing and spreading excellence;	(a) reinforcing and spreading excellence;
(b) increasing collaboration across sectors and disciplines;	(b) increasing collaboration across sectors and disciplines;
(c) connecting and developing research infrastructures across the European research area;	(c) connecting and developing research infrastructures across the European research area;
(d) strengthening international cooperation;	(d) strengthening international cooperation;
(e) attracting, training and retaining researchers and innovators in the European Research Area, including through mobility of researchers;	(e) attracting, training and retaining researchers and innovators in the European Research Area, including through mobility of researchers;
(f) fostering open science and ensuring visibility to the public and open access to results;	(f) fostering open science and ensuring visibility to the public and open access to results;
(g) actively disseminating and exploiting results, in particular for policy development;	(g) actively disseminating and exploiting results, in particular for policy development;

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(h) supporting the implementation of Union policy priorities;	(h) supporting the implementation of Union policy priorities;
	(ha) enhancing the implementation of smart specialisation strategies and the competitiveness of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs;
(i) reinforcing the link between research and innovation and other policies, including Sustainable Development Goals;	(i) reinforcing the link between research and innovation and other policies, including Sustainable Development Goals;
(j) delivering, through R&I missions, on ambitious goals within a set timeframe;	(j) delivering, through R&I missions, on ambitious goals within a set timeframe;
(k) involving citizens and end-users in co-design and co-creation processes;	(k) involving citizens and end-users in co-design and co-creation processes;
(l) improving science communication.	(l) improving science communication.
(m) accelerating industrial transformation;	(m) accelerating industrial change and in particular the ecological and digital transition of industry, while developing sustainable and high-quality jobs;

Reason

The operational objectives of the framework programme should help implement smart specialisation strategies in the EU Member States and their regions, which are an integral part of the EU's support for research and innovation (COM(2018) 306 final).

Amendment 32

Article 5(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
For each mission, a mission board may be established. It shall be composed of around 15 high level individuals including relevant end-users' representatives. The mission board shall advise upon the following:	For each mission, a mission board may be established. It shall be composed of around 15 high-level individuals including relevant end-users' representatives and public and private stakeholders . The mission board shall advise upon the following:
(a) content of work programmes and their revision as needed for achieving the mission objectives, in co-design with stakeholders and the public where relevant ;	(a) content of work programmes and their revision as needed for achieving the mission objectives, in co-design with public policymakers from the Member States, local and regional authorities , stakeholders and the public;

Amendment 33

Article 10(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The EIC Board may upon request address recommendations to the Commission on:</p> <p>(a) any matter which from an innovation perspective may enhance and foster innovation eco-systems across Europe, the achievements and impact of the objectives of the EIC component and the capacity of innovative firms to roll out their solutions;</p>	<p>The EIC Board may upon request address recommendations to the Commission on:</p> <p>(a) any matter which from an innovation perspective may enhance and foster innovation eco-systems across Europe, and especially cooperation between regional eco-systems and innovation hubs the achievements and impact of the objectives of the EIC component and the capacity of innovative firms to roll out their solutions;</p>

Amendment 34

Article 10(3)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The EIC Board shall be composed of 15 to 20 high-level individuals drawn from various parts of Europe's innovation ecosystem, including entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, investors and researchers. It shall contribute to outreach actions, with EIC Board members striving to enhance the prestige of the EIC brand.</p>	<p>3. The EIC Board shall be composed of 15 to 20 high-level individuals drawn from various parts of local, regional, national and European innovation ecosystems, including entrepreneurs, corporate leaders, investors and researchers. It shall contribute to outreach actions, with EIC Board members striving to enhance the prestige of the EIC brand.</p>

Amendment 35

Article 10(4)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The EIC Board shall have a President who shall be appointed by the Commission following a transparent recruitment process. The President shall be a high profile public figure linked to the innovation world.</p> <p>The President shall be appointed for a term of office limited to four years, renewable once.</p> <p>The President shall chair the EIC Board, prepare its meetings, assign tasks to members, and may establish dedicated sub-groups, in particular to identify emerging technology trends from EIC's portfolio. He or she shall promote the EIC, act as interlocutor with the Commission and represent the EIC in the world of innovation. The Commission may provide for administrative support for the President to undertake his or her duties.</p>	<p>The EIC Board shall have a President who shall be appointed by the Commission following a transparent recruitment process. The President shall be a high profile public figure linked to the innovation world.</p> <p>The President shall be appointed for a term of office limited to four years, renewable once.</p> <p>The President shall chair the EIC Board, prepare its meetings, assign tasks to members, and may establish dedicated sub-groups, in particular to identify emerging technology trends from EIC's portfolio, and closely involving regional and national agencies responsible for innovation. He or she shall promote the EIC, act as interlocutor with the Commission and represent the EIC in the world of innovation. The Commission may provide for administrative support for the President to undertake his or her duties.</p>

Amendment 36

Point 1.4.4 of the Legislative Financial Statement

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM	EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM
Part I, Point 1.4.4. Legislative Financial Statement (page 20 of COM(2018) 436 final)	Part I, Point 1.4.4. Legislative Financial Statement (page 20 of COM(2018) 436 final)
Horizon Europe is designed to be implemented enabling synergies with other Union funding programmes, in particular through arrangements for complementary funding from EU programmes where management modalities permit; either in sequence, in an alternating way, or through the combination of funds including for the joint funding of actions.	Horizon Europe is designed to be implemented enabling synergies with other Union funding programmes, in particular through arrangements for complementary funding from EU programmes where management modalities permit; either in sequence, in an alternating way, or through the combination of funds including for the joint funding of actions.
A non-exhaustive list of such arrangements and funding programmes include synergies with the following programmes:	A non-exhaustive list of such arrangements and funding programmes include synergies with the following programmes:
— Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)	— Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
	— <i>Integrated Maritime Policy</i>
	— <i>Common Fisheries Policy</i>
	— <i>European Maritime and Fisheries Fund</i>
— European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)	— European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
— European Social Fund (ESF)	— European Social Fund (ESF)
— Single Market Programme	— Single Market Programme
— European Space Programme	— European Space Programme
— Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)	— Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)
— Digital Europe Programme (DEP)	— Digital Europe Programme (DEP)
— Erasmus Programme	— Erasmus Programme
— External Instrument	— External Instrument
— InvestEU Fund	— InvestEU Fund
— Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community	— Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community

Amendment 37

Annex I — Activities, first part, Strategic Planning, third to fifth paragraphs (page 1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>It will include extensive consultations and exchanges with Member States, the European Parliament as appropriate, and with various stakeholders about priorities, including missions, under the 'Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness' pillar, and the suitable types of action to use, in particular European partnerships.</p>	<p>It will include extensive consultations and exchanges with Member States and their regions, including the outermost regions, the European Parliament as appropriate, and with various stakeholders about priorities, including missions, under the 'Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness' pillar, and the suitable types of action to use, in particular European partnerships.</p>
<p>Based on such extensive consultations, the Strategic Planning will identify common objectives and common areas for activities such as partnership areas (the proposed legal basis sets out only the instruments and criteria that will guide their use) and mission areas.</p>	<p>Based on such extensive consultations, the Strategic Planning will identify common objectives and common areas for activities such as partnership areas (the proposed legal basis sets out only the instruments and criteria that will guide their use) and mission areas.</p>
<p>The Strategic Planning will help to develop and realise the implementation of policy for the relevant areas covered, at EU level as well as complementing policy and policy approaches in the Member States. EU policy priorities will be taken into consideration during the Strategic Planning process to increase the contribution of research and innovation to the realisation of policy. It will also take into account foresight activities, studies and other scientific evidence and take account of relevant existing initiatives at EU and national level.</p>	<p>The Strategic Planning will help to develop and realise the implementation of policy for the relevant areas covered, at EU level as well as complementing policy and policy approaches in the Member States and their regions, including the outermost regions. EU policy priorities will be taken into consideration during the Strategic Planning process to increase the contribution of research and innovation to the realisation of policy. It will also take into account foresight activities, studies and other scientific evidence and take account of relevant existing initiatives at EU, national and regional level.</p>

Amendment 38

Annex I — Activities, first part Strategic Planning, 11th and 12th paragraphs (page 2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>'FET Flagships' supported under Horizon 2020 will continue to be supported under this Programme. As they present substantial analogies with missions, other 'FET flagships', if any, will be supported under this Framework Programme as missions geared towards future and emerging technologies.</p>	<p>'FET Flagships' supported under Horizon 2020 will continue to be supported under this Programme. As they present substantial analogies with missions, other 'FET flagships', if any, will be supported under this Framework Programme as missions geared towards future and emerging technologies.</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Science and Technology Cooperation dialogues with the EU's international partners and policy dialogues with the main world regions will make important contributions to the systematic identification of opportunities for cooperation which, when combined with differentiation by country/region, will support priority setting.</p>	<p><i>The new framework programme will aim to secure better recognition and mobilisation of excellence spread across all of Europe's Member States and regions; it will in particular foster initiatives to build trans-national and trans-regional cooperation between regional ecosystems and innovation hubs.</i></p> <p>Science and Technology Cooperation dialogues with the EU's international partners and policy dialogues with the main world regions will make important contributions to the systematic identification of opportunities for cooperation which, when combined with differentiation by country/region, will support priority setting.</p>

Amendment 39

Annex I — Activities, second part Dissemination and Communication, first and second paragraphs (page 3)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Horizon Europe will provide dedicated support for open access to scientific publications, to knowledge repositories and other data sources. Dissemination and knowledge diffusion actions will be supported, also from cooperation with other EU programmes, including clustering and packaging results and data in languages and formats for target audiences and networks for citizens, industry, public administrations, academia, civil society organisations, and policy makers. For this purpose, Horizon Europe may make use of advanced technologies and intelligence tools.</p> <p>There will be appropriate support for mechanisms to communicate the programme to potential applicants (e.g. National Contact Points).</p>	<p>Horizon Europe will provide dedicated support for open access to scientific publications, to knowledge repositories and other data sources. Dissemination and knowledge diffusion actions will be supported, also from cooperation with other EU programmes, including clustering and packaging results and data in languages and formats for target audiences and networks for citizens, industry, public administrations, academia, civil society organisations, and policy makers. For this purpose, Horizon Europe may make use of advanced technologies and intelligence tools.</p> <p>There will be appropriate support for mechanisms to communicate the programme to potential applicants (e.g. National <i>and regional</i> Contact Points), <i>especially for the Member States and regions that had the least involvement with the Horizon 2020 programme.</i></p>

Amendment 40

Annex I

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES	RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURES
Rationale	Rationale
Page 14 of COM(2018) 436 final (Annex I)	Page 14 of COM(2018) 436 final (Annex I)
Activities will contribute to different Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as: SDG 3 — Good Health and Well-Being for People; SDG 7 — Affordable and Clean Energy; SDG 9 — Industry Innovation and Infrastructure; SDG 13 — Climate Action.	Activities will contribute to different Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as: SDG 3 — Good Health and Well-Being for People; SDG 7 — Affordable and Clean Energy; SDG 9 — Industry Innovation and Infrastructure; SDG 13 — Climate Action; SDG 14 — Life Below Water; SDG 17 — Partnerships for the Goals.

Reason

A number of infrastructures belonging to ESFRI relate to the marine environment, justifying the inclusion of SDG 14. The proposal to include SDG 17 stems from the concept of infrastructure that is shared across the entire EU and the ensuing partnership aimed at achieving the objectives.

Amendment 41

Annex I Pillar II

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<i>Broad lines</i>	<i>Broad lines</i>
— Reforms in public health systems and policies in Europe and beyond;	— Reforms in public health systems and policies in Europe and beyond;
— New models and approaches for health and care and their transferability or adaptation from one country/region to another;	— New models and approaches for health and care and their transferability or adaptation from one country/region to another, and for the contribution of the voluntary and not-for-profit sector;
— Improving health technology assessment;	— Improving health technology assessment;
— Evolution of health inequality and effective policy response;	— Evolution of health inequality and effective policy response;
— Future health workforce and its needs;	— Future health workforce and its needs;

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Improving timely health information and use of health data, including electronic health records, with due attention to security, privacy, interoperability, standards, comparability and integrity; — Health systems' resilience in absorbing the impact of crises and to accommodate disruptive innovation; — Solutions for citizen and patient empowerment, self-monitoring, and interaction with health and social care professionals, for more integrated care and a user-centred approach; — Data, information, knowledge and best practice from health systems research at EU-level and globally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Improving timely health information and use of health data, including electronic health records, with due attention to security, privacy, interoperability, standards, comparability and integrity; — Health systems' resilience in absorbing the impact of crises and to accommodate disruptive innovation; — Solutions for citizen and patient empowerment, self-monitoring, and interaction with health and social care professionals, for more integrated care and a user-centred approach; — Data, information, knowledge and best practice from health systems research at EU-level and globally.

Amendment 42

Annex I, Broad lines of activities, Pillar II — Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness, Inclusive and Secure Society cluster; Section 2.1, second paragraph (page 24)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The EU must promote a model of inclusive and sustainable growth while reaping the benefits of technological advancements, enhancing trust in and promoting innovation of democratic governance, combatting inequalities, unemployment, marginalisation, discrimination and radicalisation, guaranteeing human rights, fostering cultural diversity and European cultural heritage and empowering citizens through social innovation. The management of migration and the integration of migrants will also continue to be priority issues. The role of research and innovation in the social sciences and the humanities in responding to these challenges and achieving the EU's goals is fundamental.</p>	<p>The EU must promote a model of inclusive and sustainable growth while reaping the benefits of technological advancements, enhancing trust in and promoting innovation of democratic governance, combatting inequalities, unemployment, marginalisation, discrimination and radicalisation, by protecting and promoting human rights, cultural diversity and European cultural heritage, by improving access to culture and education for all and by development of a social economy. The management of migration and the reception and integration of migrants will also continue to be priority issues. The role of research and innovation in the social sciences and the humanities in responding to these challenges and achieving the EU's goals is fundamental.</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<p><i>The social inclusion objective must build, in particular, on promoting the cultural heritage, tangible or intangible, which in today's globalised world plays a central role in people's sense of belonging, in particular its regional and linguistic aspects. Europe — which has in fact been built over centuries by the coexistence of very diverse communities that have left a huge legacy — should therefore address this challenge and support the preservation and enhancement of heritage, together with the various regions and countries. Such action is all the more relevant in that it is an important field for experimentation and application for a great many technological innovations. Their implementation in the field of heritage constitutes a powerful economic driver in the form of tourism revenue generated for the regions.</i></p>

Amendment 43

Annex I, Broad lines of activities, Pillar II — Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness, Inclusive and Secure Society cluster; Section 2.1, sixth paragraph (page 25)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Research and Innovation activities in this Global Challenge will be overall aligned with the Commission's priorities on Democratic Change; employment, growth and investment; justice and fundamental rights; migration; a deeper and more equitable monetary Union; the digital single digital market. It will respond to the commitment of the Rome Agenda to work towards: 'a social Europe' and 'a Union which preserves our cultural heritage and promotes cultural diversity'. It will also support the European Pillar of Social Rights, and the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.</p>	<p>Research and Innovation activities in this Global Challenge will be overall aligned with the Commission's priorities on Democratic Change; employment, growth and investment; education; justice and fundamental rights; migration; a deeper and more equitable monetary Union; the digital single digital market. It will respond to the commitment of the Rome Agenda to work towards: 'a social Europe' and 'a Union which preserves our cultural heritage and promotes cultural diversity'. It will also support the European Pillar of Social Rights and the objective of a knowledge society, and the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.</p>

Amendment 44

Annex I, Broad lines of activities, Pillar II — Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness, Inclusive and Secure Society cluster; Section 2.2.1 (pages 25 and 26)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p><i>Broad lines</i></p> <p>— The history, evolution and effectiveness of democracies, at different levels and in different forms; digitisation aspects and the effects of social network communication and the role of education and youth policies as cornerstones of democratic citizenship;</p>	<p><i>Broad lines</i></p> <p>— The history, evolution and effectiveness of democracies, at different levels and in different forms; digitisation aspects and the effects of social network communication and the role of education and youth policies as cornerstones of democratic citizenship;</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Innovative approaches to support the transparency, responsiveness, accountability effectiveness and legitimacy of democratic governance in full respect of fundamental rights and of the rule of law; — Strategies to address populism, extremism, radicalisation, terrorism and to include and engage disaffected and marginalised citizens; — Better understand the role of journalistic standards and user-generated content in a hyper-connected society and develop tools to combat disinformation; — The role of multi-cultural citizenship and identities in relation to democratic citizenship and political engagement; — The impact of technological and scientific advancements, including big data, online social networks and artificial intelligence on democracy; — Deliberative and participatory democracy and active and inclusive citizenship, including the digital dimension; — The impact of economic and social inequalities on political participation and democracies, demonstrating how reversing inequalities and combatting all forms of discrimination including gender, can sustain democracy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Innovative approaches to support the transparency, responsiveness, accountability effectiveness and legitimacy of democratic governance in full respect of fundamental rights and of the rule of law; — Strategies to address populism, extremism, radicalisation, terrorism and to include and engage disaffected and marginalised citizens; — Better understand the role of journalistic standards and user-generated content in a hyper-connected society and develop tools to combat disinformation; — The role of multi-cultural citizenship and identities in relation to democratic citizenship and political engagement; — The impact of technological and scientific advancements, including big data, online social networks and artificial intelligence on democracy; — Deliberative and participatory democracy and active and inclusive citizenship, including the digital dimension; — <i>The role of cities and regions as places for building citizenship, social and cultural links, the environmental and energy transition, and economic development and innovation; their contribution to the development of social innovation, democratic practices, and local, national and European citizenship;</i> — The impact of economic and social inequalities on political participation and democracies, demonstrating how reversing inequalities and combatting all forms of discrimination including gender, can sustain democracy.

Reason

Cities and regions are also a tool for a more secure and inclusive society and their role must be subject to scientific research.

Amendment 45

Annex I — Broad lines of activities, Pillar II — Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness, Inclusive and Secure Society cluster; Section 2.2.3 (pages 26 and 27)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>2.2.3. Social and Economic Transformations</p> <p>European societies are undergoing profound socioeconomic transformations, especially as a result of globalisation and technological innovations. At the same time there has been an increase in income inequality in most European countries. Forward-looking policies are needed, with a view to promoting inclusive growth and reversing inequalities, boosting productivity (including advancements in its measurement) and human capital, responding to migration and integration challenges and supporting intergenerational solidarity and social mobility. Education and training systems are needed for a more equitable and prosperous future.</p> <p><i>Broad lines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — <i>Knowledge base for advice on investments and policies especially education and training, for high value added skills, productivity, social mobility, growth, social innovation and job creation.</i> The role of education and training to tackle inequalities; — Social sustainability beyond GDP only indicators especially new economic and business models and new financial technologies; — Statistical and other economic tools for a better understanding of growth and innovation in a context of sluggish productivity gains; — New types of work, the role of work, trends and changes in labour markets and income in contemporary societies, and their impacts on income distribution, non-discrimination including gender equality and social inclusion; 	<p>2.2.3. <i>Education, Employment and</i> Social and Economic Transformations</p> <p>European societies are undergoing profound socioeconomic transformations, especially as a result of globalisation and technological innovations. At the same time there has been an increase in income inequality in most European countries. Forward-looking policies are needed, with a view to promoting inclusive growth and reversing inequalities, boosting productivity (including advancements in its measurement) and human capital, responding to migration and integration challenges and supporting intergenerational solidarity and social mobility. Education and training systems are needed for a more equitable and prosperous future.</p> <p><i>Broad lines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — The role of education and training to tackle inequalities; <i>organisation of the education and training system; educational and innovative practices; activities that foster fulfilment, creativity, autonomy and the development of critical thinking; appropriate support for each young person, contributing to the success of everyone at school or in training;</i> — Social sustainability beyond GDP only indicators especially new economic and business models and new financial technologies; <i>diversity of economic, social and environmental aims and of business models;</i> — Statistical and other economic tools for a better understanding of growth and innovation in a context of sluggish productivity gains; — New types of work, the role of work, <i>the place of employees in the business,</i> trends and changes in labour markets and income in contemporary societies, and their impacts on income distribution, non-discrimination including gender equality and social inclusion;

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Tax and benefits systems together with social security and social investment policies with a view to reversing inequalities and addressing the negative impacts of technology, demographics and diversity; — Human mobility in the global and local contexts for better migration governance, integration of migrants including refugees; respect of international commitments and human rights; greater, improved access to quality education, training, support services, active and inclusive citizenship especially for the vulnerable; — Education and training systems to foster and make the best use of the EU's digital transformation, also to manage the risks from global interconnectedness and technological innovations, especially emerging online risks, ethical concerns, socioeconomic inequalities and radical changes in markets; — Modernisation of public authorities to meet citizens' expectation regarding service provision, transparency, accessibility, openness, accountability and user-centricity. — Efficiency of justice systems and improved access to justice based on judiciary independence and rule of law principles, with fair, efficient and transparent procedural methods both in civil and criminal matters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Tax and benefits systems together with social security and social investment policies with a view to reversing inequalities and addressing the negative impacts of technology, demographics and diversity; — Human mobility in the global and local contexts for better migration governance, integration of migrants including refugees; respect of international commitments and human rights; greater, improved access to quality education, training, support services, active and inclusive citizenship especially for the vulnerable; — Education and training systems to foster and make the best use of the EU's digital transformation, also to manage the risks from global interconnectedness and technological innovations, especially emerging online risks, ethical concerns, socioeconomic inequalities and radical changes in markets; — Modernisation of public authorities to meet citizens' expectation regarding service provision, transparency, accessibility, openness, accountability and user-centricity. — Efficiency of justice systems and improved access to justice based on judiciary independence and rule of law principles, with fair, efficient and transparent procedural methods both in civil and criminal matters.

Amendment 46

Annex I — Pillar II (page 31)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
3.2. Areas of Intervention	3.2. Areas of Intervention
3.2.1. Manufacturing Technologies	3.2.1. Cross-cutting processing and performance drivers

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Manufacturing is a key driver of employment and prosperity in the EU, producing over three quarters of the EU's global exports and providing over a 100 million direct and indirect jobs. The key challenge for EU manufacturing is to remain competitive at a global level with smarter and more customised products of high added value, produced at much lower energy costs. Creative and cultural inputs will be vital to help generate added value.</p>	<p><i>The future of industry depends not just on technological factors, but also social and organisational ones that are critical for its competitiveness, are often too little known and demand a further development in knowledge, dissemination and ownership.</i></p> <p>Broad lines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — <i>Organisation of value chains and collaboration within them; sharing of added value and negotiation and pricing mechanisms; information exchange and collaborative work tools, co-design initiatives; use of virtual and augmented reality in design, preparation for manufacture and training of workers;</i> — <i>Clustering, localised collaboration networks, development of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs; development of positive externalities by regions to make them more attractive and their industry more competitive;</i> — <i>Ergonomics and improving working conditions; access to lifelong learning and adapting skills to changing job profiles; capitalising on the experience and creativity of employees;</i> — <i>Removing obstacles to the transformation, especially digital transformation, of companies: access to funding, innovation and skills; creation and management of transformation strategies, providing support for the transition; evolution in the representation of industry and its trades.</i> <p>3.2.2. Manufacturing Technologies</p> <p>Manufacturing is a key driver of employment and prosperity in the EU, producing over three quarters of the EU's global exports and providing over a 100 million direct and indirect jobs. The key challenge for EU manufacturing is to remain competitive at a global level with smarter and more customised products of high added value, produced at much lower energy costs. Creative and cultural inputs will be vital to help generate added value.</p>

Reason

At present, Horizon Europe neglects or underplays the cross-cutting and organisational aspects that nevertheless play a great role in the transformation and competitiveness of industry and for which Europe needs more scientific knowledge and more innovation.

Amendment 47

Annex I — Pillar II (page 39)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM	EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM
PART II — Annex I	PART II — Annex I
Point 4. CLUSTER 'CLIMATE, ENERGY AND MOBILITY'	Point 4. CLUSTER 'CLIMATE, ENERGY AND MOBILITY'
4.1. Rationale	4.1. Rationale
[...]	[...]
Activities under this Cluster contribute in particular to the goals of the Energy Union, as well as to those of the Digital Single Market, the Jobs, Growth and Investment agenda, the strengthening of the EU as a global actor, the new EU Industrial Policy Strategy, the Circular Economy, the Raw Materials Initiative, the Security Union and the Urban Agenda, as well as the Common Agricultural Policy of the EU as well as EU legal provisions to reduce noise and air pollution.	Activities under this Cluster contribute in particular to the goals of the Energy Union, as well as to those of the Digital Single Market, the Jobs, Growth and Investment agenda, the strengthening of the EU as a global actor, the new EU Industrial Policy Strategy, the Circular Economy, Blue Growth , the Raw Materials Initiative, the Security Union and the Urban Agenda, as well as the Common Agricultural Policy, the Integrated Maritime Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy of the EU as well as EU legal provisions to reduce noise and air pollution.
[...]	[...]

Reason

The seas and fisheries are crucial sectors for the EU: mention of these sectors is therefore essential.

Amendment 48

Annex I — Pillar II — 4.2.5. Communities and Cities (page 42)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<i>Broad lines</i>	<i>Broad lines</i>
[...]	[...]
Quality of life for the citizens, safe mobility, urban social innovation, cities' circular and regenerative capacity, reduced environmental footprint and pollution;	Quality of life for the citizens, safe mobility, urban social innovation, cities' circular and regenerative capacity, reduced environmental footprint and pollution;

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
[...]	<p><i>Getting citizens in towns and regions involved, the democratic challenges of the environmental and energy transformation; social acceptance and support for the changes involved in the transition; reduction of inequalities in the process of adapting to climate change and the environmental and energy changes;</i></p> <p>[...]</p>

Amendment 49

Annex I — Pillar II — 5.2.4. Sea and Oceans (page 48)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p><i>Broad lines</i></p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Blue value-chains, the multiple-use of marine space and growth of the renewable energy sector from seas and oceans, including sustainable micro- and macro- algae;</p> <p>Nature-based solutions based on the dynamics of marine and coastal ecosystems,</p> <p>[...]</p>	<p><i>Broad lines</i></p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Blue value-chains, the multiple-use of marine space and growth of maritime industries such as the renewable energy sector from seas and oceans, including sustainable micro- and macro- algae;</p> <p><i>Land-sea interfaces in coastal areas, sustainability of various blue economy sectors, including fishing and marine crops, as well as coastal tourism; systematic approaches to sustainable development of port and coastal areas; the issue of urbanisation and population ageing in coastal areas;</i></p> <p>Nature-based solutions based on marine and coastal ecosystem dynamics,</p> <p>[...]</p>

Amendment 50

Annex I — Pillar II — 6.2.2. Global Challenges (page 54)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>2. Inclusive and Secure Society</p> <p>— Research on inequality, poverty and exclusion, social mobility, cultural diversity, and skills; assessment of social, demographic and technological transformations on the economy and on society;</p>	<p>2. Inclusive and Secure Society</p> <p>— Research on inequality, poverty and exclusion, social mobility, cultural diversity, and skills; assessment of social, demographic and technological transformations on the economy and on society;</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
— Support to the preservation of cultural heritage; [...]	— <i>Research into the creation of educational disadvantage and the development of an education and training system that promotes the success and self-fulfilment of all throughout their lives;</i> — Support to the preservation of cultural heritage; [...]

Amendment 51

Annex I — Pillar II (pages 55 and 56)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
5. Food and Natural Resources [...] — EU Reference Laboratories on Feed Additives, Genetically Modified Organisms and Food Contact Materials; — Knowledge centre for food fraud and quality; — Knowledge centre for bioeconomy.	5. Food and Natural Resources [...] — EU Reference Laboratories on Feed Additives, Genetically Modified Organisms and Food Contact Materials; — <i>Knowledge centre for local food systems;</i> — Knowledge centre for food fraud and quality; — Knowledge centre for bioeconomy.

Amendment 52

Annex I — Programme Activities, Pillar III — Open Innovation, seventh paragraph (page 58)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
For Europe to lead that new wave of breakthrough innovation, the following underlying challenges need to be met: — Improve the transformation of science into innovation in order to accelerate the transfer of ideas, technologies and talent from the research base into start-ups and industry;	For Europe to lead that new wave of breakthrough innovation, the following underlying challenges need to be met: — Improve the transformation of science into innovation in order to accelerate the transfer of ideas, technologies and talent from the research base into start-ups and industry;

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Speed up industrial transformation: European industry is lagging behind in embracing new technologies and scaling up: 77 % of the young and big R & D companies are in US or Asia and only 16 % are based in Europe; — Increase risk finance to overcome financing gaps: Europe's innovators suffer from a low supply of risk finance. Venture capital is key to turning breakthrough innovations into world-leading companies but, in Europe, it is less than a quarter of the amounts raised in the US and in Asia. Europe must bridge the 'Valleys of death', whereby ideas and innovations fail to reach the market due to the gap between public support and private investment, in particular with regard to high-risk breakthrough innovations and long-term investments; — Enhance and simplify the European landscape for funding and supporting research and innovation: the multitude of funding sources provides a complex landscape for innovators. EU intervention has to cooperate and coordinate with other initiatives at European, national and regional level, public and private, to better enhance and align supporting capacities, and provide for an easy-to-navigate landscape for any European innovator; — Overcome fragmentation to the innovation ecosystem. While Europe is home to a growing number of hotspots, these are not well connected. Companies with international growth potential have to cope with fragmentation of national markets with their diverse languages, business cultures and regulations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Speed up industrial transformation: European industry is lagging behind in embracing new technologies and scaling up: 77 % of the young and big R & D companies are in US or Asia and only 16 % are based in Europe; — Increase risk finance to overcome financing gaps: Europe's innovators suffer from a low supply of risk finance. Venture capital is key to turning breakthrough innovations into world-leading companies but, in Europe, it is less than a quarter of the amounts raised in the US and in Asia. Europe must bridge the 'Valleys of death', whereby ideas and innovations fail to reach the market due to the gap between public support and private investment, in particular with regard to high-risk breakthrough innovations and long-term investments; — Enhance and simplify the European landscape for funding and supporting research and innovation: the multitude of funding sources provides a complex landscape for innovators. EU intervention has to cooperate and coordinate with other initiatives at European, national and regional level, public and private, to better enhance and align supporting capacities, and provide for an easy-to-navigate landscape for any European innovator; — Overcome fragmentation to the innovation ecosystem. While Europe is home to a growing number of hotspots, these are not well connected. Companies with international growth potential have to cope with fragmentation of national markets with their diverse languages, business cultures and regulations; — <i>Recognise the territorial basis of science and innovation and the major contribution of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs, which can respond rapidly and provide radical innovations, and are able to ensure ongoing support for the transformation of value chains in Europe and for action to develop skills and human resources. To this end, it is necessary to take better account of smart specialisations and their networks.</i>

Amendment 53

Annex I — Programme Activities, Pillar III — Open Innovation, 11th paragraph (pages 59 and 60)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Whilst the EIC will directly support breakthrough innovations, the overall environment from which European innovations nurture and emerge must be further developed and enhanced: it must be a common European endeavour to support innovation all across Europe, and in all dimensions and forms, including through complementary EU and national policies and resources whenever possible. Hence, this Pillar provides also for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Renewed and reinforced coordination and cooperation mechanisms with Member States and Associated Countries, but also with private initiatives, in order to support all types of European innovation ecosystems and their actors; — Support to the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). 	<p>Whilst the EIC will directly support breakthrough innovations, the overall environment from which European innovations nurture and emerge must be further developed and enhanced: it must be a common European endeavour to support innovation all across Europe, its Member States and their regions, and in all dimensions and forms, including through complementary local, regional, national and EU policies and resources whenever possible. Hence, this Pillar provides also for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Renewed and reinforced coordination and cooperation mechanisms with local and regional authorities, Member States and Associated Countries, but also with private initiatives, in order to support all types of European innovation ecosystems and their actors; — Support to the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs).

Amendment 54

Annex I — Programme activities, Pillar III — Open Innovation, Part 1 European Innovation Council, point 1.1 (page 62)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Particular attention will be paid to ensuring proper and efficient complementarity with individual or networked Member States initiatives, including in the form of European Partnership.</p>	<p>Particular attention will be paid to ensuring proper and efficient complementarity with individual or networked Member State initiatives and regional ecosystems and innovation hubs, including in the form of European Partnerships. <i>In the interests of the projects that receive support, the Pathfinder and the Accelerator will ensure that their assistance is incorporated into a continuous chain of support for projects. The EIC will maintain a constant dialogue with the national, regional and local authorities responsible for innovation to ensure that actions complement one another and to maximise coordination and cooperation, including through co-financed programmes. This dialogue is a prerequisite for the EIC to award Seals of Excellence.</i></p>

Amendment 55

Annex I Pillar III (page 64)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>1.1.3. Additional EIC activities</p> <p>Additionally, EIC will also implement:</p> <p>— EIC business acceleration services in support of Pathfinder and Accelerator activities and actions. The aim will be to connect the EIC Community of funded innovators, including funded Seal of Excellence, to investors, partners and public buyers. It will provide a range of coaching and mentoring services to EIC actions. It will provide innovators with access to international networks of potential partners, including industrial ones, to complement a value chain or develop market opportunities, and find investors and other sources of private or corporate finance. Activities will include live events (e.g. brokerage events, pitching sessions) but also, the development of matching platforms or use of existing ones, in close relation with financial intermediaries supported by the InvestEU and with the EIB Group. These activities will also encourage peer exchanges as a source of learning in innovation ecosystem, making particular good use of Members of the High Level Advisory board of the EIC and EIC Fellows;</p>	<p>1.1.3. Additional EIC activities</p> <p>Additionally, EIC will also implement:</p> <p>— EIC business acceleration services in support of Pathfinder and Accelerator activities and actions. The aim will be to connect the EIC Community of funded innovators, including funded Seal of Excellence, to investors, partners and public buyers, but also national and local players promoting innovation and capable of complementing EIC support and provide sustainable help to innovators. It will provide a range of coaching and mentoring services to EIC actions. It will provide innovators with access to international networks of potential partners, including industrial ones, to complement a value chain or develop market opportunities, and find investors and other sources of private or corporate finance. Activities will include live events (e.g. brokerage events, pitching sessions) but also, the development of matching platforms or use of existing ones, in close relation with financial intermediaries supported by the InvestEU and with the EIB Group. These activities will also encourage peer exchanges as a source of learning in innovation ecosystem, making particular good use of Members of the High Level Advisory board of the EIC and EIC Fellows;</p>

Amendment 56

Annex I — Programme activities, Pillar III — Open Innovation, European Innovation Council, point 1.2.2 (pages 65 and 66)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>1.2.2. EIC programme managers</p> <p>The Commission will take a pro-active approach to the management of high risk projects, through access to the necessary expertise.</p>	<p>1.2.2. EIC programme managers</p> <p>The Commission will take a pro-active approach to the management of high risk projects, through access to the necessary expertise.</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Commission will appoint on a temporary basis a number of EIC programme managers to assist it with technology-based vision and operational guidance.</p> <p>Programme managers will come from multiple spheres, including companies, universities, national laboratories and research centres. They will bring deep expertise from personal experience and years in the field. They will be recognised leaders, either having managed multidisciplinary research teams or directing large institutional programs, and know the importance of communicating their visions tirelessly, creatively, and broadly. Lastly, they will have experience in overseeing important budgets, which require sense of responsibility.</p>	<p>The Commission will appoint on a temporary basis a number of EIC programme managers to assist it with technology-based vision and operational guidance.</p> <p>Programme managers will come from multiple spheres, including public stakeholders specialising in innovation companies, universities, national laboratories and research centres. They will bring deep expertise from personal experience and years in the field. They will be recognised leaders, either having managed multidisciplinary research teams or directing large institutional programs, and know the importance of communicating their visions tirelessly, creatively, and broadly. Lastly, they will have experience in overseeing important budgets, which require sense of responsibility.</p>

Amendment 57

Annex I Programme activities, Pillar III — Open Innovation, European Innovation Council, point 2.1 (page 68)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>2.1. Reason</p> <p>To fully harness the potential of innovation involving researchers, entrepreneurs, industry and society at large, the EU must improve the environment within which innovation can flourish at all levels. This will mean contributing to the development of an effective innovation ecosystem at EU level, and encouraging cooperation, networking, and the exchange of ideas, funding and skills among national and local innovation ecosystems.</p> <p>The EU must also aim to develop ecosystems that support social innovation and public sector innovation, in addition to innovation in private enterprises. Indeed, the government sector must innovate and renew itself in order to be able to support the changes in regulation and governance required to support the large-scale deployment of new technologies and a growing public demand for the more efficient and effective delivery of services. Social innovations are crucial to enhance the welfare of our societies.</p>	<p>2.1. Reasons</p> <p>To fully harness the potential of innovation involving researchers, entrepreneurs, industry and society at large, the EU must improve the environment within which innovation can flourish at all levels. This will mean contributing to the development of an effective innovation ecosystem at EU level, and encouraging cooperation, networking, and the exchange of ideas, funding and skills among national and local innovation ecosystems.</p> <p>The EU must also aim to develop ecosystems that support social innovation and innovation in the voluntary, not-for-profit and public sectors, in addition to innovation in private enterprises. Indeed, these sectors must innovate and renew themselves in order to be able to support the changes in regulation and governance required to support the large-scale deployment of new technologies and a growing public demand for the more efficient and effective delivery of services. Social innovations are crucial to enhance the welfare of our societies.</p>

Amendment 58

Annex I — Programme activities, Pillar III — Open Innovation, European Innovation Council, point 2.2 (pages 68 and 69)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>2.2. Areas of intervention</p> <p>As a first step the Commission will organise an EIC Forum of Member States and Associated countries' public authorities and bodies in charge of national innovation policies and programmes, with the aim of promoting coordination and dialogue on the development of the EU's innovation ecosystem. Within this EIC Forum, the Commission will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Discuss the development of innovation-friendly regulation, through the continued application of the Innovation Principle and development of innovative approaches to public procurement including developing and enhancing the Public Procurement of Innovation (PPI) instrument to drive innovation. The Observatory of Public Sector Innovation will also continue to support internal government innovation efforts, alongside the revamped Policy Support Facility; — Promote the alignment of research and innovation agendas with EU efforts to consolidate an open market for capital flows and investment, such as the development of key framework conditions in favour of innovation under the Capital Markets Union; — Enhance coordination between national innovation programmes and the EIC, so as to stimulate operational synergies and avoid overlap, by sharing data on programmes and their implementation, resources and expertise, analysis and monitoring of technological and innovation trends, and by interconnecting respective innovators' communities; 	<p>2.2 Areas of Intervention</p> <p>As a first step the Commission will organise an EIC Forum of Member States, cities and regions, and Associated countries' public authorities and bodies in charge of national innovation policies and programmes, with the aim of promoting coordination and dialogue on the development of the EU's innovation ecosystem. Within this EIC Forum, the Commission will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Discuss the development of innovation-friendly regulation, through the continued application of the Innovation Principle and development of innovative approaches to public procurement including developing and enhancing the Public Procurement of Innovation (PPI) instrument to drive innovation. The Observatory of Public Sector Innovation will also continue to support internal government innovation efforts, alongside the revamped Policy Support Facility; — Promote the alignment of research and innovation agendas with EU efforts to consolidate an open market for capital flows and investment, such as the development of key framework conditions in favour of innovation under the Capital Markets Union; — Enhance coordination between national, regional and local innovation programmes and the EIC, so as to stimulate operational synergies and avoid overlap, by sharing data on programmes and their implementation, resources and expertise, analysis and monitoring of technological and innovation trends, and by interconnecting respective innovators' communities;

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>— Establish a joint communication strategy on innovation in the EU. It will aim at stimulating the EU's most talented innovators, entrepreneurs, particularly young drivers, SMEs and start-ups, also from fresh corners of the EU. It will stress the EU added-value that technical, non-technical, and social innovators can bring to EU citizens by developing their idea/vision into a thriving enterprise (social value/impact, jobs and growth, societal progression).</p> <p>Activities will be implemented to ensure effective complementarity between EIC's types of action and their specific focus on breakthrough innovation, with activities implemented by Member States and Associated Countries, but also by private initiatives, in order to support all types of innovation, reach out to all innovators across the EU, and provide them with enhanced and adequate support.</p>	<p>— <i>Foster the identification, classification, recognition and promotion of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs, connecting them around smart specialisations, and bringing them together in consortia likely to contribute significantly to achieving the objectives of the programme and in particular its Open Innovation pillar;</i></p> <p>— Establish a joint communication strategy on innovation in the EU. It will aim at stimulating the EU's most talented innovators, entrepreneurs, particularly young drivers, SMEs and start-ups, also from fresh corners of the EU. It will stress the EU added-value that technical, non-technical, and social innovators can bring to EU citizens by developing their idea/vision into a thriving enterprise (social value/impact, jobs and growth, societal progression).</p> <p>Activities will be implemented to ensure effective complementarity between EIC's types of action and their specific focus on breakthrough innovation, with activities implemented by Member States, regions and cities and Associated Countries, but also by private initiatives, in order to support all types of innovation, reach out to all innovators across the EU, and provide them with enhanced and adequate support.</p>

Reason

Cities, regions, and their innovation ecosystems should be at the heart of the EIC.

Amendment 59

Annex I — Programme activities, Pillar III — Open Innovation, European Innovation Council, point 2.2 (page 69)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>To that end, the EU will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Promote and co-fund joint innovation programmes managed by authorities in charge of public national, regional or local innovation policies and programmes, to which private entities supporting innovation and innovators may be associated. Such demand-driven joint programmes may target, among others, early stage and feasibility study support, academia-enterprise cooperation, support to high-tech SMEs' collaborative research, technology and knowledge transfer, internationalisation of SMEs, market analysis and development, digitalisation of low-tech SMEs, financial instruments for close to market innovations activities or market deployment, social innovation. They may also include joint public procurement initiatives, enabling innovations to be commercialised in the public sector, in particular in support of the development of new policy. This could be particularly effective to stimulate innovation in public service areas and to provide market opportunities to European innovators. — Support also joint programmes for mentoring, coaching, technical assistance and other services that are delivered close to innovators, by networks such as Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), clusters, pan-European platforms such as Startup Europe, local innovation actors, public but also private, in particular incubators and innovation hubs that could moreover be interconnected to favour partnering between innovators. Support may also be given to promote soft skills for innovation, including to networks of vocational institutions and in close relation with the European Institute of Innovation and Technology; 	<p>To that end, the EU will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Promote and co-fund joint innovation programmes managed by authorities in charge of public national, regional or local innovation policies and programmes, to which private entities supporting innovation and innovators may be associated. These joint programmes could take the form of consortia that draw together regional ecosystems and innovation hubs; Such demand-driven joint programmes may target, among others, early stage and feasibility study support (including complementary research that would provide proof of concept, demonstrators and pilot production lines), academia-enterprise cooperation, support to high-tech SMEs' collaborative research, technology and knowledge transfer, internationalisation of SMEs, market analysis and development, digitalisation of low-tech SMEs, financial instruments for close to market innovations activities or market deployment, social innovation. They may also include joint public procurement initiatives, enabling innovations to be commercialised in the public sector, in particular in support of the development of new policy. This could be particularly effective to stimulate innovation in public service areas and to provide market opportunities to European innovators. — Support also joint programmes for mentoring, coaching, technical assistance and other services that are delivered close to innovators, by networks such as Enterprise Europe Network (EEN), clusters, pan-European platforms such as Startup Europe, regional and local innovation actors, public but also private, in particular incubators and innovation hubs that could moreover be interconnected to favour partnering between innovators. Support may also be given to promote soft skills for innovation, including to networks of vocational institutions and in close relation with the European Institute of Innovation and Technology;

Amendment 60

Annex I — Programme activities, Pillar III — Open Innovation, European Innovation Council, point 2.2 (page 69)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The EU will also launch actions necessary to further monitor and nurture the overall innovation landscape and innovation management capacity in Europe.	The EU will also launch actions necessary to further monitor and nurture the overall innovation landscape and innovation management capacity in Europe.
	<i>The Commission will set up, together with cities and regions, a forum of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs, in order to improve knowledge of their conditions for start-up and success, their contribution to European scientific excellence and to the dynamics of innovation, and to facilitate and boost their contribution to implementing the programme and achieving its objectives.</i>
The ecosystem support activities will be implemented by the Commission, supported by an executive agency for the evaluation process.	The ecosystem support activities will be implemented by the Commission, supported by an executive agency for the evaluation process.

Amendment 61

Annex I — Programme activities, Pillar III — Open Innovation, European Innovation Council, point 3.1 second paragraph (page 70)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Efforts are still needed to develop ecosystems where researchers, innovators, industries and governments can easily interact.	Efforts are still needed to develop ecosystems where researchers, innovators, industries and governments, <i>as well as local and regional authorities</i> , can easily interact.

Amendment 62

Annex I — Programme activities, Pillar III — Open Innovation, European Institute of Innovation and Technology, point 3.1 fourth paragraph, first sentence (page 70)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The nature and scale of the innovation challenges require liaising and mobilising players and resources at European scale, by fostering cross-border collaboration.	The nature and scale of the innovation challenges require liaising and mobilising players and resources at European scale, by fostering <i>trans-regional and</i> cross-border collaboration.

Amendment 63

Annex I — Programme activities, Pillar III — Open Innovation, European Institute of Innovation and Technology, point 3.2.1 (pages 70 and 71)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>3.2. Areas of intervention</p> <p><i>3.2.1. Sustainable innovation ecosystems across Europe</i></p> <p>The EIT will play a reinforced role in strengthening sustainable innovation ecosystems across Europe. In particular, the EIT will continue to operate primarily through its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), the large-scale European partnerships that address specific societal challenges. It will continue to strengthen innovation ecosystems around them, by fostering the integration of research, innovation and education. Furthermore, EIT will contribute to bridge existing gaps in innovation performance across Europe by expanding its Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS). The EIT will work with innovation ecosystems that exhibit high innovation potential based on strategy, thematic alignment and impact, in close synergy with Smart Specialisation Strategies and Platforms.</p>	<p>3.2. Areas of intervention</p> <p><i>3.2.1. Sustainable innovation ecosystems across Europe</i></p> <p>The EIT will play a reinforced role in strengthening sustainable innovation ecosystems across Europe. In particular, the EIT will continue to operate primarily through its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), the large-scale European partnerships that address specific societal challenges. It will continue to strengthen innovation ecosystems around them, by fostering the integration of research, innovation and education. Furthermore, EIT will contribute to bridge existing gaps in innovation performance across Europe by expanding its Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS). The EIT will work with innovation ecosystems, and in particular with regional ecosystems and innovation hubs, that exhibit high innovation potential based on strategy, thematic alignment and impact, in close synergy with Smart Specialisation Strategies and Platforms.</p>

Amendment 64

Annex I Programme activities, Pillar III — Open Innovation, European Institute of Innovation and Technology, point 3.2.4 (page 72)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p><i>Broad lines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Cooperation with the EIC in streamlining the support (i. e. funding and services) offered to highly innovative ventures in both start-up and scale-up stages, in particular through KICs; — Planning and implementation of EIT activities in order to maximise synergies and complementarities with the actions under the Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness Pillar; — Engage with EU Member States at the national level, establishing a structured dialogue and coordinating efforts to enable synergies with existing national initiatives, in order to identify, share and disseminate good practices and learnings; 	<p><i>Broad lines</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Cooperation with the EIC in streamlining the support (i. e. funding and services) offered to highly innovative ventures in both start-up and scale-up stages, in particular through KICs; — Planning and implementation of EIT activities in order to maximise synergies and complementarities with the actions under the Global Challenges and Industrial Competitiveness Pillar; — Engage with EU Member States at the national level and with local and regional authorities, establishing a structured dialogue and coordinating efforts to enable synergies with existing national, regional and local initiatives, in order to identify, share and disseminate good practices and learnings;

Amendment 65

Annex I — Programme Activities — Strengthening the European Research Area, fourth paragraph (page 74)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p><i>In addition</i>, research and innovation are seen by some as distant and elitist without clear benefits for citizens, instilling attitudes that hamper the creation and uptake of innovative solutions, and scepticism about evidence-based public policies. This requires both better linkages between scientists, citizens and policymakers, and more robust approaches to pooling scientific evidence itself.</p>	<p><i>These disparities and inequalities in access to research and innovation have resulted in a loss of public trust, but</i> research and innovation are <i>also</i> seen by some as distant and elitist without clear benefits for citizens, instilling attitudes that hamper the creation and uptake of innovative solutions, and scepticism about evidence-based public policies. This requires <i>tackling the disparities that have been observed</i>, better linkages between scientists, citizens and policymakers, and more robust approaches to pooling scientific evidence itself.</p>

Amendment 66

Annex I — Programme Activities — Strengthening the European Research Area, fifth paragraph (page 74)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The EU now needs to raise the bar on the quality and impact of its research and innovation system, requiring a revitalised European Research Area (ERA), better supported by the EU's research and innovation Framework Programme. Specifically, a well-integrated yet tailored set of EU measures is needed, combined with reforms and performance enhancements at national level (to which the Smart Specialisation Strategies supported under the European Regional Development Fund can contribute) and, in turn, institutional changes within research funding and performing organisations, including universities. By combining efforts at EU level, synergies can be exploited and the necessary scale can be found to make support to national policy reforms more efficient and impactful.</p>	<p>The EU now needs to raise the bar on the quality and impact of its research and innovation system, requiring a revitalised European Research Area (ERA), better supported by the EU's research and innovation Framework Programme. Specifically, a well-integrated yet tailored set of EU measures is needed, combined with reforms and performance enhancements at national, regional and local level (to which the Smart Specialisation Strategies supported under the European Regional Development Fund can contribute) and, in turn, institutional changes within research funding and performing organisations, including universities. By combining efforts at EU level, synergies can be exploited and the necessary scale can be found to make support to national, regional and local policy reforms more efficient and impactful.</p>

Amendment 67

Annex I — Programme Activities — Strengthening the European Research Area, sixth paragraph (page 74)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The activities supported under this part addresses ERA policy priorities, while generally underpinning all parts of Horizon Europe. Activities may also be established to foster brain circulation across ERA through mobility of researchers and innovators.	The activities supported under this part addresses ERA policy priorities, while generally underpinning all parts of Horizon Europe. Activities may also be established to foster brain circulation across ERA through mobility of researchers and innovators. <i>Other activities can focus on supporting the emergence, structuring and excellence of new regional ecosystems and innovation hubs in the Member States and regions lagging behind in the development of research and innovation.</i>

Amendment 68

Annex I — Programme Activities — Strengthening the European Research Area, Sharing excellence (page 76)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<i>Broad lines</i>	<i>Broad lines</i>
— Teaming, to create new centres of excellence or upgrade existing ones in eligible countries, building on partnerships between leading scientific institutions and partner institutions;	— Teaming, to create <i>new regional ecosystems and innovation hubs and</i> new centres of excellence or upgrade existing ones in eligible countries, building on partnerships between leading scientific institutions and partner institutions;
— Twinning, to significantly strengthen a university or research organisation from an eligible country in a defined field, by linking it with internationally-leading research institutions from other Member States or Associated Countries.	— Twinning, to significantly strengthen a university or research organisation from an eligible country in a defined field, by linking it with internationally-leading research institutions from other Member States or Associated Countries.
— ERA Chairs, to support universities or research organisations attract and maintain high quality human resources under the direction of an outstanding researcher and research manager (the 'ERA Chair holder'), and to implement structural changes to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis.	— ERA Chairs, to support universities or research organisations attract and maintain high quality human resources under the direction of an outstanding researcher and research manager (the 'ERA Chair holder'), and to implement structural changes to achieve excellence on a sustainable basis.

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>— European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST), involving ambitious conditions regarding the inclusion of eligible countries, and other measures to provide scientific networking, capacity building and career development support to researchers from these target countries. 80 % of the total budget of COST will be devoted to actions fully aligned with the objectives of this intervention area.</p>	<p>— European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST), involving ambitious conditions regarding the inclusion of eligible countries, and other measures to provide scientific networking, capacity building and career development support to researchers from these target countries. 80 % of the total budget of COST will be devoted to actions fully aligned with the objectives of this intervention area.</p> <p>— <i>trans-regional cooperation around shared smart specialisations and between regional ecosystems and innovation hubs, by supporting and facilitating the involvement of emerging and developing ecosystems.</i></p>

Amendment 69

Annex I — Programme Activities — Strengthening the European Research Area — Reforming and enhancing the European Research Area (page 91)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Policy reforms at national level will be mutually reinforced through the development of EU-level policy initiatives, research, networking, partnering, coordination, data collection and monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p><i>Broad lines</i></p> <p>— Strengthening the evidence base for research and innovation policy, for a better understanding of the different dimensions and components of national research and innovation systems, including drivers, impacts, associated policies;</p> <p>— Foresight activities, to anticipate emerging needs, in coordination and co-design with national agencies and future-oriented stakeholders, in a participative manner, building on advances in forecasting methodology, making outcomes more policy relevant, while exploiting synergies across and beyond the programme;</p>	<p>Policy reforms at national, regional and local level will be mutually reinforced through the development of EU-level policy initiatives, research, networking, partnering, coordination, data collection and monitoring and evaluation.</p> <p><i>Broad lines</i></p> <p>— Strengthening the evidence base for research and innovation policy, for a better understanding of the different dimensions and components of national, regional and local research and innovation systems, including drivers, impacts, associated policies;</p> <p>— Foresight activities, to anticipate emerging needs, in coordination and co-design with national agencies, local and regional authorities and future-oriented stakeholders, in a participative manner, building on advances in forecasting methodology, making outcomes more policy relevant, while exploiting synergies across and beyond the programme;</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Accelerating the transition towards open science, by monitoring, analysing and supporting the development and uptake of open science policies and practices at the level of Member States, regions, institutions and researchers, in a way that maximises synergies and coherence at EU level; — Support to national research and innovation policy reform, including though a strengthened set of services of the Policy Support Facility (PSF) (i.e. peer reviews, specific support activities, mutual learning exercises and the knowledge centre) to Member States and Associated Countries, operating in synergy with the European Regional Development Fund, the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) and the Reform Delivery Tool; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Accelerating the transition towards open science, by monitoring, analysing and supporting the development and uptake of open science policies and practices at the level of Member States, regions, cities, institutions and researchers, in a way that maximises synergies and coherence at EU level; — Support to national, regional and local research and innovation policy reform, including though a strengthened set of services of the Policy Support Facility (PSF) (i.e. peer reviews, specific support activities, mutual learning exercises and the knowledge centre) to Member States, regions and cities and Associated Countries, operating in synergy with the European Regional Development Fund, the Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) and the Reform Delivery Tool; — <i>Support for the emergence, structuring and development of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs. In the event of a joint request from the Member State and local and regional authorities, a specific measure for cooperation between the Commission and these national, regional and local actors may be implemented in order to enhance the relevance of ERDF and ESF + use in the field of research and innovation, to facilitate access to the Horizon Europe programme and to strengthen synergies between the different funds and the framework programme, for example, in the new European partnerships and co-financed programmes. The Commission services and agencies responsible for the implementation of Horizon Europe will be directly involved in this scheme;</i>

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. reiterates its call for a comprehensive approach to the Union's financial effort for research, training and innovation, which is currently absent from budgetary work;

2. considers that the level of resources allocated to Horizon Europe is satisfactory in the current budgetary context, and that only a major increase in the Union budget could justify a reassessment, which should then be concentrated on Pillar III and the section on Strengthening the European Research Area;

3. is concerned at the risk of inequalities growing 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; reiterates that according to Article 174 TFEU, the Union shall develop and pursue its actions leading to the strengthening of its economic, social and territorial cohesion; warns of the inadequacy of the steps taken to close the gaps between regions in order to address the challenges, including the demographic challenge, and to promote access for all to Horizon Europe;

4. calls for genuine account to be taken of the excellence to be found throughout the EU's Member States and regions in order to improve the level of scientific excellence in Europe as a whole and not in just a few large regions and cities;

5. emphasises the progress made on taking account of local and regional innovation in Horizon Europe, but is disappointed to note the ongoing refusal to recognise the territorial roots of scientific excellence, the contribution of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs to the EU's dynamics, and the role of local and regional authorities in the planning and implementation of research and innovation policies; considers that the introduction of a formal definition of regional and innovation hubs is essential if they are to be properly taken into consideration;
6. calls strongly for the full participation of local and regional authorities in the strategic planning exercise that will guide the implementation of Horizon Europe, and for smart specialisation strategies to be taken into account in this context;
7. believes that territorial impacts should be recognised as integral components of the impact concept when it comes to evaluating the programme and projects;
8. considers it essential that the coordination needed between European, national, regional and local innovation policies is clearly spelled out and that local and regional authorities have a place in the European Innovation Council Forum;
9. fully supports new European partnerships and co-financed actions, which could become the main funding tools for trans-regional cooperation and programmes run by consortia of regional ecosystem and innovation hubs (a process to connect territories); calls for a significant proportion of the Horizon Europe programme to be implemented through these arrangements, in particular under Pillars II and III;
10. hopes that all funding harnessed to co-finance an action or action programme under Horizon Europe will be subject to the legal rules applying to this programme, in particular those concerning State aid;
11. considers it essential to provide a precise framework for the synergies between the different funds and the framework programme around a 5C principle (coherence, complementarity, compatibility, co-construction, recognition of local stakeholder collectives); emphasises the crucial importance of an effective co-construction-based approach, in particular to establish the Seal of Excellence;
12. strongly opposes the fact 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;
13. emphasises the importance and value of the support measure for the European innovation ecosystems provided for in Pillar III, calls for its budget to be substantially increased, and for this approach to be directed, in particular, towards regional ecosystems and innovation hubs;
14. notes with concern, in relation to Pillar II, the risks of 'missions' becoming commonplace, and calls for a return to the operational and co-construction-based approach proposed by the Lamy Report; is also concerned by the weakness of the place given to the social sciences and humanities; calls for further examination of the topics discussed in the Inclusive and Secure Society cluster;
15. calls, in connection with agricultural dimension of the Food and Natural Resources cluster, for priority to be given to research into agro-ecological and agro-forestry production methods and to the development of local food systems;
16. notes that the Commission's proposals comply with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality; stresses the importance of taking into account the proposals in this report in order to put into practice the conclusions of the Task Force on Subsidiarity.

Brussels, 9 October 2018.

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

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Proposal for a Regulation on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund

(2018/C 461/12)

Rapporteur-general: Nathalie SARRABEZOLLES (FR/PES), President of Finistère Departmental Council

Reference document: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council

COM(2018)390 final

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

Recital 8

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The multiannual financial framework set out in Regulation (EU) xx/xx[6] provides that the Union budget must continue to support fisheries and maritime policies. The EMFF budget should amount, in current prices, to EUR 6 140 000 000. EMFF resources should be split between shared, direct and indirect management. EUR 5 311 000 000 should be allocated to support under shared management and EUR 829 000 000 to support under direct and indirect management. In order to ensure stability in particular with regard to the achievement of the objectives of the CFP, the definition of national allocations under shared management for the 2021-2027 programming period should be based on the EMFF 2014-2020 shares. Specific amounts should be reserved for the outermost regions, control and enforcement and collection and processing of data for fisheries management and scientific purposes, while amounts for permanent cessation and extraordinary cessation of fishing activities should be capped.</p>	<p>The multiannual financial framework set out in Regulation (EU) xx/xx[6] provides that the Union budget must continue to support fisheries and maritime policies. The EMFF budget should be maintained at the same levels as for the period 2014-2020. It should amount, in current prices, to EUR 6 400 000 000. EMFF resources should be split between shared, direct and indirect management. 90 % of the total EMFF budget (EUR 5 760 000 000) should be allocated to support under shared management and 10 % (EUR 640 000 000) to support under direct and indirect management. In order to ensure stability in particular with regard to the achievement of the objectives of the CFP, the definition of national allocations under shared management for the 2021-2027 programming period should be based on the EMFF 2014-2020 shares. Specific amounts should be reserved for the outermost regions, control and enforcement and collection and processing of data for fisheries management and scientific purposes, while amounts for permanent cessation and extraordinary cessation of fishing activities should be capped.</p>

Reason

The budget allocation should be at the same level as before. The 90/10 split between shared, direct and indirect management should be brought back (instead of the proposed 86 % for shared management).

Amendment 2

Recital 10

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(10) The EMFF should be based on four priorities: fostering sustainable fisheries and the conservation of marine biological resources; contributing to food security in the Union through competitive and sustainable aquaculture and markets; enabling the growth of a sustainable blue economy and fostering prosperous coastal communities; strengthening international ocean governance and enabling safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed seas and oceans. Those priorities should be pursued through shared, direct and indirect management.	(10) The EMFF should be based on four priorities: fostering sustainable fisheries and the conservation of marine biological resources; contributing to food security in the Union through competitive and sustainable aquaculture and markets; enabling the growth of a sustainable blue economy and fostering prosperous coastal communities; strengthening international ocean governance and enabling safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed seas and oceans. Those priorities should be pursued through shared, direct and indirect management. <i>Due to the current challenges that fisheries and maritime policies face, it is particularly important that the new EMFF ensures that funds are easily accessible to beneficiaries;</i>

Reason

The four priorities should be welcomed but the focus on the interests of beneficiaries needs to be underlined more strongly.

Amendment 3

Recital 12a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<p><i>The EMFF must also contribute to other objectives of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SGOs). The present regulation takes the following goals in particular into account:</i></p> <p><i>SDG 1. No poverty: the EMFF, in conjunction with the EAFRD, helps improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable coastal communities, especially those which depend on a single fisheries resource threatened by overfishing, global changes or environmental problems.</i></p> <p><i>SDG 3. Good health and well-being: the EMFF, in conjunction with the EAFRD, helps combat the pollution of coastal waters, which are a cause of endemic illnesses, and helps ensure good quality foodstuffs from fisheries and aquaculture.</i></p> <p><i>SDG 7. Clean energy: by financing the blue economy, the EMFF, in conjunction with funds geared towards Horizon 2020, encourages the deployment of renewable marine energy and ensures that this development is compatible with protection of the marine environment and preservation of fisheries resources.</i></p> <p><i>SDG 8. Decent work and economic growth: the EMFF, in conjunction with the ESF, contributes to development of the blue economy, which boosts economic growth. Moreover, it ensures that this economic growth is a source of decent jobs for coastal communities. In addition, the EMFF helps improve fishers' working conditions.</i></p> <p><i>SDG 12. Responsible consumption and production: the EMFF supports the move towards rational use of natural resources and to limiting waste of natural and energy resources.</i></p> <p><i>SDG 13. Climate action: the EMFF will make available part of its budget into climate change mitigation.</i></p>

Reason

The European Union plays a key role in defining the global 2030 Agenda and has undertaken to make a considerable contribution to implementing its 17 goals (Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 22 November 2016 — COM(2016) 739).

Amendment 4

Recital 26

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(26) Given the challenges to achieve the conservation objectives of the CFP, it should be possible for the EMFF to support actions for the management of fisheries and fishing fleets. In this context, support for fleet adaptation remains sometimes necessary with regard to certain fleet segments and sea basins. Such support should be tightly targeted to the conservation and sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources and aimed to achieve balance between the fishing capacity and the available fishing opportunities. Therefore, it should be possible for the EMFF to support the permanent cessation of fishing activities in fleet segments where the fishing capacity is not balanced with the available fishing opportunities. Such support should be a tool of the action plans for the adjustment of fleet segments with identified structural overcapacity, as provided for in Article 22(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, and should be implemented either through the scrapping of the fishing vessel or through its decommissioning and retrofitting for other activities. Where the retrofitting would lead to an increased pressure of recreational fishing on the marine ecosystem, support should only be granted if in line with the CFP and the objectives of the relevant multiannual plans. In order to ensure the consistency of fleet structural adaptation with conservation objectives, support for the permanent cessation of fishing activities should be strictly conditional and linked to the achievement of results. It should therefore be implemented only by financing not linked to costs, as provided for in Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Regulation laying down Common Provisions). Under that mechanism, Member States should not be reimbursed by the Commission for permanent cessation of fishing activities on the basis of real costs incurred but on the basis of the fulfilment of conditions and of the achievement of results. For this purpose, the Commission should establish in a delegated act such conditions, which should relate to the achievement of the conservation objectives of the CFP.</p>	<p>(26) Given the challenges to achieve the conservation objectives of the CFP, it should be possible for the EMFF to support actions for the management of fisheries and fishing fleets, as referred to in the report adopted by the European Parliament on ‘the management of the fishing fleets in the Outermost Regions’. In this context, support for fleet adaptation remains sometimes necessary with regard to certain fleet segments and sea basins. Such support should be tightly targeted to the conservation and sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources and aimed to achieve balance between the fishing capacity and the available fishing opportunities. Therefore, it should be possible for the EMFF to support the permanent cessation of fishing activities in fleet segments where the fishing capacity is not balanced with the available fishing opportunities. Such support should be a tool of the action plans for the adjustment of fleet segments with identified structural overcapacity, as provided for in Article 22(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, and should be implemented either through the scrapping of the fishing vessel or through its decommissioning and retrofitting for other activities. Where the retrofitting would lead to an increased pressure of recreational fishing on the marine ecosystem, support should only be granted if in line with the CFP and the objectives of the relevant multiannual plans. In order to ensure the consistency of fleet structural adaptation with conservation objectives, support for the permanent cessation of fishing activities should be strictly conditional and linked to the achievement of results. It should therefore be implemented only by financing not linked to costs, as provided for in Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Regulation laying down Common Provisions). Under that mechanism, Member States should not be reimbursed by the Commission for permanent cessation of fishing activities on the basis of real costs incurred but on the basis of the fulfilment of conditions and of the achievement of results. For this purpose, the Commission should establish in a delegated act such conditions, which should relate to the achievement of the conservation objectives of the CFP.</p>

Reason

The Rodust report of the European Parliament (A8-0138/2017) proposes to authorise public funding for the renewal of fishing fleets in the outermost regions.

Amendment 5

Recital 28

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Small-scale coastal fishing is carried out by fishing vessels below 12 metres and not using towed fishing gears. That sector represents nearly 75 % of all fishing vessels registered in the Union and nearly half of all employment in the fishery sector. Operators from small-scale coastal fisheries are particularly dependant on healthy fish stocks for their main source of income. The EMFF should therefore give them a preferential treatment through a 100 % aid intensity rate, including for operations related to control and enforcement, with the aim of encouraging sustainable fishing practices. In addition, certain areas of support should be reserved for small-scale fishing in fleet segment where the fishing capacity is balanced with the available fishing opportunities, i.e. support for the acquisition of a second-hand vessel and for engine replacement or modernisation. Furthermore, Member States should include in their programme an action plan for small-scale coastal fishing, which should be monitored on the basis of indicators for which milestones and targets should be set.</p>	<p>Small-scale coastal fishing is carried out by fishing vessels below 12 metres and not using towed fishing gears, and includes fishing and collecting shellfish on foot. That sector represents nearly 75 % of all fishing vessels registered in the Union and nearly half of all employment in the fishery sector. Operators from small-scale coastal fisheries are particularly dependant on healthy fish stocks for their main source of income. The EMFF should therefore give them a preferential treatment through a 100 % aid intensity rate, including for operations related to control and enforcement, with the aim of encouraging sustainable fishing practices. In addition, certain areas of support should be reserved for small-scale fishing in fleet segment where the fishing capacity is balanced with the available fishing opportunities, i.e. support for the acquisition of a second-hand vessel or the building of a new one without increasing capacity or fishing effort. Furthermore, Member States should include in their programme an action plan for small-scale coastal fishing, which should be monitored on the basis of indicators for which milestones and targets should be set.</p>

Reason

The EMFF regulation is intended to be a part of EU policy on combating climate change (Recital 13). Replacing propulsion and ancillary engines on vessels is one of the few measures allowing a contribution to this goal, particularly thanks to the use of new technologies and should not therefore limit small-scale coastal fishing. Shore fishing must be considered as small-scale coastal fishing and new vessels help to speed up the renewal of the European fishing fleet.

Amendment 6

Recital 29

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(29) The outermost regions, as outlined in the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank of 24 October 2017 entitled 'A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions', face specific challenges linked to their remoteness, topography and climate as referred to in Article 349 of the Treaty and also have specific assets on which to develop a sustainable blue economy. Therefore, for each outermost region, an action plan for the development of sustainable blue economy sectors, including the sustainable exploitation of fisheries and aquaculture, should be attached to the programme of the concerned Member States and a financial allocation should be reserved to support the implementation of those action plans. It should also be possible for the EMFF to support a compensation of the additional costs the outermost regions face due to their location and insularity. That support should be capped as a percentage of this overall financial allocation. In addition, a higher aid intensity rate than the one that applies to other operations should be applied in the outermost regions.</p>	<p>(29) The outermost regions, as outlined in the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank of 24 October 2017 entitled 'A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions', face specific challenges linked to their remoteness, topography and climate as referred to in Article 349 of the Treaty and also have specific assets on which to develop a sustainable blue economy. Therefore, for each outermost region, an action plan for the development of sustainable blue economy sectors, including the sustainable exploitation of fisheries and aquaculture, should be attached to the programme of the concerned Member States and a financial allocation should be reserved to support the implementation of those action plans. It should also be possible for the EMFF to support a compensation of the additional costs the outermost regions face due to their location and insularity. That support should be capped as a percentage of this overall financial allocation. <i>In addition, specific provisions should be envisaged to enable the EMFF to support operations in these regions aimed at protecting and restoring ecosystems and marine and coastal biodiversity, investments in the fishing fleet and productive investments in aquaculture and the processing industry. With regard to investments in the fishing fleet, the EMFF should support specific measures for these regions, taking into account their specificities and geographical conditions and ensuring a sustainable balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities, in line with the European Parliament's resolution on the management of the fishing fleets in the outermost regions.</i> In addition, a higher aid intensity rate than the one that applies to other operations should be applied in the outermost regions.</p>

Reason

The percentage of aid allocated to compensating for additional costs in the outermost regions must remain capped. On the other hand the fragility of the structural social and economic situation of the ORs as well as the aim of promoting the development of these regions and of ensuring balance and equal opportunities across all EU regions justifies special measures.

Amendment 7

Recital 32

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(32) It should be possible for the EMFF to support the promotion and the sustainable development of aquaculture, including freshwater aquaculture, for the farming of aquatic animals and plants for the production of food and other raw material. Complex administrative procedures in some Member States remain in place, such as difficult access to space and burdensome licensing procedures, which make it difficult for the sector to improve the image and competitiveness of farmed products. Support should be consistent with the multiannual national strategic plans for aquaculture developed on the basis of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013. In particular, support for environmental sustainability, productive investments, innovation, acquisition of professional skills, improvement of working conditions, compensatory measures providing critical land and nature management services should be eligible. Public health actions, aquaculture stock insurance schemes and animal health and welfare actions should also be eligible. However, in the case of productive investments support should be provided only through financial instruments and through InvestEU, which offer a higher leverage on markets and are therefore more relevant than grants to address the financing challenges of the sector.</p>	<p>(32) It should be possible for the EMFF to support the promotion and the sustainable development of aquaculture, including freshwater aquaculture, for the farming of aquatic animals and plants for the production of food and other raw material. Complex administrative procedures in some Member States remain in place, such as difficult access to space and burdensome licensing procedures, which make it difficult for the sector to improve the image and competitiveness of farmed products. Support should be consistent with the multiannual national strategic plans for aquaculture developed on the basis of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013. In particular, support for environmental sustainability, productive investments, innovation, acquisition of professional skills, improvement of working conditions, compensatory measures providing critical land and nature management services should be eligible. Public health actions, aquaculture stock insurance schemes and animal health and welfare actions should also be eligible. However, in the case of productive investments, and with the exception of investments located in the outermost regions, support should be provided only through financial instruments and through InvestEU, which offer a higher leverage on markets and are therefore more relevant than grants to address the financing challenges of the sector.</p>

Reason

Article 349 TFEU allows for the adoption of specific measures for the ORs. Due to the weak performance of companies located in the ORs, it is important that all forms of support for businesses remain eligible in order to encourage productive investment in these regions.

Amendment 8**Recital 34**

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(34) The processing industry plays a role in the availability and quality of fishery and aquaculture products. It should be possible for the EMFF to support targeted investments in that industry, provided they contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the CMO. Such support should be provided only through financial instruments and through InvestEU and not through grants.	(34) The processing industry plays a role in the availability and quality of fishery and aquaculture products. It should be possible for the EMFF to support targeted investments in that industry, provided they contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the CMO. With the exception of investments located in the outermost regions, such support should be provided only through financial instruments and through InvestEU and not through grants.

Reason

Article 349 TFEU allows for the adoption of specific measures for the ORs. Due to the weak performance of companies located in the ORs, it is important that all forms of support for businesses remain eligible in order to encourage productive investment in these regions.

Amendment 9**Article 3**

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
2	2. ... (16) 'environmental incident' means an anthropogenic or natural accidental phenomenon leading to environmental degradation. (17) 'aquaculture farmer' means any person who carries out his or her activity in professional aquaculture as recognised by the Member State, on board an aquaculture vessel, or who carries out professional farming activities without the use of a vessel; (18) 'inshore coastal fishing' means a professional fishing activity carried out by fishing vessels of less than 24 metres in length, within territorial waters and with trips of less than 24 hours.

Reason

The concept of an environmental incident, used in Article 18(1)(d), is not defined. It warrants a definition to avoid different interpretations or multiple requests for clarification addressed to the Commission.

It is necessary to include the definition of 'aquaculture farmer' in Article 3, to determine the scope of these professionals' activities. The term 'inshore coastal fishing' should also be included, which is the predominant activity in the Mediterranean with trips of only one day.

Amendment 10

Article 4

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Priorities</p> <p>The EMFF shall contribute to the implementation of the CFP and of the maritime policy. It shall pursue the following priorities:</p> <p>(1) Fostering sustainable fisheries and the conservation of marine biological resources;</p> <p>(2) Contributing to food security in the Union through competitive and sustainable aquaculture and markets;</p> <p>(3) Enabling the growth of a sustainable blue economy and fostering prosperous coastal communities;</p> <p>(4) Strengthening international ocean governance and enabling safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed seas and oceans.</p> <p>Support under the EMFF shall contribute to the achievement of the environmental and climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives of the Union. That contribution shall be tracked in accordance with the methodology set out in Annex IV.</p>	<p>Priorities</p> <p>The EMFF shall contribute to the implementation of the CFP and of the maritime policy. It shall pursue the following priorities:</p> <p>(1) Fostering sustainable fisheries and the conservation of marine biological resources;</p> <p>(2) Contributing to food security in the Union through competitive and sustainable aquaculture and markets;</p> <p>(3) Enabling the growth of a sustainable blue economy and fostering prosperous coastal communities;</p> <p>(4) Strengthening international ocean governance and enabling safe, secure, clean and sustainably managed seas and oceans.</p> <p>Support under the EMFF shall contribute to the achievement of the environmental and climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives of the Union, including support for implementing projects that improve nurseries for juvenile fish in accordance with the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC). That contribution shall be tracked in accordance with the methodology set out in Annex IV.</p>

Reason

The Fund's objective should continue to be that of ensuring that greening is more closely linked with environmental sustainability, including improvements in water courses as spawning and nursery areas for fish.

Amendment 11

Article 9

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>3. In addition to the elements referred to in Article 17 of Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Regulation laying down Common Provisions), the programme shall include:</p> <p>(a) an analysis of the situation in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and the identification of the needs that require to be addressed in the relevant geographical area, including, where appropriate, sea basins covered by the programme;</p>	<p>3. In addition to the elements referred to in Article 17 of Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Regulation laying down Common Provisions), the programme shall include:</p> <p>(a) an analysis of the situation in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and the identification of the needs that require to be addressed in the relevant geographical area, including, where appropriate, sea basins covered by the programme;</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(b) the action plan for small-scale coastal fishing referred to in Article 15;	(b) the action plan for small-scale coastal fishing referred to in Article 15;
(c) where applicable, the action plans for the outermost regions referred to in paragraph 4.	(c) where applicable, the action plans for the outermost regions referred to in paragraph 4;
...	...
6. The Commission shall assess the programme in accordance with Article 18 of Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Regulation laying down Common Provisions). In its assessment it shall take into account, in particular:	6. The Commission shall assess the programme in accordance with Article 18 of Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Regulation laying down Common Provisions). In its assessment it shall take into account, in particular:
(a) the maximisation of the contribution of the programme to the priorities referred to in Article 4;	(a) the maximisation of the contribution of the programme to the priorities referred to in Article 4;
(b) the balance between the fishing capacity of the fleets and the available fishing opportunities, as reported annually by Member States according to Article 22(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;	(b) the balance between the fishing capacity of the fleets and the available fishing opportunities, as reported annually by Member States according to Article 22(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;
(c) where applicable, the multiannual management plans adopted under Articles 9 and 10 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, the management plans adopted under Article 19 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 and the recommendations from regional fisheries management organisations, where applicable to the Union;	(c) where applicable, the multiannual management plans adopted under Articles 9 and 10 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, the management plans adopted under Article 19 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1967/2006 and the recommendations from regional fisheries management organisations, where applicable to the Union;
(d) the implementation of the landing obligation referred to in Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;	(d) the implementation of the landing obligation referred to in Article 15 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;
(e) the most recent evidence on the socioeconomic performance of the sustainable blue economy, and in particular the fishery and aquaculture sector;	(e) the programme's expected socioeconomic contribution to the sustainable blue economy, and in particular the fishery and aquaculture sector;
(f) where applicable, the analyses referred to in paragraph 5;	(f) where applicable, the analyses referred to in paragraph 5;
(g) the contribution of the programme to the conservation and restoration of marine ecosystems, while the support related to Natura 2000 areas shall be in accordance with the prioritised action frameworks established pursuant to Article 8(4) of Directive 92/43/EEC;	(g) the contribution of the programme to the conservation and restoration of marine ecosystems, while the support related to Natura 2000 areas shall be in accordance with the prioritised action frameworks established pursuant to Article 8(4) of Directive 92/43/EEC;

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(h) the contribution of the programme to the reduction of marine litter, in accordance with Directive xx/xx of the European Parliament and of the Council (Directive on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment);	(h) the contribution of the programme to the reduction of marine litter, in accordance with Directive xx/xx of the European Parliament and of the Council (Directive on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment);
(i) the contribution of the programme to climate change mitigation and adaptation.	(i) the contribution of the programme to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Reason

3(d) Allowing Member States to develop regional operational programmes (where they wish to do so) as part of national programming for regions with competences in the field will allow for smarter spending and regional specialisation strategies under the EMFF.

6(e) In its assessment of Member States' programmes, the Commission should not just take account of data, but should also assess the socioeconomic contribution of the proposed measures.

Amendment 12

Article 12

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
An application submitted by a beneficiary for support from the EMFF shall be inadmissible for an identified period of time laid down pursuant to paragraph 4, if it has been determined by the competent authority that the beneficiary concerned:	An application submitted by a beneficiary for support from the EMFF shall be inadmissible for an identified period of time laid down pursuant to paragraph 4, if it has been determined by the competent authority that the beneficiary concerned:
(a) has committed serious infringements under Article 42 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 or Article 90 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009 or under other legislation adopted by the European Parliament and by the Council;	(a) has committed serious infringements under Article 42 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008 or Article 90 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1224/2009;
(b) has been involved in the operation, management or ownership of fishing vessels included in the Union IUU vessel list as set out in Article 40(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008, or of a vessel flagged to countries identified as non-cooperating third countries as set out in Article 33 of that Regulation; or	(b) has been involved in the operation, management or ownership of fishing vessels included in the Union IUU vessel list as set out in Article 40(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1005/2008, or of a vessel flagged to countries identified as non-cooperating third countries as set out in Article 33 of that Regulation; or
(c) has committed any of the environmental offences set out in Articles 3 and 4 of Directive 2008/99/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, where the application is made for support under Article 23.	(c) has committed any of the environmental offences set out in Articles 3 and 4 of Directive 2008/99/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

Reason

- (a) Regulations (EC) No 1005/2008 and (EC) No 1224/2009 set out an exhaustive list of serious infringements. There does not seem to be any point in adding to the list.
- (c) The EMFF can be used to finance aquaculture, fisheries and the blue economy. No parties should be funded under the EMFF if they have seriously infringed the provisions of Community environmental protection legislation. Aquaculture should not be the only activity concerned by this rule.

Amendment 13

Article 13

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The following operations shall not be eligible under the EMFF:	The following operations shall not be eligible under the EMFF:
(a) operations that increase the fishing capacity of a fishing vessel or support the acquisition of equipment that increases the ability of a fishing vessel to find fish;	(a) operations that increase the fishing capacity of a fishing vessel or support the acquisition of equipment that increases the ability of a fishing vessel to find fish;
(b) the construction and acquisition of fishing vessels or the importation of fishing vessels, unless otherwise provided for in this Regulation;	(b) the construction and acquisition of fishing vessels or the importation of fishing vessels, unless otherwise provided for in this Regulation;
(c) the transfer or reflagging of fishing vessels to third countries including through the creation of joint ventures with partners of those countries;	(c) the transfer or reflagging of fishing vessels to third countries including through the creation of joint ventures with partners of those countries;
(d) the temporary or permanent cessation of fishing activities, unless otherwise provided for in this Regulation;	(d) the temporary or permanent cessation of fishing activities, unless otherwise provided for in this Regulation;
(e) exploratory fishing;	(e) exploratory fishing;
(f) the transfer of ownership of a business;	(f) the transfer of ownership of a business;
(g) direct restocking, except explicitly provided for as a conservation measure by a Union legal act or in the case of experimental restocking;	(g) direct restocking, except explicitly provided for as a conservation measure by a Union legal act or in the case of experimental restocking;
(h) the construction of new ports, new landing sites or new auction halls;	(h) the construction of new ports, new landing sites or new auction halls, except in the outermost regions ;
(i) market intervention mechanisms aiming to temporarily or permanently withdraw fishery or aquaculture products from the market with a view to reducing supply in order to prevent price decline or drive up prices; by extension, storage operations in a logistics chain that would produce the same effects either intentionally or unintentionally;	(i) market intervention mechanisms aiming to temporarily or permanently withdraw fishery or aquaculture products from the market with a view to reducing supply in order to prevent price decline or drive up prices; by extension, storage operations in a logistics chain that would produce the same effects either intentionally or unintentionally;

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(j) investments on board fishing vessels necessary to comply with the requirements under Union or national law, including requirements under the Union's obligations in the context of regional fisheries management organisations;	(j) investments on board fishing vessels necessary to comply with the requirements under Union or national law, including requirements under the Union's obligations in the context of regional fisheries management organisations;
(k) investments on board fishing vessels that have carried out activities at sea for less than 60 days in each of the two calendar years preceding the year of submission of the application for support.	(k) investments on board fishing vessels that have carried out activities at sea for less than 60 days in each of the two calendar years preceding the year of submission of the application for support;
	(l) the replacement or modernisation of main or ancillary engines on vessels if they increase kW power;
	(m) the production of genetically modified organisms.

Reason

- (h) Outermost regions are still woefully short of infrastructure for landing and selling fisheries products in acceptable health and safety conditions.
- (l) The replacement of main or ancillary engines on vessels should not lead to an increase in their power and consequently in fishing effort.
- (m) Since the marine environment is an open one, the production of genetically modified organisms risks disseminating such organisms.

Amendment 14

Article 15

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	4. In order to lower the administrative burden on members of the maritime and fisheries sector requesting aid, action plans shall propose a simplified single application form for measures under the EMFF.

Reason

Unlike fishing companies, small-scale fishers are mostly individuals, who do not have the administrative capacity to fill out complex application papers. A simplified single application form will greatly improve their chances of accessing funding.

Amendment 15

Article 16

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
1. The EMFF may support the following investments in respect of small-scale coastal fishing vessels which belong to a fleet segment for which the latest report on fishing capacity, referred to in Article 22(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, has shown a balance with the fishing opportunities available to that segment:	1. The EMFF may support the following investments in respect of small-scale coastal fishing vessels which belong to a fleet segment for which the latest report on fishing capacity, referred to in Article 22(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, has shown a balance with the fishing opportunities available to that segment:

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(a) the first acquisition of a fishing vessel by a young fisher who, at the moment of submitting the application, is under 40 years of age and has worked a least five years as fisher or has acquired adequate vocational qualification;</p> <p>(b) the replacement or modernisation of a main or ancillary engine.</p> <p>2. The vessels referred to in paragraph 1 shall be equipped for sea fishing and be between 5 and 30 years old.</p> <p>3. The support referred to in paragraph 1(b) may only be granted under the following conditions:</p> <p>the new or modernised engine shall not have more power in kW than the current engine;</p> <p>any reduction of fishing capacity in kW due to the replacement or modernisation of a main or ancillary engine shall be permanently removed from the Union fleet register;</p> <p>the engine power of the fishing vessel shall have been physically inspected by the Member State to ensure that it does not exceed the engine power stated in the fishing license.</p> <p>4. No support shall be granted under this Article, if the assessment on the balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities in the latest report referred to in Article 22(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 for the fleet segment to which the vessels concerned belong, has not been prepared on the basis of the biological, economic and vessel use indicators set out in the common guidelines referred to in that Regulation.</p>	<p>(a) the first acquisition of a fishing vessel by a fisher who, at the moment of submitting the application, has worked a least five years as fisher or has acquired adequate vocational qualification;</p> <p>(b) the replacement or modernisation of a main or ancillary engine with new technologies that reduce the carbon footprint..</p> <p>2. The vessels referred to in paragraph 1(a) shall be equipped for sea fishing and be less than 20 years old.</p> <p>3. The vessels referred to in paragraph 1(b) shall be equipped for sea fishing and be between 5 and 30 years old.</p> <p>4. The support referred to in paragraph 1(b) may only be granted under the following conditions:</p> <p>(a) the new or modernised engine shall not have more power in kW than the current engine;</p> <p>(b) any reduction of fishing capacity in kW due to the replacement or modernisation of a main or ancillary engine shall be permanently removed from the Union fleet register;</p> <p>(c) the engine power of the fishing vessel shall have been physically inspected by the Member State to ensure that it does not exceed the engine power stated in the fishing license.</p> <p>5. No support shall be granted under this Article, if the assessment on the balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities in the latest report referred to in Article 22(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 for the fleet segment to which the vessels concerned belong, has not been prepared on the basis of the biological, economic and vessel use indicators set out in the common guidelines referred to in that Regulation.</p>

Reason

(a) Europe takes pride in being social and inclusive, and there is no reason for age discrimination in the access to any profession.

2. Aid for purchasing new vessels must allow the renewal of fleets to introduce more ergonomic, safer vessels which use less fuel, without increasing the fishing effort. On the contrary, it does not seem appropriate to finance the re-engining of vessels less than five years old, or to finance the purchase of vessels over 20 years old.

Amendment 16

Article 17

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
1. The EMFF may support operations for the management of fisheries and fishing fleets.	1. The EMFF may support operations for the management of fisheries and fishing fleets.
2. If the support referred to in paragraph 1 is granted through the compensation for the permanent cessation of fishing activities, the following conditions shall be complied with:	2. If the support referred to in paragraph 1 is granted through the compensation for the permanent cessation of fishing activities, the following conditions shall be complied with:
(a) the cessation is foreseen as a tool of an action plan referred to in Article 22(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;	(a) the cessation is foreseen as a tool of an action plan referred to in Article 22(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;
(b) the cessation is achieved through the scrapping of the fishing vessel or through its decommissioning and retrofitting to activities other than commercial fishing, keeping in line with the objectives of the CFP and multiannual plans;	(b) the cessation is achieved through the scrapping of the fishing vessel or through its decommissioning and retrofitting to activities other than commercial fishing, keeping in line with the objectives of the CFP and multiannual plans;
(c) the fishing vessel is registered as active and has carried out fishing activities at sea for at least 120 days in each of the last three calendar years preceding the year of submission of the application for support;	(c) the fishing vessel is registered as active and has carried out fishing activities at sea for at least 180 days in total in in each of the last two calendar years preceding the year of submission of the application for support;

Reason

Many fleets carry out single-species seasonal fishing and operate less than 120 days a year. Moreover, these very vulnerable fleets are dependent on environmental conditions. The stocks they fish are sometimes subject to various pressures, leading to the introduction of fishing capacity management measures.

Amendment 17

Article 18

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The EMFF may support a compensation for the extraordinary cessation of fishing activities caused by:	The EMFF may support a compensation for the extraordinary cessation of fishing activities caused by:
(a) conservation measures, as referred to in Article 7(1), points (a), (b), (c) and (j) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, or equivalent conservation measures adopted by regional fisheries management organisations, where applicable to the Union;	(a) conservation measures, as referred to in Article 7(1), points (a), (b), (c) and (j) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, or equivalent conservation measures adopted by regional fisheries management organisations, where applicable to the Union;

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(b) Commission measures in case of a serious threat to marine biological resources, as referred to in Article 12 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;</p> <p>(c) the interruption due to reasons of force majeure of the application of a sustainable fisheries partnership agreement or protocol thereto; or</p> <p>(d) natural disasters or environmental incidents, as formally recognised by the competent authorities of the relevant Member State.</p> <p>2. The support referred to in paragraph 1 may only be granted where:</p> <p>(a) the commercial activities of the vessel concerned are stopped during at least 90 consecutive days; and</p> <p><i>(b) the economic losses resulting from the cessation amount to more than 30 % of the annual turnover of the business concerned, calculated on the basis of the average turnover of that business over the preceding three calendar years.</i></p> <p>3. <i>The support referred to in paragraph 1 shall only be granted to:</i></p> <p><i>(a) owners of fishing vessels which are registered as active and which have carried out fishing activities at sea for at least 120 days in each of the last three calendar years preceding the year of submission of the application for support; or</i></p> <p><i>(b) fishers who have worked at sea for at least 120 days in each of the last three calendar years preceding the year of submission of the application for support on board a Union fishing vessel concerned by the extraordinary cessation. The reference to the number of days at sea in this paragraph shall not apply to eel fisheries.</i></p> <p>4. The support referred to in paragraph 1 may be granted for a maximum duration of 6 months per vessel during the period from 2021 to 2027.</p> <p>5. All fishing activities carried out by the vessels and fishers concerned shall be effectively suspended during the period concerned by the cessation. The competent authority shall satisfy itself that the vessel concerned has stopped any fishing activities during the period concerned by the extraordinary cessation and that any overcompensation resulting from the use of the vessel for other purposes is avoided.</p>	<p>(b) Commission measures in case of a serious threat to marine biological resources, as referred to in Article 12 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013;</p> <p>(c) the interruption due to reasons of force majeure of the application of a sustainable fisheries partnership agreement or protocol thereto; or</p> <p>(d) natural disasters or environmental incidents, as formally recognised by the competent authorities of the relevant Member State.</p> <p>2. The support referred to in paragraph 1 may only be granted where:</p> <p>(a) the commercial activities of the vessel concerned are stopped during at least 45 consecutive days; and</p> <p>3. The support referred to in paragraph 1 may be granted for a maximum duration of 6 months per vessel during the period from 2021 to 2027.</p> <p>4. All fishing activities carried out by the vessels and fishers concerned shall be effectively suspended during the period concerned by the cessation. The competent authority shall satisfy itself that the vessel concerned has stopped any fishing activities during the period concerned by the extraordinary cessation and that any overcompensation resulting from the use of the vessel for other purposes is avoided.</p>

Reason

The intention of the draft regulation is to make extensive use of extraordinary cessations of fishing activity, the practice applied in the EMFF throughout the current shellfishing programming period. We do not agree with the 90 consecutive days of inactivity, given that 45 calendar days are already sufficient in representing almost 20 % of the fishing activity of the vessel. Equally we do not agree with paragraph 2.b) and we propose that it be removed since a loss of earnings in line with the loss of activity cannot be justified

Amendment 18

Article 23

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Aquaculture</p> <p>1. The EMFF may support the promotion of a sustainable aquaculture as provided for in Article 34(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013. It may also support animal health and welfare in aquaculture in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council 32 and Regulation (EU) No 652/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council 33.</p> <p>2. The support referred to in paragraph 1 shall be consistent with the multiannual national strategic plans for the development of aquaculture referred to in Article 34(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.</p> <p>3. Productive aquaculture investments under this Article may only be supported through the financial instruments provided for in Article 52 of Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Regulation laying down Common Provisions) and through InvestEU, in accordance Article 10 of that Regulation.</p>	<p>Aquaculture</p> <p>1. The EMFF may support the promotion of a sustainable aquaculture as provided for in Article 34(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013. It may also support animal health and welfare in aquaculture in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council 32 and Regulation (EU) No 652/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council 33.</p> <p>2. The support referred to in paragraph 1 shall be consistent with the multiannual national strategic plans for the development of aquaculture referred to in Article 34(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013.</p> <p>3. Productive aquaculture investments under this Article may only be supported through the financial instruments provided for in Article 52 of Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Regulation laying down Common Provisions) and through InvestEU, in accordance Article 10 of that Regulation.</p> <p>4. By way of derogation from paragraph 3, all forms of support provided for in Article 47 of the Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Common Provisions Regulation) shall be admissible in the outermost regions.</p>

Reason

Article 349 TFEU allows for the adoption of specific measures for the ORs. Due to the weak performance of companies located in the outermost regions, it is important that all forms of support for businesses remain eligible in order to encourage productive investment in these regions.

Amendment 19

Article 25

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Processing of fishery and aquaculture products</p> <p>1. The EMFF may support investments in the processing of fishery and aquaculture products. Such support shall contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products as provided for in Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 and further specified in Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013.</p> <p>2. Support under this Article shall only be granted through the financial instruments provided for in Article 52 of Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Regulation laying down Common Provisions) and through InvestEU, in accordance Article 10 of that Regulation.</p>	<p>Processing of fishery and aquaculture products</p> <p>1. The EMFF may support investments in the processing of fishery and aquaculture products. Such support shall contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the common organisation of the markets in fishery and aquaculture products as provided for in Article 35 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 and further specified in Regulation (EU) No 1379/2013.</p> <p>2. Support under this Article shall only be granted through the financial instruments provided for in Article 52 of Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Regulation laying down Common Provisions) and through InvestEU, in accordance Article 10 of that Regulation.</p> <p>3. By way of derogation from paragraph 2, all forms of support provided for in Article 47 of the Regulation (EU) xx/xx (Common Provisions Regulation) shall be admissible in the outermost regions.</p>

Reason

Article 349 TFEU allows for the adoption of specific measures for the ORs. Due to the weak performance of companies located in the ORs, it is important that all forms of support for businesses remain eligible in order to encourage productive investment in these regions.

Amendment 20

Article 31

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Determination of co-financing rates</p> <p>The maximum EMFF co-financing rate per area of support is set out in Annex II.</p>	<p>Determination of co-financing rates</p> <p>1. The maximum EMFF co-financing rate per area of support is set out in Annex II.</p> <p>2. In the case of operations located in the outermost regions, the maximum co-financing rates set out in Annex II shall be increased by 10 percentage points, up to a maximum of 100 %.</p>

Reason

The amendment is justified by the fragility of the structural social and economic situation of the ORs as well as by the aim of promoting the development of these regions and of ensuring balance and equal opportunities across all EU regions.

Amendment 21

Article 32a

Maritime policy and development of a sustainable blue economy

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<i>The EMFF supports implementation of the integrated maritime policy and growth of the blue economy by developing regional platforms for funding innovative projects.</i>

Reason

Pooling resources at regional level has proven effective for the development of the blue economy. The regionalisation of funding allows effective responses to local challenges.

Amendment 22

Article 55

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>1. In order to facilitate the transition from the support scheme established by Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 to the scheme established by this Regulation, the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts, in accordance with Article 52, laying down the conditions under which support approved by the Commission under Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 may be integrated into support provided for under this Regulation.</p> <p>2. This Regulation shall not affect the continuation or modification of the actions concerned, until their closure, under Regulation (EU) No 508/2014, which shall continue to apply to the actions concerned until their closure.</p> <p>3. Applications made under Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 shall remain valid.</p>	<p>1. In order to facilitate the transition from the support scheme established by Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 to the scheme established by this Regulation, the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts, in accordance with Article 52, laying down the conditions under which support approved by the Commission under Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 may be integrated into support provided for under this Regulation.</p> <p>2. This Regulation shall not affect the continuation or modification of the actions concerned, until their closure, under Regulation (EU) No 508/2014, which shall continue to apply to the actions concerned until their closure.</p> <p><i>An uninterrupted transition will be ensured between the compensation plans for the outermost regions applicable in the period 2014-2020 and those applicable in the period 2021-2027.</i></p> <p>3. Applications made under Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 shall remain valid.</p>

Reason

No provisions were included in the compensation plans for the transition between the 2007-2013 regime and the current one. As a result, support for 2014 and 2015 was only paid in 2016 and 2017, jeopardising the continuity of many operators' activities. It is hoped that this situation will not be repeated.

Amendment 23

Annex I, replace the third indicator

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<i>Surface (ha) of Natura 2000 sites, and other MPAs under the MSFD, covered by protection, maintenance and restoration measures.</i>	<i>Extent to which environmental objectives have been achieved, as defined in the action plan for the marine environment in application of the MSFD or, alternatively, surface (ha) of Natura 2000 sites, and other MPAs under the MSFD, covered by protection, maintenance and restoration measures.</i>
...	...

Reason

In order to simplify objectives and criteria and to unify them, the first EC proposal should be accepted for the sake of uniformity.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. welcomes the existence of a European fund for supporting fisheries, aquaculture, protection of the marine environment and the blue economy in marine and coastal regions, particularly in connection with strengthening international ocean governance;
2. acknowledges simplification efforts, in particular the ending of measures pre-defined at European level, allowing Member States the possibility of including in operational programmes those measures they would like to implement in order to achieve CFP (Common Fisheries Policy) and IMP (Integrated Maritime Policy) goals;
3. recognises the value of establishing a common financing framework for the various European funds by proposing a regulation containing common provisions for seven funds, including the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), under shared management;
4. points out that the seas are Europe's lifeblood. Europe's maritime spaces and coasts are central to its well-being and prosperity: they are trade routes, climate regulators, and sources of food, energy and resources ⁽¹⁾;
5. considers that, because of the need to finance an emerging blue economy, maritime surveillance and numerous projects relating to protection of the marine environment, in addition to fisheries and aquaculture, the overall budget of the EMFF should be increased or complemented by other funds to reach the minimum threshold of 1 % of the post-2020 multi-annual financial framework, by adding a further 0,47 % of funding for the integrated maritime policy to the 0,53 % of appropriations currently allocated to fisheries and aquaculture. In fact, while the previous regulation reserved EUR 4,4 billion for supporting sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, the budget available under the 2021-2024 EMFF for all measures — excluding support for the outermost regions, fisheries control and data collection — is EUR 4,2 billion, covering fisheries, aquaculture, support for the blue economy, maritime surveillance, and cooperation on coastguard functions;
6. regrets the changes in the distribution of this budget between shared management and (in)direct management, in favour of the latter. The budget allocated to shared management is being reduced, while that allocated to (in)direct management is being considerably increased. For the 2014-2021 period, the budget allocated to shared management has amounted to 90 % of the total. Now, the budget allocated to shared management will amount to no more than 86 % of the overall budget, while the direct and indirect management budget is rising from 10 % to 13 % of the total budget;
7. welcomes the fact that this new regulation has done away with constraints on the distribution of budgets to groups of pre-defined measures and therefore allows Member States the greatest possible freedom to distribute the budget to measures addressing real challenges for the regions;

⁽¹⁾ 'White Paper' — Communication on an Integrated Maritime Policy for the European Union

8. approves of the increased use of simplified cost options, i.e. flat-rate reimbursement, standard scales of unit costs and flat rates designed to cut the red tape encumbering beneficiaries;
9. endorses the strengthening of the territorial focus of the fund, through sea basin strategies, thereby offering solutions tailored to different circumstances and challenges in Europe's regions;
10. deems it necessary to allow Member States to develop regional operational programmes, where they wish to do so, as part of national programming, in particular for regions which have responsibility for maritime matters. This way of organising programmes will encourage the establishment of regional strategies and allow the EMFF to be better channelled to deal with local issues;
11. points out that one of the CFP objectives is to obtain positive spill-over effects in the ecosystem, economic, social and labour domains⁽²⁾ and therefore considers that measures affecting the people involved in fishing and aquaculture, especially for improving safety and ergonomics on board vessels, promotion of the fishing and aquaculture professions, and training, should be better taken into account in this regulation by proposing specific support rates and dedicated indicators;
12. urges the Commission to assess programmes by taking into account the social contribution of measures proposed by Member States;
13. endorses the Commission's proposal to require an action plan for each of the outermost regions. This will allow for better deployment of aid which has not, for the moment, succeeded in resolving the difficulties facing these regions. Putting in place a global plan, including investment aid, training support, the establishment of easy-to-use financial tools (such as microcredit), campaigns to encourage people to learn about the resources available, and the strengthening of checks, should enable fisheries, aquaculture and the blue economy in these regions to achieve significant development;
14. considers that the fishing industry must also help combat global warming and pollution. The EMFF must therefore be able to assist research and innovation to improve energy efficiency and lower CO₂ emissions;
15. supports the possibility of funding the re-engining of fishing vessels, particularly for the deployment of new technologies such as electric propulsion, hybrid power, the use of hydrogen and gas as a fuel, and any other system which helps reduce the carbon footprint of vessels, whatever their size;
16. proposes that support for the purchase of new vessels be made possible so as to speed up renewal of an ageing fleet. This measure would make jobs in this sector more attractive by replacing old equipment with more ergonomic, less polluting and safer vessels, without increasing the fishing effort;
17. approves of the strong support for aquaculture, allowing: pressure on wild stocks to be eased; healthy products to be offered to European consumers; and the EU's dependence on imports of marine products to be reduced;
18. endorses the support given to processing firms, allowing value to be added to primary production and good quality jobs to be developed for coastal communities;
19. deems it logical to offer support to processing and aquaculture businesses for productive investment by means of responsive and simple financial instruments accessible to the smallest businesses;
20. calls for more stringent environmental requirements in the development of aquaculture, knowledge of inputs for fish farming and assessment of environmental impact. In particular, aid should not be granted to businesses whose activities significantly alter the marine environment of a protected area. Moreover, because of the risks of propagation in the environment, support should not be possible for farming genetically modified organisms;
21. considers that aquaculture must remain a net producer of fish proteins that are safe in terms of food, a source of added value and business and employment, compatible with maritime-fisheries activities and responsible in the use of other natural resources in their development. Nevertheless, aquaculture should avoid overfishing of stocks that are useful for feeding farmed fish, which can upset the balance of the food chain and adversely affect biodiversity;

⁽²⁾ Article 2 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy

22. notes the ending of support for storage, which in some cases makes it possible to offset occasional incidents in the management of marine product supplies;
23. considers that all outermost regions are recognised as being in a more difficult situation than the rest of Europe. This requires support to be granted for the acquisition of new vessels or the creation of port infrastructure and fish market facilities. Aid for the acquisition of new vessels for these regions would be designed to shift the fishing effort away from overfished coastal areas, which are sometimes also damaged by pollution or the proliferation of invasive species, especially in waters off the continental shelf;
24. supports the reinstatement of compensation for the permanent cessation of fishing activities, so as to fund a reduction in the fishing effort in respect of the most vulnerable resources;
25. notes that, for reasons of timing, the draft regulation in hand is not proposing any Brexit accompanying measures. Depending on the outcome of the Brexit negotiations, specific support measures might be needed to help businesses undermined by Brexit and such measures would require special funding that is not at present anticipated in the draft regulation setting the multi-annual financial framework for the 2021-2027 period.
26. acknowledges that the European Commission's proposal complies with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;

Brussels, 9 October 2018.

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

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Asylum and Migration Fund

(2018/C 461/13)

Rapporteur-General: Peter BOSSMAN (SL/PES), Mayor of the Municipality of Piran

Reference document: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Asylum and Migration Fund

COM(2018) 471 final

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

COM(2018) 471 final, Recital 42

Text proposed by the Commission	Amendment
In order to strengthen the Union's capacity to immediately address unforeseen or disproportionate heavy migratory pressure in one or more Member States characterised by a large or disproportionate inflow of third-country nationals, which places significant and urgent demands on their reception and detention facilities, asylum and migration management systems and procedures, heavy migratory pressures in third countries due to political developments or conflicts, it should be possible to provide emergency assistance in accordance with the framework set out in this Regulation.	In order to strengthen the Union's capacity to immediately address unforeseen or disproportionate heavy migratory pressure in one or more Member States characterised by a large or disproportionate inflow of third-country nationals, especially involving vulnerable persons, such as unaccompanied minors , which places significant and urgent demands on their reception and detention facilities, asylum and migration management systems and procedures, heavy migratory pressures in third countries due to political developments or conflicts, it should be possible to provide emergency assistance and help in creating infrastructure , in accordance with the framework set out in this Regulation.

Reason

A line of emergency funding needs to be opened to deal with situations where Member States are overwhelmed by the challenge of dealing with the arrival of vulnerable persons from third countries, unaccompanied minors in particular, requiring specific measures.

Amendment 2

COM(2018) 471 final, Article 3.2

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Within the policy objective set out in paragraph 1, the Fund shall contribute to the following specific objectives:</p> <p>(a) to strengthen and develop all aspects of the Common European Asylum System, including its external dimension;</p> <p>(b) to support legal migration to the Member States including to contribute to the integration of third-country nationals;</p> <p>(c) to contribute to countering irregular migration and ensuring effectiveness of return and readmission in third countries.</p>	<p>Within the policy objective set out in paragraph 1, the Fund shall contribute to the following specific objectives:</p> <p>(a) to strengthen and develop all aspects of the Common European Asylum System, including its external dimension;</p> <p>(b) to support legal migration to the Member States including to contribute to the integration of third-country nationals and to create the channels enabling such migration to take place in an ordered and safe way;</p> <p>(c) to contribute to countering irregular migration and ensuring effectiveness of return and readmission in third countries while ensuring that human rights are respected;</p> <p>(d) to enhance solidarity and responsibility-sharing between the Member States, in particular towards those most affected by migration and asylum flows, including through practical cooperation.</p>

Reason

This specific objective is to be found in the current AMIF Regulation and should be expressly stated as a specific objective of the future AMF Regulation.

Amendment 3

COM(2018) 471 final, Article 8

Draft opinion	Amendment
Text proposed by the Commission	
<p>Budget</p> <p>1. The financial envelope for the implementation of the Fund for the 2021-2027 period shall be EUR 10 415 000 000 in current prices.</p> <p>2. The financial resources shall be used as follows:</p>	<p>Budget</p> <p>1. The financial envelope for the implementation of the Fund for the 2021-2027 period shall be EUR 16 188 000 000 in current prices.</p> <p>2. The financial resources shall be used as follows:</p>

Draft opinion	Amendment
Text proposed by the Commission	
(a) EUR 6 249 000 000 shall be allocated to the programmes implemented under shared management;	(a) EUR 10 790 000 000 shall be allocated to the programmes implemented under shared management;
(b) EUR 4 166 000 000 shall be allocated to the thematic facility.	(b) EUR 5 398 000 000 shall be allocated to the thematic facility.
3. Up to 0,42 % of the financial envelope shall be allocated for technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission as referred to in Article 29 of the Regulation (EU) xx/xx [Common Provisions Regulation].	3. Up to 0,42 % of the financial envelope shall be allocated for technical assistance at the initiative of the Commission as referred to in Article 29 of the Regulation (EU) xx/xx [Common Provisions Regulation].

Reason

The proposed increase for migration and asylum would mirror the 2,4-fold increase in funding allocated to the control of external borders and reflects the fact that in the current proposals no increase in funding appropriations is foreseen under the ESF+ for new task of long-term integration.

Amendment 4

COM(2018) 471 final, Article 9.1

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(...) Funding from the thematic facility shall be used for its components:	(...) Funding from the thematic facility shall be used for its components:
a) specific actions;	a) specific actions;
b) Union actions;	b) Union actions;
c) emergency assistance;	c) emergency assistance;
d) resettlement;	d) resettlement;
e) support to Member States contributing to solidarity and responsibility efforts;	e) support to Member States contributing to solidarity and responsibility efforts;
and	and
f) European Migration Network.	f) European Migration Network;
	g) European integration networks of local and regional authorities.
(....)	(....)

Reason

Local and regional authorities play a crucial role in the integration of migrants, which is an essential component of migration policies.

Amendment 5

COM(2018) 471 final, Article 9.6

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The thematic facility shall in particular, support actions falling under the implementation measure 2(b) of Annex II that are implemented by the local and regional authorities or civil society organisations.	The thematic facility shall in particular, support actions falling under the implementation measure 2(b) of Annex II that are implemented by the local and regional authorities or civil society organisations. At least 30 % of funding from thematic facility shall be allocated for this purpose.

Reason

Local and regional authorities play a crucial role in the integration of migrants, which is an essential component of migration policies.

Amendment 6

COM(2018) 471 final, Article 13.1

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<i>Each Member State shall ensure that the priorities addressed in its programme are consistent with, and respond to, the Union priorities and challenges in the area of migration management and are fully in line with the relevant Union acquis and agreed Union priorities. In defining the priorities of their programmes Member States shall ensure that the implementation measures set out in Annex II are adequately addressed.</i>	<i>Each Member States shall allocate at least 20 % of the resources in its programme to the specific objective referred to in point (a) of the first subparagraph of Article 3(2), and at least 20 % to the specific objective referred to in point (b) of the first subparagraph of Article 3(2). Member States may depart from those minimum percentages only where a detailed explanation is included in the national programme as to why allocating resources below this level does not jeopardise the achievement of the objective. As far as the specific objective referred to in point (a) of the first subparagraph of Article 3(2) is concerned, those Member States faced with structural deficiencies in the area of accommodation, infrastructure and services shall not fall below the minimum percentage laid down in this Regulation;</i>

Reason

The AMF should support durable solutions to migration and ensure consistency with priorities agreed by the Member States at EU level. Ensuring minimum appropriations for building a functioning asylum system (Article 3(2)(a)) and for the development of legal migration paths and support for integration (Article 3(2)(b)) will contribute to the achievement of the policy objective of this fund (efficient management of migration flows).

The proposed wording corresponds to the wording under the current AMIF Regulations.

Amendment 7

COM(2018) 471 final, article 13.7

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Member States shall in particular pursue the actions eligible for higher co-financing as listed in Annex IV. In the event of unforeseen or new circumstances or in order to ensure the effective implementation of funding, the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 32 to amend the list of actions eligible for higher co-financing as listed in Annex IV.	Member States shall in particular pursue the actions eligible for higher co-financing as listed in Annex IV. Member States that do not pursue such actions shall include a detailed explanation in the national programmes as to how they are going to ensure that this choice does not jeopardise the achievement of AMF specific objectives. In the event of unforeseen or new circumstances or in order to ensure the effective implementation of funding, the Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 32 to amend the list of actions eligible for higher co-financing as listed in Annex IV.

Reason

Same as for Amendment 6.

Amendment 8

COM(2018) 471 final, Article 21

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>1. The Fund shall support the European Migration Network and provide the financial assistance necessary for its activities and its future development.</p> <p>2. The amount made available for the European Migration Network under the annual appropriations of the Fund and the work programme laying down the priorities for its activities shall be adopted by the Commission, after approval by the Steering Board in accordance with Article 4(5)(a) of Decision 2008/381/EC (as amended). The decision of the Commission shall constitute a financing decision pursuant to Article [110] of the Financial Regulation. To ensure the timely availability of resources, the Commission may adopt the work programme for the European Migration Network in a separate financing decision.</p> <p>3. Financial assistance provided for the activities of the European Migration Network shall take the form of grants to the national contact points referred to in Article 3 of Decision 2008/381/EC and procurements as appropriate, in accordance with the Financial Regulation.</p>	<p>1. The Fund shall support the European Migration Network and provide the financial assistance necessary for its activities and its future development.</p> <p>2. The amount made available for the European Migration Network under the annual appropriations of the Fund and the work programme laying down the priorities for its activities shall be adopted by the Commission, after approval by the Steering Board in accordance with Article 4(5)(a) of Decision 2008/381/EC (as amended). The decision of the Commission shall constitute a financing decision pursuant to Article [110] of the Financial Regulation. To ensure the timely availability of resources, the Commission may adopt the work programme for the European Migration Network in a separate financing decision.</p> <p>3. Financial assistance provided for the activities of the European Migration Network shall take the form of grants to the national contact points referred to in Article 3 of Decision 2008/381/EC and procurements as appropriate, in accordance with the Financial Regulation.</p> <p>4. The fund shall support European integration networks of local and regional authorities.</p>

Reason

Same as for amendment 4.

Amendment 9

COM(2018) 471 final, article 26.1

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Fund shall provide financial assistance to address urgent and specific needs in the event of an emergency situation resulting from one or more of the following:</p> <p>(a) heavy migratory pressure in one or more Member States characterised by a large or disproportionate inflow of third-country nationals, which places significant and urgent demands on their reception and detention facilities, asylum and migration management systems and procedures;</p> <p>(b) the implementation of temporary protection mechanisms within the meaning of Directive 2001/55/EC;</p> <p>(c) heavy migratory pressure in third countries, including where persons in need of protection may be stranded due to political developments or conflicts, notably where it might have an impact on migration flows towards the EU..</p>	<p>The Fund shall provide financial assistance to address urgent and specific needs and to create infrastructure in the event of an emergency situation resulting from one or more of the following:</p> <p>(a) heavy migratory pressure in one or more Member States characterised by a large or disproportionate inflow of third-country nationals, especially involving vulnerable persons, such as unaccompanied minors, which places significant and urgent demands on their reception and detention facilities, asylum and migration management systems and procedures;</p> <p>(b) the implementation of temporary protection mechanisms within the meaning of Directive 2001/55/EC;</p> <p>(c) heavy migratory pressure in third countries, including where persons in need of protection may be stranded due to political developments or conflicts, notably where it might have an impact on migration flows towards the EU. Measures implemented in third countries in accordance with this article must be consistent with and, where relevant, complementary to Union humanitarian policy and respect fundamental human rights and international legal obligations.</p>

Reason

Ensure coherence with other EU policies and respect for fundamental rights.

Amendment 10

COM(2018) 471 final, article 26.2

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Emergency assistance may take the form of grants awarded directly to the decentralised agencies.</p>	<p>Emergency assistance may take the form of grants awarded directly to the decentralised agencies and to local and regional authorities with heavy migratory pressure, in particular those responsible for receiving and integrating unaccompanied immigrant minors.</p>

Reason

LRAs often have responsibility for receiving and integrating unaccompanied immigrant minors, but frequently lack the capacity to do so.

Amendment 11

COM(2018) 471 final, Annex I (Criteria for the allocation of funding to the programmes under shared management)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>1. The available resources referred to in Article 11 shall be broken down between the Member States as follows:</p> <p>(a) Each Member State shall receive a fixed amount of EUR 5 000 000 from the Fund at the start of the programming period only;</p> <p>(b) The remaining resources referred to in Article 11 shall be distributed based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 30 % for asylum; — 30 % for legal migration and integration; — 40 % for countering irregular migration including returns. 	<p>1. The available resources referred to in Article 11 shall be broken down between the Member States as follows:</p> <p>(a) Each Member State shall receive a fixed amount of EUR 5 000 000 from the Fund at the start of the programming period only;</p> <p>(b) The remaining resources referred to in Article 11 shall be distributed based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — 33,3 % for asylum; — 33,3 % for legal migration and integration; — 33,3 % for countering irregular migration including returns.

Reason

Asylum, legal migration and integration are as important (if not more) as irregular migration/returns for effective management of migration flows.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

1. agrees that in the context of the evolving migratory challenges, investing in efficient and coordinated migration management in the EU in support of the Member States (MS) and their LRAs is key to realising the Union's objective of establishing an area of freedom, security and justice. Welcomes in this context of the increased attention on, and funding for, migration in the EU budget, but is concerned by the bias in these increases which are far more significant for measures on border protection, than for the AMF. Consequently suggests an increase to AMF equivalent to the increase in funding for external border management, i.e. a 2,4-fold increase.

2. reiterates the need for a coordinated approach by the EU and the Member States to build a common asylum and migration policy based on the principles of solidarity and fair sharing of responsibility.

3. welcomes the establishment of the AMF and other new or revised instruments (IBMF, ESF+, ERDF, NDCI, IPAI) that financially address both the internal and external dimensions of migration.

4. agrees that effective management of EU external borders is necessary, but is of the view that focusing primarily on border control and less on the other essential aspects of a comprehensive EU migration policy including a reformed EU asylum system, consistent and ambitious policies to facilitate legal migration and support integration, decisive measures to combat human trafficking and strong action to tackle the root causes of migration would not be effective, nor does it reflect the EU's fundamental values.

5. insists that it is essential to ensure synergies, consistency and efficiency between the AMF and other EU funds and policies, notably with the protection of fundamental rights, the promotion of social cohesion and external and development policies.

6. underlines the need to reform the Common European Asylum System to ensure that efficient asylum procedures guarantee the rights of those seeking protection, prevent secondary movements and provide uniform and appropriate reception conditions and standards for granting international protection.

7. believes that partnerships and cooperation with third countries are an essential component of EU migration policy and tackling its root causes and that the Fund should therefore provide financial incentives for such cooperation, including the implementation of the EU Resettlement Framework. External development funding should not, however, be harnessed solely to prevent migration.

8. notes the new approach of distinguishing between short-term and long-term integration measures, the latter being financed now from the ESF+. Stresses that the financial provisions for the ESF+ must fully reflect this new task. Regrets, however, that 'integration' has disappeared from the title of the AMF, especially since most short-term integration measures are the responsibility of LRAs.

9. welcomes the fact that the new Fund allows a higher co-financing rate (up to 90 %), which may help in particular LRAs under pressure, and especially those with an external border, but regrets that its repeated calls to make LRAs partially responsible for the management of the AMF have not been answered.

10. acknowledges that the AMF will be governed for the first time by the common provisions regulation. This should bring increased involvement of LRAs in planning and implementing national policies, but such positive effects require the full application of the partnership and multi-level governance principles.

11. underlines that the Fund should support Member States in devising coordinated strategies for all aspects of migration, the exchange of information and best practices, as well as cooperation between different administrations and levels of governance, and between Member States.

12. notes in this respect that as regards the allocation of funds to Member States, the proposal provides for a distribution key reflecting their needs and pressures in three key areas; asylum (30 %); legal migration and integration (30 %); and countering irregular migration including returns (40 %); finds also, however, that it is not clear why these three elements are weighted as suggested and hence suggests giving them equal weight.

13. recognises that an efficient return policy is a key element of a comprehensive approach to migration and that the Fund should therefore support the development of common standards for, and coordinated management of return in full compliance with EU law and international human rights and the dignity of the persons concerned, including measures in third countries for the reintegration of returnees.

14. urges Member States in this context to give preference to voluntary return in the interests of both returnees and the authorities of sending and receiving countries.

15. agrees that the Fund should support Member States in their implementation of Directive 2009/52/EC prohibiting the employment of illegally staying third-country nationals and sanctioning employers who infringe that prohibition, and Directive 2011/36/EU on assistance, support and protection of victims of human trafficking.

16. regrets that the Member States are no longer required to allocate at least 20 % of the available funding to asylum action and 20 % to integration, which creates the risk that countering irregular migration will be prioritised over other action; consequently, calls for the reintroduction of these minimum allocation and spending requirements.

17. believes that decentralised cooperation can play an important role in strengthening good governance in origin and transit countries and so reduce migration flows. Actions such as the Nicosia initiative for capacity-building in Libyan municipalities illustrates to what extent cooperation by LRAs can promote stability and prosperity in our neighbourhood.

18. reiterates its own role in facilitating dialogue and cooperation with LRAs in countries of origin and transit of migrants, for instance through existing bodies and platforms (ARLEM, CORLEAP, Joint Consultative Committees and Working Groups) in order to achieve AMF objectives.

19. is convinced that Member States should be encouraged to use part of their programme allocation to fund in particular:

- integration measures implemented by LRAs and civil society
- actions to develop effective alternatives to detention
- assisted voluntary return and reintegration programmes and related activities
- measures targeting vulnerable applicants for international protection with special reception and/or procedural needs, notably children, in particular those unaccompanied.

20. welcomes the proposed framework for emergency assistance which will allow Member States to face challenges resulting from large or disproportionate inflows of third-country nationals, especially when vulnerable persons, such as unaccompanied minors, are involved; insists that in particular LRAs in these situations need to have access to such assistance.

21. believes that the proposed legislation has clear European added value and therefore that the proposal complies with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

Brussels, 9 October 2018.

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

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Proposal for a Regulation establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013

(2018/C 461/14)

Rapporteur: Marco DUS (IT/PES), Member of Vittorio Veneto Municipal Council, Treviso

Reference document: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013

COM(2018) 385 final — 2018/0209(COD)

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

Recital 6

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(6) For achieving the overarching objectives, the implementation of the Circular economy package⁽¹⁾, the 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework⁽²⁾,⁽³⁾,⁽⁴⁾, Union nature legislation⁽⁵⁾, as well as of related policies⁽⁶⁾,⁽⁷⁾,⁽⁸⁾,⁽⁹⁾,⁽¹⁰⁾, is of particular importance.</p> <p>⁽¹⁾ COM(2015) 614 final, 2.12.2015</p> <p>⁽²⁾ Climate and Energy Policy Framework, COM(2014)15, 22.1.2014.</p> <p>⁽³⁾ EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change, COM(2013) 216, 16.4.2013.</p> <p>⁽⁴⁾ Clean Energy for all Europeans package, COM(2016) 860, 30.11.2016.</p> <p>⁽⁵⁾ Action Plan for nature, people and the economy, COM(2017) 198, 27.4.2017.</p> <p>⁽⁶⁾ Clean Air Programme for Europe, COM(2013) 918.</p> <p>⁽⁷⁾ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1).</p> <p>⁽⁸⁾ Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection, COM(2006) 231.</p> <p>⁽⁹⁾ Low Emission Mobility Strategy, COM(2016) 501 final.</p> <p>⁽¹⁰⁾ Action Plan on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure under Article 10(6) of Directive 2014/94/EU, 8.11.2017.</p>	<p>(6) For achieving the overarching objectives, the implementation of the Circular economy package⁽¹⁾, the 2030 Climate and Energy Policy Framework⁽²⁾,⁽³⁾,⁽⁴⁾, the seventh General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 and its possible successor⁽⁵⁾, Union nature legislation⁽⁶⁾, as well as of related policies⁽⁷⁾,⁽⁸⁾,⁽⁹⁾,⁽¹⁰⁾,⁽¹¹⁾,⁽¹²⁾,⁽¹³⁾,⁽¹⁴⁾,⁽¹⁵⁾ is of particular importance.</p> <p>⁽¹⁾ COM(2015) 614 final, 2.12.2015</p> <p>⁽²⁾ Climate and Energy Policy Framework, COM(2014)15, 22.1.2014.</p> <p>⁽³⁾ EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change, COM(2013) 216, 16.4.2013.</p> <p>⁽⁴⁾ Clean Energy for all Europeans package, COM(2016) 860, 30.11.2016.</p> <p>⁽⁵⁾ Decision No 1386/2013/EU</p> <p>⁽⁶⁾ Action Plan for nature, people and the economy, COM(2017)198, 27.4.2017.</p> <p>⁽⁷⁾ Clean Air Programme for Europe, COM(2013) 918.</p> <p>⁽⁸⁾ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1).</p> <p>⁽⁹⁾ Thematic Strategy for Soil Protection, COM(2006) 231.</p> <p>⁽¹⁰⁾ Low Emission Mobility Strategy, COM(2016) 501 final.</p> <p>⁽¹¹⁾ Action Plan on Alternative Fuels Infrastructure under Article 10(6) of Directive 2014/94/EU, 8.11.2017.</p> <p>⁽¹²⁾ Directive 2002/49/EC relating to the assessment and management of environmental noise.</p> <p>⁽¹³⁾ A European Strategy for Plastics in a Circular Economy, COM(2018) 28 final.</p> <p>⁽¹⁴⁾ Directive 2007/60/EC on the assessment and management of flood risks.</p> <p>⁽¹⁵⁾ Communication Green Infrastructure (GI) — Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital, COM(2013) 249 final.</p>

Reason

Self-explanatory.

Amendment 2

Recital 7

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR Amendment
(7) Complying with the Union's commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change requires the transformation of the Union into an energy efficient, low carbon and climate resilient society. This in turn requires actions, with a special focus on sectors that contribute most to the current levels of CO ₂ output and pollution, contributing to the implementation of the 2030 energy and climate policy framework and the Member States' Integrated National Energy and Climate Plans and preparations for the Union's mid-century and long-term climate and energy strategy. The Programme should also include measures contributing to the implementation of the Union's climate adaptation policy to decrease vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change.	(7) Complying with the Union's commitments under the Paris Agreement on Climate Change requires the transformation of the Union into an energy efficient, low carbon and climate resilient society. This in turn requires actions, with a special focus on sectors that contribute most to the current levels of CO ₂ output and pollution, contributing to the implementation of the 2030 energy and climate policy framework and the Member States' Integrated National Energy and Climate Plans and preparations for the Union's mid-century and long-term climate and energy strategy. The Programme should also include measures contributing to the implementation of the Union's climate adaptation policy to decrease vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change.

Reason

The word resilient is considered more appropriate in this context as this refers to adaptation. [Translator's note: this does not affect the English version, which already uses the term resilient.]

Amendment 3

Recital 8

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(8) The transition to clean energy is an essential contribution to the mitigation of climate change with co-benefits for the environment. Actions for capacity building supporting the clean energy transition, funded until 2020 under Horizon 2020, should be integrated in the Programme since their objective is not to fund excellence and generate innovation, but to facilitate the uptake of already available technology that will contribute to climate mitigation. The inclusion of these capacity building activities into the Programme offers potential for synergies between the sub-programmes and increases the overall coherence of Union funding. Therefore, data should be collected and disseminated on the uptake of existing research and innovation solutions in the LIFE projects, including from the Horizon Europe programme and its predecessors.	(8) The transition to clean energy is an essential contribution to the mitigation of climate change with co-benefits for the environment. Actions for capacity building supporting the clean energy transition, funded until 2020 under Horizon 2020, should be integrated in the Programme, retaining the same co-financing coefficient , since their objective is not to fund excellence and generate innovation, but to facilitate the uptake of already available technology that will contribute to climate mitigation. The inclusion of these capacity building activities into the Programme offers potential for synergies between the sub-programmes and increases the overall coherence of Union funding. Therefore, data should be collected and disseminated on the uptake of existing research and innovation solutions in the LIFE projects, including from the Horizon Europe programme and its predecessors.

Reason

The co-financing rate for regions and cities is 100 % under Horizon 2020.

Amendment 4

Recital 9

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(9) The impact assessments of the Clean Energy legislation estimate that the delivery of the Union's 2030 energy targets will require additional investments of EUR 177 billion annually in the period 2021-2030. The biggest gaps relate to the investments in buildings decarbonisation (energy efficiency and small-scale renewable energy sources), where capital needs to be channelled towards projects of highly distributed nature. One of the objectives of the Clean Energy Transition sub-programme is to build capacity for projects development and aggregation, thereby also helping to absorb funds from the European Structural and Investment Funds and catalyse investments in clean energy also using the financial instruments provided under InvestEU.</p>	<p>(9) The impact assessments of the Clean Energy legislation estimate that the delivery of the Union's 2030 energy targets will require additional investments of EUR 177 billion annually in the period 2021-2030. The biggest gaps relate to the investments in buildings decarbonisation (energy efficiency and decentralised renewable energy sources for all types of energy consumption and, in particular, consumption for heating and air conditioning), where capital needs to be channelled towards projects of highly distributed nature, for example by promoting pilot projects located in small conurbations and settlements and isolated housing in rural areas. One of the objectives of the Clean Energy Transition sub-programme is to build capacity for projects development and aggregation, thereby also helping to absorb funds from the European Structural and Investment Funds and catalyse investments in clean energy also using the financial instruments provided under InvestEU.</p>

Reason

Decarbonisation of the buildings sector is a crucial step to achieving the EU's climate and energy objectives and, consequently, to successfully meeting the Paris Agreement objectives. It is however important to focus greater attention on energy consumption for heating and air conditioning, as it accounts for a major part of European energy consumption.

Amendment 5

Recital 12

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(12) The Union's most recent Environmental Implementation Review package⁽¹⁾ indicates that significant progress is required to accelerate implementation of the Union environment <i>acquis</i> and enhance the integration of environmental and climate objectives into other policies. The Programme should therefore act as a catalyst to achieve the required progress through developing, testing and replicating new approaches; supporting policy development, monitoring and review; enhancing stakeholder involvement; mobilising investments across Union investment programmes or other financial sources and supporting actions to overcome the various obstacles to the effective implementation of key plans required by environment legislation.</p> <p>⁽¹⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions — The EU Environmental Implementation Review: Common challenges and how to combine efforts to deliver better results (COM(2017) 63 final of 3 February 2017).</p>	<p>(12) The Union's most recent Environmental Implementation Review package⁽¹⁾ indicates that significant progress is required to accelerate implementation of the Union environment <i>acquis</i> and enhance the integration of environmental and climate objectives into other policies. The Programme should therefore act as a catalyst to achieve the required progress through developing, testing and replicating new approaches; supporting policy development, <i>evaluation</i>, monitoring and review; <i>promoting greater awareness and communication; developing good governance</i>; enhancing stakeholder involvement <i>to boost resilience against global change</i>; mobilising investments across Union investment programmes or other financial sources and supporting actions to overcome the various obstacles to the effective implementation of key plans required by environment legislation.</p> <p>⁽¹⁾ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions — The EU Environmental Implementation Review: Common challenges and how to combine efforts to deliver better results (COM (2017) 63 final of 3 February 2017).</p>

Reason

Improved governance, in particular through awareness raising and stakeholder involvement, is essential to deliver environmental objectives. These are priorities explicitly set out in the previous LIFE programme and the Committee of the Regions considers they should be kept.

Amendment 6

Recital 15

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(15) The voluntary scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European Overseas (BEST) promotes the conservation of biodiversity, including marine biodiversity, and sustainable use of ecosystem services, including ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation, in the Union's Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories. BEST has helped to raise awareness for the ecological importance of the Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories for conserving global biodiversity. In their Ministerial Declarations in 2017 and 2018, Overseas Countries and Territories have expressed their appreciation for this small grant scheme for biodiversity. It is appropriate to allow the Programme to continue financing small grants for biodiversity in both the Outermost Regions and the Overseas Countries and Territories.</p>	<p>(15) The voluntary scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European Overseas (BEST) promotes the conservation of biodiversity, including marine biodiversity, and sustainable use of ecosystem services, including ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation, in the Union's Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories. BEST has helped to raise awareness for the ecological importance of the Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories for conserving global biodiversity. In their Ministerial Declarations in 2017 and 2018, Overseas Countries and Territories have expressed their appreciation for this small grant scheme for biodiversity. It is appropriate to allow the Programme to continue financing small grants for biodiversity in both the Outermost Regions and the Overseas Countries and Territories, in line with the objectives and measures envisaged under a stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the European Union's outermost regions ⁽¹⁾.</p> <p>⁽¹⁾ As set out in COM(2017) 623 final, 'A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions'.</p>

Reason

To clarify the text.

Amendment 7

Recital 17

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(17) The Union's long-term objective for air policy is to achieve levels of air quality that do not cause significant negative impacts on and risks to human health. Public awareness about air pollution is high and citizens expect authorities to act. Directive (EU) 2016/2284 of the European Parliament and of the Council stresses the role Union funding can play in achieving clean air objectives. Therefore, the Programme should support projects, including strategic integrated projects, which have the potential to leverage public and private funds, to be showcases of good practice and catalysts for the implementation of air quality plans and legislation at local, regional, multi-regional, national and trans-national level.</p>	<p>(17) The Union's long-term objective for air policy is to achieve levels of air quality that do not cause significant negative impacts on and risks to human health. Public awareness about air pollution is high and citizens expect authorities to act. Directive (EU) 2016/2284 of the European Parliament and of the Council stresses the role Union funding can play in achieving clean air objectives. Therefore, the Programme should support projects, including strategic integrated projects, which have the potential to leverage public and private funds, to be showcases of good practice and catalysts for the implementation of air quality plans and legislation at local, regional, multi-regional, national and trans-national level. <i>These efforts to improve air quality should be consistent with greenhouse gas reduction requirements and with the long-term need to decarbonise the entire European economy, progressively replacing fossil fuel-based infrastructure with infrastructure based on renewable sources, where technically and economically possible.</i></p>

Reason

Air quality is directly linked to fossil fuel combustion for transport, heating and air conditioning and, generally, for generating electricity. Decarbonising these sectors therefore has a direct impact on air quality and public health. The LIFE programme should consider the potential for reducing emissions of gaseous pollutants in these kinds of projects. Where an alternative based on a renewable energy source exists, the LIFE programme should promote this initiative rather than replacing the replacement of appliances emitting high levels of greenhouse gas with equipment that is more efficient but is still based on fossil energy, provided the investment is also cost-effective.

Amendment 8

New recital 17a after recital 17

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	(17a) <i>Particular attention should be focused on promoting a shift away from sources of air pollution, in particular domestic heating appliances and power stations based on the most polluting fossil fuels. In order to tackle the problem of air pollution, efforts should focus on a transition to renewable and other clean energy sources, encouraging a medium/long-term view.</i>

Reason

Carbon-based domestic heating is a major source of air pollution in the EU and has a harmful impact on public health. Where technically and financially possible, a shift to renewable energy and other clean energy sources should be facilitated, in keeping with the decarbonisation targets for the buildings sector, as set out in the Buildings Energy Performance Directive.

Amendment 9

Recital 20

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(20) The improvement of governance on environmental, climate change and related clean energy transition matters requires involvement of civil society by raising public awareness, consumer engagement, and broadening of stakeholder involvement, including non-governmental organisations, in consultation on and implementation of related policies.	(20) The improvement of governance on environmental, climate change and related clean energy transition matters requires involvement of civil society by raising public awareness, partly by means of a communication strategy that reflects the new media and social networks and boosts consumer engagement, and broadening of stakeholder involvement, including non-governmental organisations, in consultation on and implementation of related policies. Moreover, engagement and co-responsibility of local and regional authorities — in accordance with the acknowledgement granted to cities, regions and local authorities by the Conference of the Parties in Paris (the Paris Agreement) — as the level of government closest to citizens, in keeping with the subsidiarity principle — can contribute to achieving substantial environment-, energy- and climate-related results, as demonstrated by the growing success of the Covenant of Mayors initiative and other municipal climate and environmental networks.

Reason

It is important to highlight the need for modern communication and to mention the Covenant of Mayors, which is now a highly successful, worldwide initiative to engage and empower the level of government closest to citizens.

Amendment 10

Recital 22

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(22) The Programme should prepare and support market players for the shift towards a clean, circular, energy-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient economy by testing new business opportunities, upgrading professional skills, facilitating consumers' access to sustainable products and services, engaging and empowering influencers and testing novel methods to adapt the existing processes and business landscape. To support a broader market uptake of sustainable solutions, general public acceptance and consumer engagement should be promoted.	(22) The Programme should prepare and support market players for the shift towards a clean, circular, energy-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient economy by testing new business opportunities, upgrading professional skills, facilitating consumers' access to sustainable products and services, engaging and empowering influencers and testing novel methods to adapt the existing processes and business landscape. To support a broader market uptake of sustainable solutions, particularly the deployment of innovative, sustainable and renewable energy technologies, general awareness and dissemination of these technologies should be promoted to encourage general public acceptance and consumer engagement should be promoted.

Reason

As a result of technological developments, market developments and (also) public support, the cost of installing renewable energy systems has fallen considerably over the last 10 years. We should continue along this path so as to allow Europe's energy potential to be fully tapped, exploiting so far little-used alternative energy sources (such as marine or geothermal energy) and building up the EU's energy independence from third countries.

Amendment 11

New Recital 24a after Recital 24

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	(24a) <i>Given the increased incidence of natural disasters caused by climate change across the EU and the inadequacy of current prevention instruments, the programme will support initiatives to strengthen climate-change resilience strategies in order to respond to related natural disasters.</i>

Reason

Given the increased incidence of natural disasters and the inadequacy of the tools for preventing them, the LIFE Programme has an essential contribution to make to supporting initiatives to strengthen climate-change resilience strategies so as to respond to disasters.

Amendment 12

Recital 25

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(25) In the implementation of the Programme due consideration should be given to the strategy for outermost regions in view of Article 349 TFEU and the specific needs and vulnerabilities of these regions. Union policies other than environmental, climate and relevant clean energy transition policies should also be taken into account.	(25) In the implementation of the Programme due consideration should be given to the strategy for outermost regions in view of Article 349 TFEU and the specific needs and vulnerabilities of these regions. Union policies other than environmental, climate, circular economy and relevant clean energy transition policies should also be taken into account. <i>Funding for this strategy should be integrated into the programme in a specific and distinct manner.</i>

Reason

This specific reference to the increased risks from global and climate change faced by the ORs is needed, due to their particular vulnerability and dependence on mainland Europe.

Amendment 13

New recital 26a after recital 26

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	(26a) <i>The European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (ECTC) are eligible and can serve as a legal instrument to implement the LIFE programme. The EGTCs have a structure comparable to that of consortia and most operate on a transnational basis. As a result of these characteristics, they can provide centralised management of project management at operational and financial level.</i>

Reason

The use of EGTCs needs to be promoted, and their eligibility as consortia to be ensured.

Amendment 14

Recital 31

Commission text	CoR amendment
The types of financing and the methods of implementation should be chosen on the basis of their ability to achieve the specific objectives of the actions and to deliver results, taking into account, in particular, the costs of controls, the administrative burden, and the expected risk of non-compliance. As regards grants, this should include consideration of the use of lump sums, flat rates and scales of unit costs.	The types of financing and the methods of implementation should be chosen on the basis of their ability to achieve the specific objectives of the actions and to deliver results, taking into account, in particular, the costs of controls, the administrative burden, and the expected risk of non-compliance. As regards grants, this should include consideration of the use of lump sums, flat rates and scales of unit costs to cover, among other things, costs for personnel, in order to support a simplification of administrative activities linked to the participation in projects.

Reason

This amendment highlights the importance of being able to support the costs of staff as one important element for successful project participation, in particular for smaller organisations.

Amendment 15

Article 3(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(1) The general objective of the Programme is to contribute to the shift towards a clean, circular, energy-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient economy, including through the transition to clean energy, to the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment and to halting and reversing biodiversity loss, thereby contributing to sustainable development.	(1) The general objective of the Programme is to contribute to the shift towards a clean, circular, energy-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient economy, including through the transition to clean energy, to the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment and to halting and reversing biodiversity loss, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

Reason

The word resilient is considered more appropriate in this context as this refers to adaptation. [Translator's note: this does not affect the English version, which already uses the term resilient.]

Amendment 16

Article 3(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(2) The Programme has the following specific objectives:	(2) The Programme has the following specific objectives:

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(a) to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques and approaches for reaching the objectives of the Union legislation and policy on environment and climate action, including the transition to clean energy, and to contribute to the application of best practice in relation to nature and biodiversity;</p> <p>(b) to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the relevant Union legislation and policy, including by improving governance through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society;</p> <p>(c) to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions for implementing the relevant Union legislation and policy by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance.</p>	<p>(a) to develop, demonstrate and promote innovative techniques and approaches for reaching the objectives of the Union legislation and policy on environment and climate action, including the transition to clean energy, and to contribute to the application of best practice in relation to nature and biodiversity;</p> <p>(b) to support the development, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the relevant Union legislation and policy, including by improving governance through enhancing capacities of public and private actors and the involvement of civil society;</p> <p>(c) to catalyse the large-scale deployment of successful technical and policy-related solutions for implementing the relevant Union legislation and policy by replicating results, integrating related objectives into other policies and into public and private sector practices, mobilising investment and improving access to finance;</p> <p>(d) to strengthen the synergies between climate-change resilience strategies and mitigating the risk of related natural disasters by introducing technical measures such as a clear method of natural disaster risk analysis.</p>

Reason

Given the increased incidence of natural disasters and the inadequacy of the current tools for preventing them, the LIFE Programme has an essential contribution to make to supporting solutions aimed at strengthening climate-change resilience strategies so as to respond to disasters.

Amendment 17

Article 5

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(1) The financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2021-2027 shall be EUR 5 450 000 000 in current prices.</p> <p>(2) The indicative distribution of the amount referred to in paragraph 1 shall be:</p>	<p>(1) The financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2021-2027 shall be EUR 6 780 000 000 in current prices.</p> <p>(2) The indicative distribution of the amount referred to in paragraph 1 shall be:</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
EUR 3 500 000 000 for the field Environment, of which	(a) EUR 4 165 000 000 for the field Environment, of which
EUR 2 150 000 000 for the sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity and	(1) EUR 2 315 000 000 for the sub-programme Nature and Biodiversity and
EUR 1 350 000 000 for the sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of Life;	(2) EUR 1 850 000 000 for the sub-programme Circular Economy and Quality of Life;
EUR 1 950 000 000 for the field Climate Action, of which	(b) EUR 2 615 000 000 for the field Climate Action, of which
EUR 950 000 000 for the sub-programme Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation and	(1) EUR 1 450 000 000 for the sub-programme Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation and
EUR 1 000 000 000 for the sub-programme Clean Energy Transition.	(2) EUR 1 165 000 000 for the sub-programme Clean Energy Transition.
(3) The amounts referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall be without prejudice to provisions on flexibility set out in Regulation (EU) xx/xx of the European Parliament	(3) The amounts referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall be without prejudice to provisions on flexibility set out in Regulation (EU) xx/xx of the European Parliament

Reason

The new overall amount for the LIFE programme is based on a 1,7 fold increase, as announced by the European Commission, but without the transfer of the previously Horizon 2020-funded measure for energy transition, with special focus on the sub-programme Climate Change Mitigation and Circular economy

Amendment 18

Article 5(3)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(3) The amounts referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall be without prejudice to provisions on flexibility set out in Regulation (EU) xx/xx of the European Parliament and of the Council [the new Multiannual Financial Framework Regulation] and the Financial Regulation.	(3) The amounts referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 shall be without prejudice to provisions on flexibility set out in Regulation (EU) xx/xx of the European Parliament and of the Council [the new Multiannual Financial Framework Regulation] and the Financial Regulation.
	(3a) The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 21 in order to increase the percentage referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article by a maximum of 10 %, provided that the total funds requested over two consecutive years by way of proposals that fall under the priority area of Nature and Biodiversity and that meet minimum quality requirements exceed by more than 20 % the corresponding amount calculated for the two years preceding those years.

Reason

Self-explanatory. To restore the flexibility clause for the Nature and Biodiversity sub-programme, as it currently stands in the 2014-2020 LIFE programme.

Amendment 19

Article 5(5)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(5) The Programme may finance activities implemented by the Commission in support of the preparation, implementation and mainstreaming of Union environmental, climate or relevant clean energy transition legislation and policies for the purpose of achieving the objectives set out in Article 3. Such activities may include:</p> <p>(a) information and communication, including awareness raising campaigns. Financial resources allocated to communication activities pursuant to this Regulation shall also cover corporate communication regarding the political priorities of the Union, as well as regarding the implementation and transposition status of Union environmental, climate or relevant clean energy legislation;</p> <p>(b) studies, surveys, modelling and scenario building;</p> <p>(c) preparation, implementation, monitoring, checking and evaluation of projects not funded by the Programme, policies, programmes and legislation;</p> <p>(d) workshops, conferences and meetings;</p> <p>(e) networking and best-practice platforms;</p> <p>(f) other activities.</p>	<p>(5) The Programme may finance activities implemented by the Commission in support of the preparation, implementation and mainstreaming of Union environmental, climate or relevant clean energy transition legislation and policies for the purpose of achieving the objectives set out in Article 3. Such activities may include:</p> <p>(a) information and communication, including awareness raising campaigns. Financial resources allocated to communication activities pursuant to this Regulation shall also cover corporate communication regarding the political priorities of the Union, as well as regarding the implementation and transposition status of Union environmental, climate or relevant clean energy legislation;</p> <p>(b) studies, surveys, modelling and scenario building;</p> <p>(c) preparation, implementation, monitoring, checking and evaluation of projects not funded by the Programme, implementing actions and actions to improve governance, policies, programmes and legislation;</p> <p>(d) workshops, conferences and meetings;</p> <p>(e) networking and best-practice platforms;</p> <p>(f) other activities.</p>

Reason

Self-explanatory.

Amendment 20

Article 11(5)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(5) Legal entities participating in consortia of at least three independent entities, established in different Member States or overseas countries or territories linked to those states or third countries associated to the Programme or other third countries, are eligible.	(5) Legal entities participating in consortia of at least three independent entities, established in different Member States or overseas countries or territories linked to those states or third countries associated to the Programme or other third countries, are eligible. <i>(5a) The European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) shall be treated as consortia, established in different Member States or overseas countries or territories linked to those states.</i>

Reason

The use of EGTCs needs to be promoted, and their eligibility as consortia to be ensured.

Amendment 21

Article 13(a)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(a) projects financed by the Programme shall avoid undermining environmental, climate or relevant clean energy objectives of the Programme and, where possible, shall promote the use of green public procurement;	(a) projects financed by the Programme shall contribute to meeting at least one of the environmental, climate, circular economy transition or sustainable energy objectives of the Programme, without undermining the other objectives and, where possible, shall promote the use of green public procurement;

Reason

The LIFE programme should not only 'avoid undermining' the EU's environmental, climate and energy objectives, but should actively contribute to meeting them. In addition, the wording on 'relevant clean energy' seems excessively vague.

Amendment 22

Article 13(f)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(f) where appropriate, special regard shall be given to projects in geographical areas with specific needs or vulnerabilities, such as areas with specific environmental challenges or natural constraints, trans-border areas or outermost regions.	(f) where appropriate, special regard shall be given to projects in geographical areas with specific needs or vulnerabilities, such as areas with specific environmental challenges (<i>e.g. areas with acknowledged air quality problems or those impacted by climate change</i>) or natural constraints, cross-border areas (<i>projects in which transnational cooperation is crucial to ensuring that the environment is protected and climate objectives achieved</i>) or regions exposed to severe risks due to global and climate change, such as the outermost regions.

Reason

It would be helpful to focus greater attention on transnational cooperation and the air quality problem, risks associated with global and climate change and the particular vulnerability of the outermost regions. The problems associated with climate change often concern geographical areas with special needs or weaknesses, such as islands, coastal towns and cities, and mountain areas.

[Translator's note: the amendment of 'trans-border' to 'cross-border' affects the English version only]

Amendment 23

New article following Article 13

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<p>Eligibility of project costs relating to VAT and staff</p> <p>(1) <i>Conditions for the eligibility of costs are laid down in Article 126 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012. Such costs shall include VAT and staff costs.</i></p> <p><i>The Commission shall provide an overview, in the mid-term and ex-post evaluations of the LIFE Programme, of VAT reimbursements per Member State that project beneficiaries under the LIFE Programme have requested at the final payment stage.</i></p> <p>(2) <i>Recoverable VAT is not eligible whether or not the applicant elects to recover. VAT does not constitute eligible expenditure except where it is genuinely and definitively borne by the final beneficiary. VAT which is recoverable, by whatever means, cannot be considered eligible, even if it is not actually recovered by the final beneficiary or individual recipient. The public or private status of the final beneficiary or the individual recipient is not taken into account for the determination whether VAT constitutes eligible expenditure in application of the provisions of this rule.</i></p> <p>(3) <i>Non-recoverable VAT can be claimed as an eligible cost provided their claim is substantiated by appropriate evidence from the organisations' auditors or accountants. VAT which is not recoverable by the final beneficiary or individual recipient by virtue of the application of specific national rules will only constitute eligible expenditure where such rules are in full compliance with Directive 2006/112/EC on VAT.</i></p>

Reason

The amendment reproduces a previous CoR opinion (rapporteur: Ms Twitchen, ENVI-V/018). VAT was considered to act as a deterrent to participation in earlier versions of the LIFE programme.

Amendment 24

Article 21(4)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(4) Before adopting a delegated act, the Commission shall consult experts designated by each Member State in accordance with the principles laid down in the Inter-institutional Agreement of 13 April 2016 on Better Law-Making.	(4) Before adopting a delegated act, the Commission shall consult experts designated by each Member State in accordance with the principles laid down in the Inter-institutional Agreement of 13 April 2016 on Better Law-Making and, if appropriate, the Commission shall consult the local and regional authorities directly and launch public consultations.

Reason

Local and regional authorities should be specifically mentioned.

Amendment 25

A new Article 21a after Article 21

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<p>Committee Procedure</p> <p>(1) The Commission shall be assisted by the Committee for the LIFE Programme for the Environment and Climate Action. That committee shall be a committee within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011.</p> <p>(2) Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.</p> <p>Where the committee delivers no opinion, the Commission shall not adopt the draft implementing act and the third subparagraph of Article 5(4) of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.</p>

Reason

The amendment reproduces Article 30 of the current regulation on the LIFE programme (Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013), in order to ensure greater participation in and monitoring of implementation of the LIFE programme.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

General comments

1. welcomes the proposal by the European Commission which, with its unreserved reconfirmation of the LIFE programme for the next MFF, explicitly acknowledges its success and the European added value generated thus far;
2. welcomes the fact that the proposal for a regulation makes specific reference to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, and that it helps to ensure that climate objectives will account for 25 % of the MFF budget. The Committee of the Regions urges that all the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals be explicitly recognised and upheld in the EU budget;
3. underlines the substantial direct impact for local and regional authorities that the LIFE programme has already demonstrated by preserving biodiversity, enhancing the quality of the environment and thus helping to reduce and mitigate the drastic effects of climate change, a struggle where local and regional authorities are in the front line;

4. approves the proposal to increase the budget for the LIFE programme under the MFF by 60 %. It points out, however, that this budget increase corresponds in part to an extension of areas eligible for funding under the future LIFE programme (such as the new Clean Energy Transition sub-programme that will fund projects that come under the Horizon 2020 programme in the current MFF); therefore, the Committee is obliged to highlight that the increase of budget proposed by the European Commission is in reality far away from the 60 % announced by the European Commission, and hopes a further increase could be considered, compatible with the general MFF proposal;
5. in the light of the proposed cuts to the ERDF and EAFRD budgets, is concerned that the funds available to local and regional authorities for projects linked to climate and energy transition policies may suffer an overall reduction in the forthcoming 2021-2027 MFF;
6. regrets the absence of any reference to the LIFE Committee in the European Commission's proposal. It considers that the LIFE Committee should not be abolished: rather, it should promote the more effective involvement of local and regional authorities in the programme;
7. welcomes the decision to emphasise project quality, avoiding binding, geographically-determined advance allocations (while promoting fair and balanced distribution between projects), and supports the attempt to simplify the programme regulation. The Committee however warns of the risk of relegating too many aspects to second-level delegated acts and, in this regard, demands that the levels of co-financing of the local and regional authorities are not decreased in future calls for proposals;
8. considers it essential to enhance the LIFE programme by ensuring that successful projects can be replicated, and using it as a catalyst to attract further funding (private and public, starting with the European Regional Development Fund). It calls on the Commission to put in place appropriate arrangements for information, dissemination and technical assistance in order to encourage and support participation by local and regional authorities in the programme. To this end, it also recommends promoting networking schemes between the national contact points, in order to facilitate exchange of best practices and transnational cooperation;
9. underlines the focus and importance of the Natura 2000 network for the LIFE programme and considers that the support to this network has to remain central for the sub-programme 'Nature and biodiversity';
10. understands and accepts the need to facilitate the mobilisation of private capital, not least for environmental investment, but urges the Commission to provide further clarification on the 'blending operations' and on the results of the pilot projects funded through financial instruments under the 2014-2020 LIFE programme.

Brussels, 9 October 2018.

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

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Connecting Europe Facility

(2018/C 461/15)

Rapporteur-general: Isabelle BOUDINEAU (FR/PES), Vice-president of the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Regional Council

Reference document: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014

COM(2018) 438 final

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1316/2013 with regard to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union

COM(2018) 568 final

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014

(COM(2018) 438 final) — Part 1

Amendment 1

Recital 15

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
In its Communication 'A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions' ⁽¹⁾ , the Commission highlighted the outermost regions' specific transport needs and the necessity to provide Union funding to match these needs, including through the Programme.	In its Communication 'A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions' ⁽¹⁾ , the Commission highlighted the outermost regions' specific transport, energy and digital needs. It stresses, in relation to transport , the necessity to provide Union funding to match these needs, including through the Programme.
⁽¹⁾ COM(2017) 623	⁽¹⁾ COM(2017) 623

Reason

In its Communication on the outermost regions (ORs) the Commission recognises the potential that these regions have in the energy and digital sectors, but they suffer from a number of constraints that require support if they are to be overcome.

Amendment 2

Recital 22

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Communication on ‘Connectivity for a Competitive Digital Single Market — Towards a European Gigabit Society’ ⁽¹⁾ (the Gigabit Society Strategy) sets out strategic objectives for 2025, in view of optimising investment in digital connectivity infrastructure. Directive (EU) 2018/XXX (European Electronic Communications Code) aims, inter alia, at creating a regulatory environment which incentivises private investments in digital connectivity networks. It is nevertheless clear that network deployments will remain commercially non-viable in many areas throughout the Union, due to various factors such as remoteness and territorial or geographical specificities, low population density, various socioeconomic factors. The Programme should therefore be adjusted to contribute to the achievement of these strategic objectives set out in the Gigabit Society Strategy, complementing the support provided for the deployment of very high capacity networks by other programmes, in particular the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund and the InvestEU fund.</p> <p>⁽¹⁾ COM(2016) 587</p>	<p>The Communication on ‘Connectivity for a Competitive Digital Single Market — Towards a European Gigabit Society’ ⁽¹⁾ (the Gigabit Society Strategy) sets out strategic objectives for 2025, in view of optimising investment in digital connectivity infrastructure.</p> <p>Directive (EU) 2018/XXX (European Electronic Communications Code) aims, inter alia, at creating a regulatory environment which incentivises private investments in digital connectivity networks. It is nevertheless clear that network deployments will remain commercially non-viable in many areas throughout the Union, due to various factors such as remoteness and territorial or geographical specificities, as is the case with the outermost regions, low population density, various socioeconomic factors. The Programme should therefore be adjusted to contribute to the achievement of these strategic objectives set out in the Gigabit Society Strategy, complementing the support provided for the deployment of very high capacity networks by other programmes, in particular the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund and the InvestEU fund.</p> <p>⁽¹⁾ COM(2016) 587</p>

Reason

The outermost regions are a typical example of this situation. As recognised in Article 349 TFEU, they face a set of constraints (such as remoteness, insularity, small size, landscape and climate) which, due to their permanent and cumulative nature, hinder their development.

Amendment 3

Recital 28

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The deployment of backbone electronic communications networks, including with submarine cables connecting European territories to third countries on other continents or connecting European islands or overseas territories to the mainland, is needed in order to provide necessary redundancy for such vital infrastructure, and to increase the capacity and resilience of the Union’s digital networks. However, such projects are often commercially non-viable without public support.</p>	<p>The deployment of backbone electronic communications networks, including with submarine cables connecting European territories to third countries on other continents or connecting European islands or the outermost regions to the mainland, is needed in order to provide necessary redundancy for such vital infrastructure, and to increase the capacity and resilience of the Union’s digital networks. However, such projects are often commercially non-viable without public support.</p>

Reason

The specific context of the outermost regions (ORs), isolated from the European continent but close to other continents, makes this problem even more acute.

Amendment 4

Article 2(h)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(h) ‘cross-border project in the field of renewable energy’ means a project selected or eligible to be selected under a cooperation agreement or any other kind of arrangements between Member States or arrangements between Member States and third countries as defined in Articles 6, 7, 9 or 11 of Directive 2009/82/EC in the planning or deployment of renewable energy, in accordance with the criteria set out in Part IV of the Annex to this Regulation;	(h) ‘cross-border project in the field of renewable energy’ means a project selected or eligible to be selected under an EGTC , a cooperation agreement or any other kind of arrangements between Member States, between local and regional authorities or between Member States and third countries as defined in Articles 6, 7, 9 or 11 of Directive 2009/82/EC in the planning or deployment of renewable energy, in accordance with the criteria set out in Part IV of the Annex to this Regulation;

Reason

The use of EGTCs is to be encouraged in the development of cross-border projects. Furthermore, some projects are financed exclusively by local and regional authorities, which means that the latter also have to be proficient in submitting applications for EU funding.

Amendment 5

Article 3(2)(a)(i)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
i) to contribute to the development of projects of common interest relating to efficient and interconnected networks and infrastructure for smart, sustainable, inclusive, safe and secure mobility;	i) to contribute to the development of strategic projects of common interest relating to efficient and interconnected networks and infrastructure supporting smart, sustainable, inclusive, safe and secure mobility and strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion in the Union; in particular prioritising the implementation and finalisation of projects and works on the main corridors and major axes listed in the annex to the regulation;

Amendment 6

Article 3(2)(a), (b) and (c)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Programme has the following specific objectives:</p> <p>(a) In the transport sector:</p> <p>i) to contribute to the development of projects of common interest relating to efficient and interconnected networks and infrastructure for smart, sustainable, inclusive, safe and secure mobility;</p> <p>ii) to adapt the TEN-T networks to military mobility needs;</p> <p>(b) In the energy sector, to contribute to the development of projects of common interest relating to further integration of the internal energy market, interoperability of networks across borders and sectors, facilitating decarbonisation and ensuring security of supply, and to facilitate cross-border cooperation in the area of renewable energy;</p> <p>(c) In the digital sector, to contribute to the deployment of very high capacity digital networks and 5G systems, to the increased resilience and capacity of digital backbone networks on EU territories by linking them to neighbouring territories, as well to the digitalisation of transport and energy networks.</p>	<p>The Programme has the following specific objectives:</p> <p>(a) In the transport sector:</p> <p>i) to contribute to the development of projects of common interest relating to efficient and interconnected networks and infrastructure for smart, sustainable, inclusive, safe and secure mobility;</p> <p>ii) to adapt the TEN-T networks to military mobility needs <i>to ensure civilian-military dual-use of some strategic transport infrastructure by implementing and completing improvements to interoperable border connections with solutions to enable and facilitate the modal transfer of goods and passengers to increase the interoperability of networks and corridors;</i></p> <p><i>iii) to improve accessibility for the outermost regions, the mobility of their people and the transport of goods;</i></p> <p>(b) In the energy sector, to contribute to the development of projects of common interest relating to further integration of the internal energy market, interoperability of networks across borders and sectors, facilitating decarbonisation and ensuring security of supply, and to facilitate cross-border <i>and inter-regional cooperation as well as</i> cooperation <i>between outermost regions,</i> in the area of renewable energy;</p> <p>(c) In the digital sector, to contribute to the deployment of very high capacity digital networks and 5G systems, to the increased resilience and capacities of digital backbone networks on EU territories, to linking them to neighbouring territories <i>and to the outermost regions, as well as to establishing high-speed broadband systems in the outermost regions and</i> to the digitalisation of transport and energy networks.</p>

Reason

Article 3(2) should include a reference to the specific case of the ORs, similar to the one which appears in Article 10 — General Priorities of the current Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013, on the guidelines for developing TEN-T.

Amendment 7

Article 4(8)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>8. As regards the amounts transferred from the Cohesion Fund, 30 % of these amounts shall be made available immediately to all Member States eligible for funding from the Cohesion Fund to finance transport infrastructure projects in accordance with this Regulation, with priority to cross-border and missing links. Until 31 December 2023, the selection of projects eligible for financing shall respect the national allocations under the Cohesion Fund with regard to 70 % of the resources transferred. As of 1 January 2024, resources transferred to the Programme which have not been committed to a transport infrastructure project shall be made available to all Member States eligible for funding from the Cohesion Fund to finance transport infrastructure projects in accordance with this Regulation.</p>	<p>8. As regards the amounts transferred from the Cohesion Fund, until 31 December 2023, the selection of projects eligible for financing shall respect the national allocations under the Cohesion Fund. As of 1 January 2024, resources transferred to the Programme which have not been committed to a transport infrastructure project shall be made available to all Member States eligible for funding from the Cohesion Fund to finance transport infrastructure projects in accordance with this Regulation, with priority to cross-border and missing links and projects in the outermost regions. For all funds transferred from the Cohesion Fund, national quotas are taken into account in the use by Member States.</p>

Reason

Resources transferred from the Cohesion Fund are a crucial part of the CEF. However, given the significant reduction in Cohesion Fund appropriations, the towns and regions of beneficiary Member States could not cope with the risk of further budget cuts. It is however necessary that the entire budget be used up at the end of the programming period.

Amendment 8

Article 4(9)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>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 [point (a) of Article 62 (1)] of the Financial Regulation or indirectly in accordance with point (c) of that Article. Where possible those resources shall be used for the benefit of the Member State concerned.</p>	<p>Resources allocated to Member States under shared management and transferable in accordance with Article 21 of Regulation (EU) XX (... Common Provisions Regulation) may, at the request of the management authority, and having consulted the regional/local authorities, be transferred to the Programme. The Commission shall implement those resources directly in accordance with point (a) of Article 62(1) of the Financial Regulation or indirectly in accordance with paragraph 1(c) of that Article. Those resources shall be used for the benefit of the geographical area corresponding to the managing authority concerned.</p>

Reason

Resources transferred to the Programme should be used by the MA that opts to carry out a transfer. This approach will enable the allocation for specific areas to be retained, and will also help to better steer allocations, in line with the current needs of regions and Member States.

Amendment 9

New article after Article 5

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<p><i>Adapting TEN-T networks to military mobility</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. The Connecting Europe Facility shall contribute to developing a priority network of transport infrastructure adapted to civilian-military dual-use.</i> <i>2. Projects supported under this objective shall be located throughout the TEN-T network.</i> <i>3. Civilian-military dual-use infrastructure must comply with TEN-T and military technical specifications and meet a real need, whether existing or potential.</i> <i>4. Infrastructure that benefits from funding under this objective cannot be limited to military use except under exceptional circumstances and for a limited period, and ensuring that the security of persons, goods, services and the infrastructure itself is maintained at all times.</i> <i>5. Actions adapting infrastructure to civilian-military dual-use shall only be supported under this objective.</i> <i>6. The Commission shall, by 31 December 2019, adopt delegated acts setting out the necessary technical specifications for civilian-military dual-use defined by the Council, a list of priority projects that may benefit from funding under this objective and the eligibility and selection rules. The Commission shall ensure that the geographical distribution of this infrastructure is coherent and balanced.</i>

Reason

In view of the envelope set aside for this objective, the Regulation must specify the rules here.

Amendment 10

Article 7(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Cross-border projects in the field of renewable energy shall involve at least two Member States and shall be included in a cooperation agreement or any other kind of arrangement between Member States or arrangements between Member States and third countries as set out in Articles 6, 7, 9 or 11 of Directive 2009/28/EC. These projects shall be identified in accordance with the criteria and procedure laid down in Part IV of the Annex to this Regulation.	Cross-border projects in the field of renewable energy shall involve at least two Member States or an EGTC or two outermost regions , and shall be included in a cooperation agreement or any other kind of arrangement between Member States, between local and regional and outermost regions' authorities , or between Member States and third countries as set out in Articles 6, 7, 9 or 11 of Directive 2009/28/EC. These projects shall be identified in accordance with the criteria and procedure laid down in Part IV of the Annex to this Regulation.

Amendment 11

Article 8(3)(d)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
3. Without prejudice to the award criteria laid down in Article 13, priority for funding shall be determined taking into account the following criteria:	3. Without prejudice to the award criteria laid down in Article 13, priority for funding shall be determined taking into account the following criteria:
(...)	(...)
(d) projects aiming at the deployment of cross-border backbone networks linking the Union to third countries and reinforcing links within the Union territory, including with submarine cables, shall be prioritised according to the extent to which they significantly contribute to increasing the resilience and capacity of electronic communications networks in Union territory;	(d) projects aiming at the deployment of cross-border backbone networks linking the Union to third countries and reinforcing links within the Union territory, particularly mainland Europe with the outermost regions , including with submarine cables, shall be prioritised according to the extent to which they significantly contribute to increasing the resilience and capacity of electronic communications networks in Union territory;
(...)	(...)

Reason

The distance between the outermost regions and mainland Europe and their proximity to neighbouring third countries makes establishing networks essential, particularly submarine cables, in order to reduce their isolation.

Amendment 12

Article 9(2)(a)(i)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
i) actions implementing the core network in accordance with Chapter III of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, including actions relating to urban nodes, maritime ports, inland ports and rail-road terminals of the core network as defined at Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013. Actions implementing the core network may include related elements located on the comprehensive network when necessary to optimize the investment and according to modalities specified in the work programmes referred to in Article 19 of this Regulation;	i) actions implementing and completing the core network in accordance with Chapter III of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, including actions relating to urban nodes, maritime ports, inland ports, airports and intermodal rail-road terminals of the core network and addressing bottlenecks and missing links as defined at Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013. Actions implementing the core network may include related elements located on the comprehensive network when necessary to optimize the investment and according to modalities specified in the work programmes referred to in Article 19 of this Regulation promoting inter-modality ;

Amendment 13

Article 9(2)(a)(ii)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
ii) actions implementing cross-border links of the comprehensive network in accordance with Chapter II of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, notably the sections listed in Part III of the Annex to this Regulation;	ii) actions developing and improving cross-border links of the comprehensive network in accordance with Chapter II of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, notably the sections listed in Part III of the Annex to this Regulation;

Amendment 14

Article 9(2)(a)(iii)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
iii) actions implementing sections of the comprehensive network located in outermost regions in accordance with Chapter II of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, including actions relating to the relevant urban nodes, maritime ports, inland ports and rail-road terminals of the comprehensive network as defined at Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013;	iii) actions implementing sections of the comprehensive network located in geographically detached regions in accordance with Chapter II of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, including actions relating to the relevant urban nodes, maritime ports, inland ports, airports and rail-road terminals of the comprehensive network as defined at Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013;

Reason

We consider that the problems of islands require differentiated treatment on the part of the EU institutions that is comparable to that of the outermost regions, the main problem being not so much distance as territorial discontinuity.

Airports are an essential tool for developing outermost regions, and are sometimes the most efficient way of integrating these regions into the EU's transport networks.

Amendment 15

Article 9(2) and (4)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
2. In the transport sector, the following actions shall be eligible to receive Union financial assistance under this Regulation:	2. In the transport sector, the following actions shall be eligible to receive Union financial assistance under this Regulation:
(a) Actions relating to efficient and interconnected networks:	(a) Actions relating to efficient and interconnected networks:
(...)	(...)
iii) actions implementing sections of the comprehensive network located in outermost regions in accordance with Chapter II of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, including actions relating to the relevant urban nodes, maritime ports, inland ports and rail-road terminals of the comprehensive network as defined at Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013;	iii) actions implementing sections of the comprehensive network located in outermost regions in accordance with Chapter II of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, including actions relating to the relevant urban nodes, airports , maritime ports, inland ports and rail terminals of the comprehensive network as defined at Annex II to Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 and actions within outermost regions ;
(...)	(...)
(b) Actions relating to smart, sustainable, inclusive, safe and secure mobility:	(b) Actions relating to smart, sustainable, inclusive, safe and secure mobility:
(...)	(...)
ix) actions improving transport infrastructure accessibility and availability for security and civil protection purposes.	ix) actions improving transport infrastructure accessibility and availability for security and civil protection purposes.
(...)	x) actions to improve the accessibility of the outermost regions, the mobility of their people and the transport of goods.
(...)	(...)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
4. In the digital sector, the following actions shall be eligible to receive Union financial assistance under this Regulation:	4. In the digital sector, the following actions shall be eligible to receive Union financial assistance under this Regulation:
(...)	(...)
(d) actions supporting deployment of backbone networks including with submarine cables, across Member States and between the Union and third countries;	(d) actions supporting deployment of backbone networks including with submarine cables, between the Member States, between the Member States and the outermost regions and between the Union and third countries;
(...)	(...)

Amendment 16

Article 9(4)(b)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
4. In the digital sector, the following actions shall be eligible to receive Union financial assistance under this Regulation:	4. In the digital sector, the following actions shall be eligible to receive Union financial assistance under this Regulation:
(a) actions supporting Gigabit connectivity of socio-economic drivers;	(a) actions supporting Gigabit connectivity of socio-economic drivers;
(b) actions supporting the provision of very high-quality local wireless connectivity in local communities that is free of charge and without discriminatory conditions;	(b) actions supporting the provision of very high-quality local wireless connectivity in local communities that is free of charge and without discriminatory conditions especially in the countryside (the concept of smart villages) ;
(c) actions implementing uninterrupted coverage with 5G systems of all major terrestrial transport paths, including the trans-European transport networks;	(c) actions implementing uninterrupted coverage with 5G systems of all major terrestrial transport paths, including the trans-European transport networks;
(d) actions supporting deployment of backbone networks including with submarine cables, across Member States and between the Union and third countries;	(d) actions supporting deployment of backbone networks including with submarine cables, across Member States and between the Union and third countries;
(e) actions supporting access of European households to very high capacity networks;	(e) actions supporting access of European households to very high capacity networks;

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(f) actions implementing digital connectivity infrastructure requirements related to cross-border projects in the areas of transport or energy and/or supporting operational digital platforms directly associated to transport or energy infrastructures.	(f) actions implementing digital connectivity infrastructure requirements related to cross-border projects in the areas of transport or energy and/or supporting operational digital platforms directly associated to transport or energy infrastructures.
An indicative list of eligible projects in the digital sector is provided for in Part V of the Annex.	An indicative list of eligible projects in the digital sector is provided for in Part V of the Annex.

Amendment 17

Article 10(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Within each of the transport, energy or digital sectors, actions eligible in accordance with Article 9 may include ancillary elements, which may not relate to eligible actions as provided for in Article 9(2), (3) or (4) respectively, provided that they comply with all of the following requirements:	Within each of the transport, energy or digital sectors, actions eligible in accordance with Article 9 may include ancillary elements, whether or not they relate to eligible actions as provided for in Article 9(2), (3) or (4) respectively, provided that they comply with all of the following requirements:

Reason

It is worth facilitating synergies. Furthermore, the mechanism proposed in paragraph 2 should allow for actions eligible under the objective of another sector of the CEF to be included in the call for proposals in a specific sector. Calls for specific proposals for mixed projects will support projects with a sectoral mix of over 20 %-80 %.

Amendment 18

Article 11(2)(b)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(b) legal entities established in a third country associated to the Programme;	(b) legal entities established in a third country associated to the Programme for actions related to a project concerning that third country ;

Reason

The CEF should not provide a benefit to non-European enterprises for activities carried out in the EU.

Amendment 19

Article 11(5)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>5. The work programmes referred to in Article 19 can stipulate that only proposals submitted by one or more Member States or, with the agreement of the Member States concerned, by international organisations, joint undertakings, or public or private undertakings or bodies, are eligible.</p>	

Reason

Maintaining the approval procedure by the Member States would run counter to the administrative simplification supported by the European Committee of the Regions.

Amendment 20

Article 12

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Grants under the Programme shall be awarded and managed in accordance with Title [VIII] of the Financial Regulation.</p>	<p>Grants under the Programme shall be awarded and managed in accordance with Title [VIII] of the Financial Regulation.</p> <p>1. The project selection process shall comprise two stages:</p> <p>(a) assessment of project eligibility on the basis of a simplified initial application;</p> <p>(b) submission, assessment and selection of the project.</p> <p>2. The Commission shall publish calls for proposals at least one month prior to the opening date. Project proposers shall have at least one month in which to submit the initial application. The European Commission shall assess the eligibility of the initial applications within one month. Project proposers shall then have at least three months in which to submit the complete application.</p>

Reason

CEF implementation needs to be simplified to avoid a situation where project proposers submit lengthy and costly complete applications when they are not eligible under the call for proposals. Moreover, project proposers need sufficient time to take on a call for proposals and prepare a full application.

Amendment 21

Article 13(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The award criteria shall be defined in the work programmes referred to in Article 19 and in the calls for proposals taking into account, to the extent applicable, the following elements:</p> <p>(a) economic, social and environmental impact (benefits and costs);</p> <p>(b) innovation, safety, interoperability and accessibility aspects;</p> <p>(c) cross-border dimension;</p> <p>(d) synergies between the transport, energy and digital sectors;</p> <p>(e) maturity of the action in the project development;</p> <p>(f) soundness of the implementation plan proposed;</p> <p>(g) catalytic effect of Union financial assistance on investment;</p> <p>(h) need to overcome financial obstacles such as insufficient commercial viability or the lack of market finance;</p> <p>(i) consistency with Union and national energy and climate plans.</p>	<p>The award criteria shall be defined in the work programmes referred to in Article 19 and in the calls for proposals taking into account, to the extent applicable, the following elements:</p> <p>(a) economic, social and environmental impact (benefits and costs);</p> <p>(b) innovation, safety, interoperability, multimodality and accessibility aspects;</p> <p>(c) cross-border dimension or improving accessibility to the island and outermost regions;</p> <p>(d) European added value;</p> <p>(e) their contribution to addressing bottlenecks and completing missing sections;</p> <p>(f) synergies between the transport, energy and digital sectors;</p> <p>(g) maturity of the action in the project development; and the degree of commitment to completing it;</p> <p>(h) the social impact;</p> <p>(i) soundness of the implementation plan proposed;</p> <p>(j) catalytic effect of Union financial assistance on investment;</p> <p>(k) need to overcome financial obstacles such as insufficient commercial viability or the lack of market finance;</p> <p>(l) consistency with Union and national energy and climate plans.</p>

Amendment 22

Article 14(2)(a)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
for works relating to the specific objectives referred to in Article 3(2)(a), the amount of Union financial assistance shall not exceed 30 % of the total eligible cost. The co-financing rates may be increased to a maximum of 50 % for actions relating to cross-border links under the conditions specified in point (c) of this paragraph, for actions supporting telematic applications systems, for actions supporting new technologies and innovation, for actions supporting improvements of infrastructure safety in line with relevant Union legislation and for actions located in outermost regions;	for works relating to the specific objectives referred to in Article 3(2)(a), the amount of Union financial assistance shall not exceed 30 % of the total eligible cost. The co-financing rates may be increased to a maximum of 50 % for actions relating to cross-border links under the conditions specified in point (c) of this paragraph, for actions relating to bottlenecks and missing links in the core network, for actions supporting motorways of the sea, for actions supporting maritime and river connections in the core and comprehensive networks, including actions in ports and links to the hinterland, for urban nodes and multi-modal and 'last mile' platforms and connections, for actions supporting telematic applications systems, for actions supporting new technologies and innovation, for actions supporting improvements of infrastructure safety in line with relevant Union legislation and for actions located in island and outermost regions;

Reason

This amendment is in keeping with the Commission's proposal to add maritime links to the core network corridors. Furthermore, maritime transport requires substantial support if the EU is to meet its environment and climate targets.

Amendment 23

Article 14(5)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The maximum co-funding rate applicable to actions selected under cross-sectoral work programmes referred to in Article 10 shall be the highest maximum co-funding rate applicable to the sectors concerned.	The maximum co-funding rate applicable to actions selected under cross-sectoral work programmes referred to in Article 10 shall be the highest maximum co-funding rate applicable to the sectors concerned increased by 10 %. Actions supported under the mechanism outlined in Article 10(2) shall benefit from the co-financing rate corresponding to the main sector, including ancillary costs.

Reason

Synergies should be encouraged, including financially. In the interest of simplification, the mechanism outlined in Article 10(2) should benefit from a single co-financing rate.

Amendment 24

Article 15, point (a)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The following cost-eligibility criteria shall apply, in addition to the criteria set out in Article [186] of the Financial Regulation:</p> <p>(a) only expenditure incurred in Member States may be eligible, except where the project of common interest or cross-border projects in the field of renewable energy involves the territory of one or more third countries as referred to in Article 5 or Article 11 paragraph 4 of this Regulation or international waters and where the action is indispensable to the achievement of the objectives of the project concerned;</p>	<p>The following cost-eligibility criteria shall apply, in addition to the criteria set out in Article [186] of the Financial Regulation:</p> <p>(a) only expenditure incurred in Member States may be eligible, except where the project of common interest or cross-border projects in the field of renewable energy involves the territory of one or more third countries as referred to in Article 5 or Article 11 paragraph 4 of this Regulation, one or more outermost regions or international waters and where the action is indispensable to the achievement of the objectives of the project concerned;</p>

Reason

Article 15(a) should include a reference to the specific situation of the outermost regions.

Amendment 25

Article 16(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>2. The use of grants referred to in paragraph 1 may be implemented through dedicated calls for proposals.</p>	<p>2. The use of grants referred to in paragraph 1 shall be implemented in all calls for proposals and through dedicated calls for proposals and limited to 10 % of the CEF's overall budget.</p>

Reason

Blending operations should be encouraged and made possible should project proposers wish to make use of them. Grants should continue to be the CEF's principal form of funding, however.

Amendment 26

Article 17(2) and new (3)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<p>3. Any funding recovered under this article shall be reused in other CEF work programmes; this funding will be allocated taking into account the agreed national envelopes.</p>

Reason

Funds allocated to the CEF under the MFF must be kept in the CEF. Taking into account agreed national envelopes when distributing funds provides an incentive for the Member States and those carrying out individual projects not to needlessly impede decisions on future projects for fear of losing financial support. This measure will also enable a more balanced geographical distribution of these funds across the EU Member States.

Amendment 27

Article 19

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>1. The Programme shall be implemented by work programmes referred to in Article 110 of the Financial Regulation. Work programmes shall set out, where applicable, the overall amount reserved for blending operations.</p> <p>2. The work programmes shall be adopted by the Commission by means of an implementing act. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 22 of this Regulation.</p>	<p>1. The Programme shall be implemented by work programmes referred to in Article 110 of the Financial Regulation. Work programmes shall set out, where applicable, the overall amount reserved for blending operations.</p> <p>2. <i>The European Commission shall present an indicative timetable for the work programmes containing the allocations and priorities of these programmes for the overall programming.</i></p> <p>3. The work programmes shall be adopted by the Commission by means of an implementing act. Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the examination procedure referred to in Article 22 of this Regulation.</p>

Reason

Funds allocated to the CES under the MFF must be kept in the CEF.

Amendment 28

Article 23

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 24 of this Regulation:</p> <p>(a) to amend Part I of the Annex regarding the indicators and to establish a monitoring and evaluation framework;</p> <p>(b) to amend Part II of the Annex regarding the indicative percentages of budgetary resources allocated to the specific objective set out in Article 3(a)(i);</p> <p>(c) to amend Part III of the Annex regarding the definition of the transport core network corridors and pre-identified sections; and pre-identified sections on the comprehensive network;</p> <p>(d) to amend Part IV of the Annex regarding the identification of cross-border projects in the field of renewable energy;</p>	<p>The Commission shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 24 of this Regulation:</p> <p>(a) to amend Part I of the Annex regarding the indicators and to establish a monitoring and evaluation framework;</p> <p>(b) to amend Part II of the Annex regarding the indicative percentages of budgetary resources allocated to the specific objective set out in Article 3(a)(i);</p> <p>(c) to amend Part III of the Annex regarding the definition of the transport core network corridors and pre-identified sections; pre-identified sections on the comprehensive network;</p> <p>(d) to amend Part IV of the Annex regarding the identification of cross-border projects in the field of renewable energy;</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(e) to amend Part V of the Annex regarding the identification of digital connectivity projects of common interest.	(e) <i>to modify the technical specifications relating to civilian-military dual-use infrastructure defined by the Council and to define or modify the list of priority projects for adaptation to dual-purpose civil and military use;</i> (f) to amend Part V of the Annex regarding the identification of digital connectivity projects of common interest.

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014

(COM(2018) 438 final) — Part 2

Amendment 29

Annex, Part III, Table 1

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Core network corridor 'Atlantic' Alignment Gijón — León — Valladolid A Coruña — Vigo — Orense — León Zaragoza — Pamplona/Logroño — Bilbao Tenerife/Gran Canaria — Huelva/Sanlúcar de Barrameda — Sevilla — Córdoba Algeciras — Bobadilla — Madrid Sines/Lisboa — Madrid — Valladolid Lisboa — Aveiro — Leixões/Porto — Douro Aveiro — Valladolid — Vitoria-Gasteiz — Bergara — Bilbao/Bordeaux — Tours — Paris — Le Havre/Metz — Mannheim/Strasbourg Saint Nazaire — Nantes — Tours	Core network corridor 'Atlantic' Alignment Gijón — León — Palencia –Valladolid A Coruña — Vigo — Orense — Ponferrada — Astorga — León — Palencia-Venta de Baños Zaragoza — Pamplona/Logroño — Bilbao (Y vasca) Bordeaux — Dax — Vitoria/Gasteiz Bordeaux — Toulouse Tenerife/Gran Canaria — Huelva/Sanlúcar de Barrameda — Sevilla — Córdoba Algeciras — Bobadilla — Madrid Sines/Lisboa — Madrid — Valladolid Lisboa — Aveiro — Leixões/Porto — Douro Aveiro — Valladolid — Vitoria-Gasteiz — Bergara — Bilbao/Bordeaux– Tours — Paris — Le Havre/Metz — Mannheim/Strasbourg Shannon Foynes — Dublin — Cork — Le Havre — Rouen — Paris Dublin — Cork — Saint Nazaire — Nantes — Tours

Reason

The UK's withdrawal from the EU will have a huge number of consequences, including a significant impact on integrating Ireland into the TEN-T core network corridors, as it depends entirely on links via the UK. Sea links to ports on the Atlantic core network corridor and some ports on the comprehensive network would also have to be integrated into the map of corridors. Integrating a link between the Mediterranean corridor and the Atlantic corridor in the priority corridors of the core network will heighten the socioeconomic performance of these two corridors by upgrading infrastructure and increasing its use. It would also provide an opportunity to link the Mediterranean and Atlantic ports along a Bordeaux-Toulouse-Narbonne axis. In addition, the proposal is part of the major rail project in south-west France to introduce two high-speed trains sharing a common section from Bordeaux to Toulouse and from Bordeaux to Spain.

The Zaragoza-Pamplona-Y vasca line also makes sense, as it would link the Atlantic and Mediterranean corridors, giving access to the port of Bilbao. France should reactivate the Bordeaux-Dax-Vitoria connection, both for passengers and to remove freight bottlenecks (Irun-Hendaye, Bordeaux variant).

And finally, need to include those possible enclaves and logistic platforms of high strategic interest or future potential which are located in peripheral regions which still have many basic infrastructure needs to improve their accessibility and connectivity, particularly with ports.

Amendment 30

Annex, Part III, Table 3

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Core network corridor 'Mediterranean'	Core network corridor 'Mediterranean'
Alignment	Alignment
Algeciras — Bobadilla — Madrid — Zaragoza — Tarragona	Algeciras — Bobadilla — Madrid — Zaragoza — Sagunto /Tarragona
	Madrid — Albacete — Valencia
Sevilla — Bobadilla — Murcia	Sevilla — Bobadilla — Almería — Murcia
Cartagena — Murcia — Valencia — Tarragona/Palma de Mallorca — Barcelona	Cartagena — Murcia — Valencia — Tarragona/Palma de Mallorca — Barcelona
Tarragona — Barcelona — Perpignan — Marseille — Genova/Lyon — Torino — Novara — Milano — Bologna/Verona — Padova — Venezia — Ravenna/Trieste/Koper — Ljubljana — Budapest	Tarragona/ Palma de Mallorca — Barcelona — Perpignan — Marseille — Genova/Lyon — Torino — Novara — Milano — Bologna/Verona — Padova — Venezia — Ravenna/Trieste/Koper — Ljubljana — Budapest
	Alcúdia — Ciudadela — Toulon — Ajaccio — Bastia — Porto Torres — Cagliari — Palermo
	Toulouse — Narbonne
Ljubljana/Rijeka — Zagreb — Budapest — UA border	Ljubljana/Rijeka — Zagreb — Budapest — UA border

Reason

Integrating a link between the priority corridors of the core network between the Mediterranean and Atlantic corridors will enhance the socioeconomic performance of these two corridors by upgrading infrastructure and increasing its use. It would also provide an opportunity to link the Mediterranean and Atlantic ports along a Bordeaux-Toulouse-Narbonne axis.

Amendment 31

Annex, Part III, Table 4

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Core network corridor 'North Sea — Mediterranean'	Core network corridor 'North Sea — Mediterranean'
Alignment	Alignment
Belfast — Dublin — Shannon Foynes/Cork	Belfast — Dublin — Shannon Foynes/Cork
	Dublin — Cork — Calais — Zeebrugge — Antwerpen — Rotterdam
	Shannon Foynes — Dublin — Rosslare — Waterford — Cork — Brest — Roscoff — Cherbourg — Caen — Le Havre — Rouen — Paris
Glasgow/Edinburgh — Liverpool/Manchester — Birmingham	Glasgow/Edinburgh — Liverpool/Manchester — Birmingham
Birmingham — Felixstowe/London/Southampton	Birmingham — Felixstowe/London/Southampton
London — Lille — Brussel/Bruxelles	London — Lille — Brussel/Bruxelles
Amsterdam — Rotterdam — Antwerpen — Brussel/Bruxelles — Luxembourg	Amsterdam — Rotterdam — Antwerpen — Brussel/Bruxelles — Luxembourg
Luxembourg — Metz — Dijon — Macon — Lyon — Marseille	Luxembourg — Metz — Dijon — Macon — Lyon — Marseille
Luxembourg — Metz — Strasbourg — Basel	Luxembourg — Metz — Strasbourg — Basel
Antwerpen/Zeebrugge — Gent — Dunkerque/Lille — Paris	Antwerpen/Zeebrugge — Gent — Dunkerque/Lille — Paris

Reason

This amendment reflects the Commission's proposal to amend the CEF Regulation in the event of the UK withdrawing from the EU without an agreement and includes ports on the comprehensive and core networks.

Amendment 32

Annex, Part III, Table 9

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Core network corridor 'Scandinavian — Mediterranean'	Core network corridor 'Scandinavian — Mediterranean'
Alignment	Alignment
RU border — Hamina/Kotka — Helsinki — Turku/Naantali — Stockholm — Örebro — Malmö	RU border — Hamina/Kotka — Helsinki — Turku/Naantali — Stockholm — Örebro — Malmö
Narvik/Oulu — Luleå — Umeå — Stockholm	Narvik/Oulu — Luleå — Umeå — Gävle — Stockholm — Örebro
	Stockholm — Örebro — Oslo
Oslo — Goteburg — Malmö — Trelleborg	Oslo — Goteburg — Malmö — Trelleborg

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Malmö — København — Fredericia — Aarhus — Aalborg — Hirtshals/Frederikshavn	Malmö — København — Fredericia — Aarhus — Aalborg — Hirtshals/Frederikshavn
København — Kolding/Lübeck — Hamburg — Hannover	København — Kolding/Lübeck — Hamburg — Hannover
Bremerhaven — Bremen — Hannover — Nürnberg	Bremerhaven — Bremen — Hannover — Nürnberg
Rostock — Berlin — Leipzig — München	Rostock — Berlin — Leipzig — München
Nürnberg — München — Innsbruck — Verona — Bologna — Ancona/Firenze	Nürnberg — München — Innsbruck — Verona — Bologna — Ancona/Firenze
Livorno/La Spezia — Firenze — Roma — Napoli — Bari — Taranto — Valletta	Livorno/La Spezia — Firenze — Roma — Napoli — Bari — Taranto — Valletta

Amendment 33

Annex, Part III, 2. Pre-identified sections on the comprehensive network

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The cross-border sections of the comprehensive network referred to at Article 9(2)(a)(ii) of this Regulation include notably the following sections:	The cross-border sections of the comprehensive network referred to at Article 9(2)(a)(ii) of this Regulation and the existing cross-border rail links and missing links at internal EU borders include notably the following sections:

Reason

This addition enables links between the TEN corridors even if they are not officially part of the comprehensive network (e.g. missing links).

Amendment 34

Annex, Part V

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
1. Gigabit connectivity to socioeconomic drivers	1. Gigabit connectivity to socioeconomic drivers
(...)	(...)
— Gigabit Connectivity for education and research centres, in the context of the efforts to close digital divides and to innovate in education systems, to improve learning outcomes, enhance equity and improve efficiency.	— Gigabit Connectivity for education and research centres, in the context of the efforts to close digital divides and to innovate in education systems, to improve learning outcomes, enhance equity and improve efficiency.
	— Gigabit connectivity ensuring high-speed broadband connection systems within the outermost regions and between these regions and their respective Member States, in particular through the installation of redundant submarine cables.

Reason

It is important to ensure that actions for the development of digital connectivity in the outermost regions are prioritised.

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1316/2013 with regards to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union

(COM(2018) 568 final) — Part 1

Amendment 35

Recital 6

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<i>In order to avoid the North Sea — Mediterranean Core Network Corridor being separated into two distinct and unconnected parts and to ensure connectivity of Ireland with mainland Europe, the North Sea — Mediterranean Core Network Corridor should include maritime links between the Irish core ports and core ports of Belgium and the Netherlands.</i>	

Reason

A number of French ports (Le Havre, Dunkirk, Calais) are part of the core network and included in the Atlantic and North Sea — Mediterranean corridors. There is no reason to exclude them.

Amendment 36

Annex

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
In Part I of Annex I, point 2 ('Core network corridors'), in the section 'North Sea — Mediterranean', after the line 'Belfast — Baile Átha Cliath/Dublin — Corcaigh/Cork' the following line is inserted:	In Part I of Annex I, point 2 ('Core network corridors'), in the section 'North Sea — Mediterranean', after the line 'Belfast — Baile Átha Cliath/Dublin — Corcaigh/Cork' the following lines are inserted:
'Baile Átha Cliath/Dublin/Corcaigh/Cork — Zeebrugge/Antwerpen/Rotterdam'.	'Baile Átha Cliath/Dublin/Corcaigh/Cork — Calais/Dunkerque - Zeebrugge/Antwerpen/Rotterdam.
	Shannon Foynes — Dublin — Rosslare — Waterford — Cork — Brest — Roscoff — Cherbourg — Caen — Le Havre — Rouen — Paris'.
	In Part I of Annex I, point 2 ('Core network corridors'), in the section 'Atlantic', after the line 'Aveiro — Valladolid — Vitoria-Gasteiz — Bergara — Bilbao/Bordeaux — Tours — Paris — Le Havre/Metz — Mannheim/Strasbourg' the following line is inserted:
	'Shannon Foynes — Dublin — Cork — Le Havre — Rouen — Paris'
	In Part I of Annex I, point 2 ('Core network corridors'), in the section 'Atlantic', the line 'Saint Nazaire — Nantes — Tours' is amended as follows:
	'Dublin — Cork — Saint Nazaire — Nantes — Tours'

Reason

The UK's withdrawal from the EU will have many consequences, including a significant impact on integrating Ireland into the TEN-T core network corridors. Sea links to ports on the core network should be integrated into the map of corridors.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS****General recommendations**

1. reiterates that a European policy on safe, modern, sustainable and efficient transport, energy and telecommunications infrastructure provided by the trans-European networks (TENs) is essential to strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion of all EU regions, including peripheral, outermost and island as well as demographically challenged regions, contributes to the proper functioning of the internal market and is necessary in order to achieve the objectives of many other EU policies, including climate and environment policy;
2. points out that some of the CoR's observations regarding the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), which was introduced in 2013, in particular in its opinion 1531/2017 on the Future of CEF Transport, adopted on 10 October 2017, are still pertinent;
3. considers that the voice of the cities and regions, which are responsible for policies to manage and develop mobility and public transport in their areas, should be listened to carefully;
4. acknowledges that the Commission proposal complies with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. The proposal's chief objective is to complete the trans-European transport network and the EU is the level of governance best suited for this;
5. points out that, in 2017, 72 % of Europeans lived in urban areas, and access to safe, efficient and sustainable forms of urban transport is crucial for them. The CEF is able to support the transition and reduce congestion, pollution and traffic accidents. Linking up various forms of transport more effectively and ensuring that journeys in urban areas go smoothly is key for completing the core network by 2030 and the comprehensive network by 2050. Interconnecting all forms of urban transport must be prioritised;
6. notes that the EU has a considerable stock of outdated maritime and river infrastructure which needs to be modernised and developed. These two forms of transport are part of the solution to road congestion and the need to shift the sector away from fossil fuels;
7. recognises that transport accounts for almost 50 % of greenhouse gas emissions in Europe. It is the only sector that has been unable to reduce its emissions since 1990. Cities and regions are directly affected by the impact of climate change, atmospheric pollution and congestion. This means that ambitious and immediate action must be undertaken to decarbonise the transport sector;
8. reiterates that the CEF must be adapted to the EU's ambitious objectives in terms of transport infrastructure. In particular, the TEN-T Regulation establishes a 2030 deadline for completion of the core network; notes that the needs of all regions should be monitored closely and steps taken to ensure that they keep up with the infrastructure innovations;
9. suggests encouraging cross-border projects, including by making use of EGTCs or the mechanism for removing legal and administrative obstacles in a cross-border context, proposed by the Commission for 2021-2027. In particular, EGTCs should be eligible entities for all calls for CEF projects, without prejudice to the powers conferred upon them;
10. welcomes the Commission's proposal to renew and amend the Connecting Europe Facility;
11. welcomes the fact that the proposal takes account of the specific features of the outermost regions and the need to provide funding for transport through the CEF, which should also be extended to include energy and digital;
12. points out that adequate funding of the CEF will help to create new jobs, support growth and make the EU a world leader in the area of research and innovation and the decarbonisation of the economy;

13. welcomes the efforts made to simplify the rules and procedures. No project proposer should be forced to give up the idea of submitting an application for funding;
14. takes note of the Commission's proposal to introduce an objective adapting TEN-T infrastructure to civilian-military dual-use, but regrets that the proposal is not more detailed and proposes spelling out the rules of this objective;
15. calls for the CEF to pay closer attention to social, economic and territorial cohesion.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

*The President
of the European Committee of the Regions*

Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Rights and Values

(2018/C 461/16)

Rapporteur-general: François DECOSTER (FR/ALDE), Vice-president of Hauts-de-France Regional Council

Reference document: COM(2018) 383 final

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

Title

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Rights and Values programme	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Rights, Values <i>and Citizenship</i> programme

Reason

The title of the programme should be consistent with its objectives and measures. The section of the programme dealing with citizenship is of fundamental importance and this should therefore be added to the programme's title.

Amendment 2

Recital 4

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The Rights and Values programme (the 'Programme') should allow developing synergies to tackle the challenges that are common to the promotion and protection of values and to reach a critical dimension to have concrete results in the field. That should be achieved by building on the positive experience of the predecessor Programmes. This will enable to fully exploit the potential of synergies, to more effectively support the policy areas covered and to increase their potential to reach people. To be effective, the Programme should take into account the specific nature of the different policies, their different target groups and their particular needs through tailor-made approaches.	The Rights, Values and citizenship programme (the 'Programme') should allow developing synergies to tackle the challenges that are common to the promotion and protection of values and to reach a critical dimension to have concrete results in the field. That should be achieved by building on the positive experience of the predecessor Programmes and developing new innovative measures. This will enable to fully exploit the potential of synergies, to more effectively support the policy areas covered and to increase their potential to reach people. To be effective, the Programme should take into account the specific nature of the different policies, their different target groups and their particular needs through tailor-made approaches.

Reason

Reliance should not be placed entirely on existing measures, but new ones should also be developed, encouraging exchanges of best practice and information, as well as possible synergies. This could, for example, take the form of an exchange and mobility programme for local and regional elected representatives or the establishment of 'European Correspondents' in local and regional authorities in Europe.

Amendment 3

Recital 5

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
In order to bring the European Union closer to its citizens, a variety of actions and coordinated efforts are necessary. Bringing together citizens in town-twinning projects or networks of towns and supporting civil society organisations in the areas covered by the programme will contribute to increase citizens' engagement in society and ultimately their involvement in the democratic life of the Union. At the same time supporting activities promoting mutual understanding, diversity, dialogue and respect for others fosters a sense of belonging and a European identity, based on a shared understanding of European values, culture, history and heritage. The promotion of a greater sense of belonging to the Union and of Union values is particularly important amongst citizens of the EU outermost regions due to their remoteness and distance from continental Europe.	In order to bring the European Union closer to its citizens, a variety of actions and coordinated efforts are necessary. Bringing together citizens in town-twinning projects or networks of towns <i>or cross-border cooperation projects</i> and supporting civil society organisations <i>and local and regional authorities</i> in the areas covered by the programme, <i>as well as training and informing local and regional elected representatives acting as multipliers</i> , will contribute to increase citizens' engagement in society and ultimately their involvement in the democratic life of the Union. At the same time supporting activities promoting mutual understanding, diversity, dialogue and respect for others fosters a sense of belonging and a European identity, based on a shared understanding of European values, culture, history and heritage. The promotion of a greater sense of belonging to the Union and of Union values is particularly important amongst citizens of the EU outermost regions due to their remoteness and distance from continental Europe.

Reason

The Rights and Values programme should also take account of cross-border cooperation projects, as they contribute to a sense of mutual belonging, to European identity and to overcoming national differences. Local and regional authorities also have a leading role to play in boosting public involvement, and they must receive funding, particularly in connection with citizens' rights and citizens' participation. A programme to train and inform locally and regionally elected representatives would be an excellent tool to help LRAs to contribute in this sense.

Amendment 4

Recital 6

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Remembrance activities and critical reflection on Europe's historical memory are necessary to make citizens aware of the common history, as the foundation for a common future, moral purpose and shared values. The relevance of historical, cultural and intercultural aspects should also be taken into account, as well as the links between remembrance and the creation of a European identity and sense of belonging together.	Remembrance activities, critical reflection on and celebration of Europe's historical memory and common values are necessary to make citizens aware of the common history and values , as the foundation for a common future, and mutual trust , moral purpose and shared values. The relevance of historical, cultural and intercultural aspects and local and national events should also be taken into account, as well as the links between remembrance and the creation of a European identity and sense of belonging together.

Reason

Celebrations as well as remembrance are part of the foundation of a common future and a European identity which must be founded on mutual trust. This could, for example, take the form of the celebration of international days or more local events that can enhance the feeling of belonging to Europe.

Amendment 5

Recital 7

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Citizens should also be more aware of their rights deriving from citizenship of the Union, and should feel at ease about living, travelling, studying, working and volunteering in another Member State, and should feel able to enjoy and exercise all their citizenship rights, place their trust in equal access, full enforceability and protection of their rights without any discrimination, no matter where in the Union they happen to be. Civil society needs to be supported for the promotion, safeguarding and raising awareness of EU common values under Article 2 TEU and in contributing to the effective enjoyment of rights under Union law.	Citizens should also be more aware of their rights deriving from citizenship of the Union, and should feel at ease about living, travelling, studying, working and volunteering in another Member State, and should feel able to enjoy and exercise all their citizenship rights, place their trust in equal access, full enforceability and protection of their rights without any discrimination, no matter where in the Union they happen to be. Civil society needs to be supported for the promotion, safeguarding and raising awareness of EU common values under Article 2 TEU and in contributing to the effective enjoyment of rights under Union law. Local and regional authorities and their representative associations engaging in activities under the Rights and Values programme must receive support, particularly with a view to promoting citizens' rights and participation.

Reason

Local and regional authorities are beneficiaries of the programme's funds and have an important role to play, in particular in promoting citizens' participation and defending the rights of EU citizens. Associations of local and regional governments have had a great role in disseminating the Programme and are still being part of it.

Amendment 6

Recital 15

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Pursuant to Articles 8 and 10 TFEU, the Programme in all its activities should support gender mainstreaming and the mainstreaming of non-discrimination objectives.	Pursuant to Articles 8 and 10 TFEU, the Programme in all its activities should support gender mainstreaming and the mainstreaming of non-discrimination objectives. The programme should provide for specific conditions and measures ensuring compliance with, and application of, gender equality standards and combating all forms of discrimination.

Reason

Specific provisions should be included in the programme and its action plan with a view to achieving gender equality goals and combating discrimination. This could be done, for example, through awareness-raising campaigns involving a balanced number of women and men and members of disadvantaged minorities.

Amendment 7

Recital 18

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Independent human rights bodies and civil society organisations play an essential role in promoting, safeguarding and raising awareness of the Union's common values under Article 2 TEU, and in contributing to the effective enjoyment of rights under Union law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. As reflected in the European Parliament Resolution of 18 April 2018, adequate financial support is key to the development of a conducive and sustainable environment for civil society organisations to strengthen their role and perform their functions independently and effectively. Complementing efforts at national level, EU funding should therefore contribute to support, empower and build the capacity of independent civil society organisations active in the promotion of human rights whose activities help the strategic enforcement of rights under EU law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, including through advocacy and watchdog activities, as well as to promote, safeguard and raise awareness of the Union's common values at national level.</p>	<p>Independent human rights bodies and civil society organisations play an essential role in promoting, safeguarding and raising awareness of the Union's common values under Article 2 TEU, and in contributing to the effective enjoyment of rights under Union law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. As reflected in the European Parliament Resolution of 18 April 2018, appropriate and sufficient financial support is key to the development of a conducive and sustainable environment for civil society organisations to strengthen their role and perform their functions independently and effectively. Complementing efforts at national level, EU funding should therefore contribute to support, empower and build the capacity of independent civil society organisations active in the promotion of human rights whose activities help the strategic enforcement of rights under EU law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, including through advocacy and watchdog activities, as well as to promote, safeguard and raise awareness of the Union's common values at national level.</p>

Reason

It is important to provide for a budget that will make it possible to support as many as possible of the projects submitted in order to avoid frustration and encourage stakeholder initiatives.

Amendment 8

Recital 21

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>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 carried out, their complementarity to Member States' actions, while consistency, complementarity and synergies shall be sought with funding programmes supporting policy areas with close links to each other, in particular within the Justice, Rights and Values Fund — and thus with the Justice Programme — as well as with Creative Europe programme, and Erasmus+ to realise the potential of cultural crossovers in the fields of culture, media, arts, education and creativity. It is necessary to create synergies with other European funding programmes, in particular in the fields of employment, internal market, enterprise, youth, health, citizenship, justice, migration, security, research, innovation, technology, industry, cohesion, tourism, external relations, trade and development.</p>	<p>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 carried out, their complementarity to actions of the Member States and local and regional authorities, in accordance with the active subsidiarity principle, while consistency, complementarity and synergies shall be sought with funding programmes supporting policy areas with close links to each other, in particular within the Justice, Rights and Values Fund — and thus with the Justice Programme — as well as with Creative Europe programme, and Erasmus+ to realise the potential of cultural crossovers in the fields of culture, media, arts, education and creativity. It is necessary to create synergies with other European funding programmes, in particular in the fields of employment, internal market, enterprise, youth, health, citizenship, justice, migration, security, research, innovation, technology, industry, cohesion, tourism, external relations, trade and development and to encourage the development of new synergies by putting innovative, cross-cutting measures in place.</p>

Reason

Local and regional authorities are also active and their activities must be taken into account by the Member States and the EU in order to ensure overall consistency, complementarity and synergy.

The Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and 'Doing Less More Efficiently' submitted its conclusions on 10 July, advocating a new 'active subsidiarity' approach that will ensure the added value of EU legislation to the benefit of the public and will lead to greater ownership of EU decisions in the Member States.

It is important to stress the launch of new innovative measures to promote the idea of European identity and citizens' participation, and particularly the establishment of an Erasmus programme for local and regional elected representatives or European Correspondents on the Austrian model.

Amendment 9

Recital 24

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>The types of financing and the methods of implementation under this Regulation should be chosen on the basis of their ability to achieve the specific objectives of the actions and to deliver results, taking into account, in particular, the costs of controls, the administrative burden, and the expected risk of non-compliance. This should include consideration of the use of lump sums, flat rates and unit costs, as well as financing not linked to costs as referred to in Article 125(1) of the Financial Regulation.</p>	<p>The types of financing and the methods of implementation under this Regulation should be chosen on the basis of their ability to achieve the specific objectives of the actions and to deliver results, taking into account, in particular, the costs of controls, the administrative burden, and the expected risk of non-compliance. This should include consideration of the use of lump sums, flat rates and unit costs, as well as financing not linked to costs as referred to in Article 125(1) of the Financial Regulation.</p> <p><i>The measures must keep the administrative burden on candidates as far as possible to a minimum and guarantee all potential candidate organisations access to funds. A two-step application process, consisting of a short project draft for elaboration of eligibility and a complete application in case of a promising funding perspective, should be introduced. Where possible, electronic applications should be accepted. Candidates must have access to a national contact point, which will provide them with support, answer their questions on the application procedure and check that their file is complete before it is submitted. The EU will do its utmost to provide information on financing arrangements to all potential beneficiaries in order to ensure the involvement of diverse organisations from different Member States and partner states.</i></p>

Reason

It is essential to simplify the application procedure, particularly for first-time candidates, smaller communities and non-profit organisations. It is important to provide as much information as possible on opportunities to all local and regional authorities and all other potentially interested stakeholders so as to ensure that it is not only the EU's privileged partners or the best informed organisations that benefit. The European Correspondents are important and should be highlighted in the European Commission's text.

Amendment 10

Recital 28

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
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 action and to the achievement of an overall target of 25 % of the EU budget expenditures supporting climate objectives. Relevant actions will be identified during the Programme's preparation and implementation, and reassessed in the context of its mid-term evaluation.	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 and bearing in mind that collective action in these fields at the different levels can develop citizenship and the feeling of belonging , this Programme will contribute to mainstream climate action and to the achievement of an overall target of 25 % of the EU budget expenditures supporting climate objectives. Relevant actions will be identified during the Programme's preparation and implementation, and reassessed in the context of its mid-term evaluation, and existing local initiatives will be supported .

Reason

Action on climate change and on achieving the wider UN SDGs are directly linked to creating an inclusive society and enhance the feeling of citizenship and belonging. There is a need to inform the public about international climate issues but also to involve them in collective action. This can be emphasised in the legislation, particularly as the synergies between the Rights and Values programme and combating climate change are not sufficiently explained.

The EU must support existing action rather than developing new activities; information and awareness-raising campaigns are often conducted at local level.

Amendment 11

Recital 29

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Pursuant to paragraph 22 and 23 of the Inter-institutional agreement for Better Law-Making of 13 April 2016, there is a need to evaluate this Programme on the basis of information collected through specific monitoring requirements, while avoiding overregulation and administrative burdens, in particular on Member States. These requirements, where appropriate, can include measurable indicators, as a basis for evaluating the effects of the Programme on the ground.	Pursuant to paragraph 22 and 23 of the Inter-institutional agreement for Better Law-Making of 13 April 2016, there is a need to evaluate this Programme on the basis of information collected through specific monitoring requirements, while avoiding overregulation and administrative burdens, in particular on Member States. These requirements, where appropriate, can include measurable indicators, as a basis for evaluating the effects of the Programme on the ground in cooperation with the local and regional authorities involved, in accordance with the active subsidiarity principle .

Reason

The Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and 'Doing Less More Efficiently' submitted its conclusions on 10 July, advocating a new 'active subsidiarity' approach that will ensure the added value of EU legislation to the benefit of the public and will lead to greater ownership of EU decisions in the Member States.

Amendment 12

Chapter I, Article 1

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
This Regulation establishes the Rights and Values programme ('Programme').	This Regulation establishes the Rights, Values and Citizenship programme ('Programme').
It lays down the objectives of the Programme, the budget for the period 2021 — 2027, the forms of Union funding and the rules for providing such funding.	It lays down the objectives of the Programme, the budget for the period 2021 — 2027, the forms of Union funding and the rules for providing such funding.

Reason

The title of the programme should be consistent with its objectives and measures. The section of the programme dealing with citizenship is of fundamental importance and this should therefore be added to the programme's title.

Amendment 13

Chapter I — Article 2

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
1. The general objective of the Programme is to protect and promote rights and values as enshrined in the EU Treaties, including by supporting civil society organisations, in order to sustain open, democratic and inclusive societies.	1. The general objective of the Programme is to protect and promote rights and values as enshrined in the EU Treaties, including by supporting civil society organisations, local and regional authorities and their representatives , in order to sustain open, democratic and inclusive societies.
2. Within the general objective set out in paragraph 1, the programme has the following specific objectives which correspond to strands:	2. Within the general objective set out in paragraph 1, the programme has the following specific objectives which correspond to strands:
(a) to promote equality and rights (Equality and rights strand),	(a) to promote equality and rights (Equality and rights strand),
(b) to promote citizens engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union (Citizens' engagement and participation strand),	(b) to promote citizens engagement and participation in the democratic life of the Union (Citizens' engagement and participation strand),
(c) to fight violence (Daphne strand).	(c) to fight violence (Daphne strand).

Reason

Local and regional authorities are beneficiaries of the programme's funds and have an important role to play, in particular in promoting citizens' participation and defending the rights of EU citizens. Associations of local and regional governments have had a great role in disseminating the Programme and are still being part of it.

Amendment 14

Chapter I, Article 4(b) and new (c)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(b) (...) to promote citizens' civic and democratic participation allowing citizens and representative associations to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action;	(b) (...) to promote citizens' civic and democratic participation at national and European level allowing citizens and representative associations to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of sub-national, national and Union action;
	(c) developing new innovative actions specifically for local and regional elected representatives as well as officials and other staff of local and regional authorities, with, for example, the development of a mobility, training and exchange programme for local and regional elected representatives and the establishment of a network of 'municipal councillors' in charge of Europe on the Austrian model to collect information on matters of topical European interest and serve as an interface between the public and the European Union.

Reason

Citizens' participation often starts at a local level, where people are affected in their daily lives, with regard to the education of their children or their mobility. Citizens' participation at local level should be supported by the programme, as it is the first step towards participation at a higher — national or European — level. Awareness-raising campaigns at local level could be linked to citizens' participation at European level.

Currently, the opportunities for citizens to get involved in European issues remain limited and do not work as well as they should. In order to avoid frustration or disappointment, opportunities to speak at all levels, including local level, should be developed.

In order to encourage citizens' participation it is thus essential to have local and regional elected representatives as well as officials and other staff of local and regional authorities who have received training in EU issues and policies and who are fully informed about topical European issues. They can serve as an interface between the public and the EU, providing information and answering citizens' questions. This would help to reconnect the EU with its citizens, to stimulate people's interest in European issues and to answer people's questions while encouraging citizens' participation and a sense of belonging.

Amendment 15

Chapter I — Article 6(1) and 6(2)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
1. The financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2021 — 2027 shall be EUR [641 705 000] in current prices.	1. The financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2021 — 2027 shall be EUR [1 100 000 000] in current prices.
2. Within the amount referred to in paragraph 1 the following indicative amount shall be allocated to the following objective:	2. Within the amount referred to in paragraph 1 the following indicative amount shall be allocated to the following objective:

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(a) EUR [408 705 000] for the specific objectives referred to in article 2(2)(a) and 2(2)(c);	(a) EUR [450 000 000] for the specific objectives referred to in article 2(2)(a) and 2(2)(c);
(b) EUR [233 000 000] for the specific objective referred to in Article 2(2)(b);	(b) EUR [650 000 000] for the specific objective referred to in Article 2(2)(b).

Reason

It is necessary to increase the overall budget for the Rights and Values instrument given the enormous challenges the EU is facing as a community of values, based on rights.

Amendment 16

Chapter III — Article 16(5)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
5. As soon as it adopts a delegated act, the Commission shall notify it simultaneously to the European Parliament and to the Council.	5. As soon as it adopts a delegated act, the Commission shall notify it simultaneously to the European Parliament and to the Council. <i>In accordance with the Better Law-Making agreement, citizens and other stakeholders may express their opinion on the draft text of a delegated act during a four-week period. The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions shall be consulted on the draft text, based on the experience of NGOs and local and regional authorities in the implementation of the programme.</i>

Reason

Given the expertise and working relations between civil society and local and regional authorities, the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee and the European Committee of the Regions is essential for the programme's delegated acts. The experience of NGOs and local and regional authorities of implementing measures should be taken into account, in particular through the opinions of the EESC and CoR.

Amendment 17

Chapter IV, Article 18(2) and new (3)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
2. The Commission shall implement information and communication actions relating to the Programme, and its actions and results. Financial resources allocated to the Programme shall also contribute to the corporate communication of the political priorities of the Union, as far as they are related to the objectives referred to in Article 2.	2. The Commission shall implement information and communication actions relating to the Programme, and its actions and results, <i>in particular through the Europe Direct Information Centres network.</i> Financial resources allocated to the Programme shall also contribute to the corporate communication of the political priorities of the Union, as far as they are related to the objectives referred to in Article 2.
	3. <i>The EU will do its utmost to provide information on financing arrangements to all potential beneficiaries in order to ensure the involvement of diverse organisations from different Member States and partner states. Candidates shall have access to a contact point, which will provide them with support, answer their questions on the application procedure and check that their file is complete before it is submitted.</i>

Reason

It is important to provide as much information as possible on opportunities to all local and regional authorities and all other potentially interested participants so as to ensure that it is not only the EU's privileged partners or the best informed organisations that benefit. The European Correspondents are important and should be highlighted in the European Commission's text. EDICs network is efficient and locally connected. Implementing information and communication actions through EDICs allows to meet results without increasing expenses.

Amendment 18

Annex I (g)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(g) bringing together Europeans of different nationalities and cultures by giving them the opportunity to participate in town-twinning activities;	(g) bringing together Europeans of different nationalities and cultures by giving them the opportunity to participate in town and rural community twinning activities as well as projects involving cross-border cooperation ;

Reason

The Rights and Values programme should also take account of cross-border cooperation projects, as they contribute to a sense of mutual belonging, to European identity and to overcoming national differences.

Amendment 19

Annex I (h)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(h) encouraging and facilitating active participation in the construction of a more democratic Union as well as awareness of rights and values through support to civil society organisations;	(h) encouraging and facilitating active participation in the construction of a more democratic Union as well as awareness of rights and values through support to civil society organisations, local and regional authorities and their representative associations ;

Reason

Local and regional authorities are beneficiaries of the programme's funds and have an important role to play, in particular in promoting citizens' participation and defending the rights of EU citizens. Associations of local and regional governments have had a great role in disseminating the Programme and are still being part of it.

Amendment 20

Annex I (j)

Commission text	Amendment
(j) developing the capacity of European networks to promote and further develop Union law, policy goals and strategies as well as supporting civil society organisations active in the areas covered by the Programme.	(j) developing the capacity of European networks through multiannual operating grants to promote and further develop Union law, enhance bottom-up critical debates on policy goals and strategies, as well as supporting civil society organisations, local and regional authorities and their representative associations active in the areas covered by the Programme.

Reason

Civil society is very important, but local and regional authorities and their representative associations at the local and regional level have and are playing crucial role within the general objectives of the programme, particularly within specific objectives under Article 2(2).

Amendment 21

Annex I (l) (new)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	(l) <i>new innovative actions aimed at local and regional elected representatives as well as officials and other staff of local and regional authorities, among others, with, for example, the development of a mobility, training and exchange programme for local and regional elected representatives and the establishment of European Correspondents on the Austrian model to collect information on matters of topical European interest and serve as an interface between the public and the European Union.</i>

Reason

In order to encourage citizens' participation it is essential to have local and regional elected representatives as well as officials and other staff of local and regional authorities who have received training in EU issues and policies and who are fully informed about topical European issues. They can serve as an interface between the public and the EU, providing information and answering citizens' questions. This would help to reconnect the EU with its citizens, to stimulate people's interest in European issues and to answer people's questions while encouraging citizens' participation and a sense of belonging.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

1. welcomes the European Commission's proposal on the MFF, which contains a Title II on investment in human capital, social cohesion and values; points out that this concept was put forward by the CoR in its report on an Erasmus for local and regional elected representatives;
2. welcomes the proposal for a Regulation establishing the Rights and Values programme. The three objectives of the programme are paramount at all government levels and are in line with the views already expressed by the CoR in various opinions and in its work programme;
3. regrets, however, the absence of the term 'citizenship' in the title of the fund, although this concept is at the heart of the activities to be undertaken by participants, in particular, as underlined in the Commission's text, against the background of a lack of trust, both within and between Member States, as well as towards Europe and the rise of extremism;

4. fully endorses and supports the Commission's objectives for combating violence, promotion of European rights without discrimination, e.g. as regards people with disabilities, gender equality and promotion of the right to privacy. The CoR would like to see specific measures to promote gender equality and combat discrimination and gender-based violence;
5. welcomes the Commission's proposal to merge into a common fund the Rights and Values and Justice programmes, thus making it possible to simplify procedures and improve their visibility and the budgetary flexibility allowed between programmes;
6. welcomes the new legal basis chosen by the Commission; stresses in this respect the need to apply the principle of 'active subsidiarity', as defined in the Final Report of the Task Force on Subsidiarity;
7. acknowledges that the Commission's proposals comply with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;
8. regrets that the amounts allocated to this fund have not been increased in view of the number of applications and the need to do more; asks therefore for an increase of the overall envelop for the Rights and Values programme to EUR 1,1 billion, EUR 513 million of which, representing one Euro per EU citizen, should be allocated to twinning and networking activities between citizens and their local and regional authorities and the establishment of new innovative actions aimed at local and regional elected representatives;
9. would like to see effective communication established to ensure that all potential applicants are aware of funding opportunities. Local and regional authorities must be directly informed of activities in which they may take part, in particular regarding citizens' participation. The work already being carried out in this area by the centres affiliated to the Commission's Europe Direct network could prove useful in this connection;
10. points out that, while the EU institutions are considered remote and technocratic, local and regional authorities, and therefore local and regional elected representatives, are close to the people and therefore represent a direct and effective link between the EU and its citizens;
11. Highlights the importance to clarify who governs the EU and calls on the EU to reinforce the role of the European commission the Union's supranational executive, subject to stronger democratic scrutiny and control;
12. considers that the development of synergies and establishment of new innovative tools will be essential to raise the profile and improve the effectiveness and follow-up of these programmes; training and information for local and regional elected representatives may thus also play a key role;
13. calls for cross-border cooperation projects also to be taken into account in the programme, as they promote cooperation between regions and organisations in different Member States and thus a shared sense of European identity;
14. asks that new innovative forms of action be included in the 'citizens' engagement and participation' strand, in particular aimed at local and regional elected representatives, for example with the development of a training and mobility programme for local and regional elected representatives, as described in the CoR opinion adopted in February 2018;
15. also asks that a network of European Correspondents based on the existing Austrian model be promoted by the European institutions in cooperation with the Member States to inform local politicians of topical European issues and enable them to respond as well as possible to citizens' expectations; this will help to combat people's lack of engagement with European issues;
16. considers that the involvement of various actors is key to achieving the objectives of the programme. The CoR suggests that preference be given to a multilevel approach, as many of the activities provided for in the programme are planned and implemented at local and regional level and as local and regional authorities can be beneficiaries of the programme funds;
17. stresses that, although information and awareness-raising campaigns are essential, they are not sufficient to ensure citizens' participation. Effective instruments to enable citizens' participation must be developed; European citizens' initiatives are an example of this at European level and several recommendations were made by the CoR in its March 2018 opinion aimed at improving this citizens' participation instrument at European level;

18. also considers that such information campaigns should focus on opportunities at local level. It is at this level that citizens can first become actively involved in issues that directly affect them in their daily lives;

19. will take part, with all local and regional authorities, in promoting citizens' rights and citizens' engagement and participation in order to raise awareness of major European issues and to increase the sense of European belonging. Measures have already been implemented by the CoR supporting the objectives of the programme, with, for example, more than 180 debates held across Europe in connection with the Reflecting on Europe programme. This demonstrates the wish of many citizens to speak out and get involved in European issues.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

*The President
of the European Committee of the Regions*

Karl-Heinz LAMBERTZ

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Proposal for a single-use plastics directive

(2018/C 461/17)

Rapporteur-general: Sirpa HERTELL (FI-EPP), city councillor of Espoo

Reference documents: Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment

COM(2018) 340 final — 2018/0172 (COD)

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

Citation 1

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 192(1) thereof,	Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 192(1) thereof and Article 114 in respect of packaging as defined under Article 3(1) of Directive 94/62/EC,

Reason

This amendment refers to the first sentence of the preamble. It aims to clarify the legal status of the single-use plastic products that are considered packaging in this proposed Directive vis-à-vis the adopted Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive.

Amendment 2

Recital 11

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(11) For certain single-use plastic products, suitable and more sustainable alternatives are not yet readily available and the consumption of most such single-use plastic products is expected to increase. To reverse that trend and promote efforts towards more sustainable solutions Member States should be required to take the necessary measures to achieve a significant reduction in the consumption of those products, without compromising food hygiene or food safety, good hygiene practices, good manufacturing practices, consumer information, or traceability requirements set out in Union food legislation.	(11) For certain single-use plastic products, suitable and more sustainable alternatives are not yet readily available and the consumption of most such single-use plastic products is expected to increase. To reverse that trend and promote efforts towards more sustainable solutions Member States should be required to take the necessary measures, without prejudice to article 18 of Directive 94/62/EC, to achieve a significant reduction in the consumption of those products, without compromising food hygiene or food safety, good hygiene practices, good manufacturing practices, consumer information, or traceability requirements set out in Union food legislation. Prior to adopting such measures, Member States should be required to conduct an assessment of the social, economic and environmental impacts to ensure the measures are proportionate and non-discriminatory.

Reason

This amendment aims to ensure that measures implemented at national, regional and local levels are proportionate, non-discriminatory, and consistent with the existing EU legislation, including Directive 2008/98/EC and Directive 94/62/EC.

Amendment 3*Article 1*

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
The objective of this Directive is to prevent and reduce the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, in particular the aquatic environment, and on human health, as well as to promote the transition to a circular economy with innovative business models, products and materials, thus also contributing to the efficient functioning of the internal market.	The objective of this Directive is to prevent and reduce the impact of certain plastic products on the environment in general , in particular plastic waste transportation to any aquatic environment, including freshwater and shallow sea, as well as on human health or sea-life, and to promote the transition to a circular economy with innovative business models, products and materials, thus also contributing to the efficient functioning of the internal market.

Reason

Recently plastic litter has been reported not only in maritime environments, but also in fresh water including rivers and lakes. The findings are observed in every environment, from mountain-top glaciers to springs or rivers. This is a clear indication that plastic waste is distributed in nature through many different mechanisms, many of which are not thoroughly understood.

Urban runoff, the water from rain and melting snow, is not included properly. Urban runoff is an increasing problem, as climate warming is leading to extreme rainfall. In Nordic areas snow dumping in seas and lakes is also one of the causes for plastic to appear in aquatic systems.

Europe has multiple sensitive aquatic ecosystems like rivers and lakes, and especially two very sensitive sea ecosystems, namely the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

Amendment 4*Article 2*

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
This Directive shall apply to the single-use plastic products listed in the Annex and to fishing gear containing plastic.	This Directive shall apply to the single-use plastic products especially those listed in the Annex, or in general any other disposable non-degradable plastic items left in the environment for any reason and to fishing gear containing plastic.

Reason

It is vitally important to understand that besides non-degradable fossil polymers, there are fossil-based biodegradable plastics and non-degradable bio-based plastics. The litter forms from non-degradable materials left in the environment for any reason. The main solution should be that to collect all disposable material and recycle it mechanically, chemically or using biotechnological means. Products have to be designed in a way that makes this possible. Disposable plastic when outside of the collection system always has the potential to become waste in aqueous ecosystems.

Fishing gear is essentially used in aquatic environments and may be lost accidentally even when properly used.

The current proposal addresses only a part of the issue of plastic marine litter. Fisheries recover, but shipping and yachting activities in European sea areas should be thoroughly controlled and regulated to protect against waste dumping in the sea and for appropriate waste management on shore. The Mediterranean and Baltic seas are particularly relevant because of tourism and should be subject to special protection.

Amendment 5

Article 3(3) (new after 3(2))

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<i>(3) single-use plastics, often also referred to as disposable plastics, products that are designed to be used once only with a limited life span, which may disintegrate in many individual and separate components and include items intended to be used only once before they are thrown away or recycled;</i>

Reason

Many plastic materials used for a long time are single-use, e.g. medical devices or thermal building insulation therefore it is recommendable to use the term 'disposable plastic' and simultaneously define the expected lifetime of the product; or products that may disintegrate e.g. toys, closures, etc.

Amendment 6

Article 3(15) (new after 3(14))

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
	<i>(15) plastics degradable in aquatic environments, biodegradable modified natural polymers and synthetic polymers are not defined as 'plastic'.</i>

Reason

Plastic materials have very different behaviours in the environment. Natural polymers are without exception biodegradable, while certain synthetic polymers are also biodegradable. According to ASTM D6002, biodegradable plastics are those that are capable of undergoing biological decomposition in a compost site such that the material is not visually distinguishable and breaks down into carbon dioxide, water, inorganic compounds and biomass at a rate consistent with known compostable materials.

Amendment 7

Article 4(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>1. Member States shall take the necessary measures to achieve a significant reduction in the consumption of the single-use plastic products listed in Part A of the Annex on their territory by ... [six years after the end-date for transposition of this Directive].</p> <p>Those measures may include national consumption reduction targets, measures ensuring that reusable alternatives to those products are made available at the point of sale to the final consumer, economic instruments such as ensuring that single-use plastic products are not provided free of charge at the point of sale to the final consumer. Those measures may vary depending on the environmental impact of the products referred to in the first subparagraph.</p>	<p>1. <i>Without prejudice to Article 18 of the Directive 94/62/EC</i>, Member States shall take the necessary measures to achieve a significant reduction in the consumption of the single-use plastic products listed in Part A of the Annex on their territory by ... [six years after the end-date for transposition of this Directive].</p> <p>Those measures, <i>proportionate and non-discriminatory</i>, may include national consumption reduction targets, measures ensuring that reusable alternatives to those products are made available at the point of sale to the final consumer, economic instruments such as ensuring that single-use plastic products are not provided free of charge at the point of sale to the final consumer. Those measures may vary depending on the environmental impact of the products referred to in the first subparagraph.</p> <p><i>Member States or their local and regional authorities should also be able to limit the use of single-use plastic products other than those listed in Part A of the Annex, on their territory for specific reasons in well defined limited areas, in order to protect the most sensitive ecosystems, specific biotypes like natural reservations, archipelagos, river deltas or the natural Arctic environment.</i></p>

Reason

The 7th Environment Action Programme to 2020 includes as Priority Objective 1: 'To protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital'. This is essential in the most sensitive ecosystems, including those of specific biotypes and related ecosystems, wetlands and shallow waters, mountain areas and Nordic natural environments, especially Arctic environments.

The reference to Article 18 of the Packaging & Packaging waste Directive 94/62/EC should ensure coherence between the already adopted directive and this proposal. Measures adopted by the Member States should be proportionate and non-discriminatory.

Amendment 8

Article 4(1)

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>1. Member States shall take the necessary measures to achieve a significant reduction in the consumption of the single-use plastic products listed in Part A of the Annex on their territory by ... [six years after the end-date for transposition of this Directive].</p> <p>Those measures may include national consumption reduction targets, measures ensuring that reusable alternatives to those products are made available at the point of sale to the final consumer, economic instruments such as ensuring that single-use plastic products are not provided free of charge at the point of sale to the final consumer. Those measures may vary depending on the environmental impact of the products referred to in the first subparagraph.</p>	<p>1. Member States shall take the necessary measures to achieve a significant reduction in the consumption of the single-use plastic products listed in Part A of the Annex on their territory by ... [six years after the end-date for transposition of this Directive].</p> <p>Those measures may include national consumption reduction targets, measures ensuring that reusable alternatives to those products are made available at the point of sale to the final consumer, economic instruments such as ensuring that single-use plastic products are not provided free of charge at the point of sale to the final consumer. Those measures may vary depending on the environmental impact of the products referred to in the first subparagraph.</p> <p><i>Member States should actively stimulate innovation and investment with a view to circular solutions to support the potential for growth in tourism and the blue economy.</i></p>

Reason

Solving disposable plastic waste issues, and plastic recycling in general, are part of the Plastics Strategy to stimulate innovation and investment with a view to circular solutions, which includes EU research funding under Horizon 2020 and the European Structural and Investment Funds. Research and development are insufficient, however: there is a direct need for piloting and demonstration financing as well.

The 2017 Strategy 'Towards the Outermost Regions' recognises their potential for growth in tourism and the blue economy as well as the circular economy. This is valid for all European maritime regions and should also include major lake areas.

Amendment 9

Article 9

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Member States shall take the necessary measures to collect separately, by 2025, an amount of waste single-use plastic products listed in Part F of the Annex equal to 90 % of such single-use plastic products placed on the market in a given year by weight. In order to achieve that objective Member States may inter alia:</p> <p>(a) establish deposit-refund schemes, or</p>	<p>Member States shall take the necessary measures to collect separately, by 2025, an amount of waste single-use plastic products listed in Part F of the Annex equal to 90 % of such single-use plastic products placed on the market in a given year by weight. In order to achieve that objective Member States may inter alia:</p> <p>(a) establish deposit-refund schemes, <i>examining the possibility of coordination or harmonization of such schemes at EU level</i>, or</p>

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(b) establish separate collection targets for relevant extended producer responsibility schemes.	<p>(b) establish separate collection targets for relevant extended producer responsibility schemes including, where relevant, incentives for exceeding the targets.</p> <p>(c) in line with the waste hierarchy, recover part of the plastic waste chemically in the form of polymers, monomers or other chemical products or energy through controlled combustion.</p> <p>Controlled combustion is preferable where the plastic cannot be recovered in other ways at a reasonable cost or where recycling would result in a higher carbon footprint than combustion.</p>

Reason

New deposit schemes may be an important step in addressing this problem, but wherever possible should be coordinated at EU level.

A system of fixed targets for separate collection should always also include special bonuses for regions or local authorities which want to go beyond the targets, to avoid that setting targets discourages the most advanced.

In certain cases, however, it is necessary to recover part of the plastic waste chemically in the form of polymers, monomers or other chemical products or energy through controlled combustion.

Amendment 10

Article 10

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Member States shall take measures to inform consumers of the single-use plastic products listed in Part G of the Annex and fishing gear containing plastic about the following:	Member States in cooperation with local and regional authorities shall take the necessary measures to inform consumers of the single-use plastic products listed in Part G of the Annex and fishing gear containing plastic about the following:
(a) the available re-use systems and waste management options for those products and fishing gear containing plastic as well as best practices in sound waste management carried out in accordance with Article 13 of Directive 2008/98/EC;	(a) the available re-use systems and waste management options for those products and fishing gear containing plastic as well as best practices in sound waste management carried out in accordance with Article 13 of Directive 2008/98/EC;
(b) the impact of littering and other inappropriate waste disposal of those products and fishing gear containing plastic on the environment, and in particular on the marine environment.	(b) the impact of littering and other inappropriate waste disposal of those products and fishing gear containing plastic on the environment, and in particular on the marine environment.

Reason

The important role of local and regional authorities in waste collection and management needs to be taken into account in the awareness raising measures in cooperation with the Member States.

Amendment 11*Article 11*

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Each Member State shall ensure that the measures taken to transpose and implement this Directive form an integral part of and are consistent with its programmes of measures established in accordance with Article 13 of Directive 2008/56/EC for those Member States that have marine waters, the programmes of measures established in accordance with Article 11 of Directive 2000/60/EC, waste management and waste prevention programmes established in accordance with Articles 28 and 29 of Directive 2008/98/EC and the waste reception and handling plans established under Union law for the management of waste from ships.	Each Member State shall ensure that the measures taken to transpose and implement this Directive form an integral part of and are consistent with its programmes of measures established in accordance with Article 13 of Directive 2008/56/EC for those Member States that have marine waters, the programmes of measures established in accordance with Article 11 of Directive 2000/60/EC, waste management and waste prevention programmes established in accordance with Articles 28 and 29 of Directive 2008/98/EC and the waste reception and handling plans established under Union law for the management of waste from ships.
The measures that Member States take to transpose and implement Articles 4 to 9 shall comply with Union food law to ensure that food hygiene and food safety are not compromised.	The measures that Member States take to transpose and implement Articles 4 to 9 shall comply with Union consumer protection and food laws to ensure that food hygiene and consumer safety are not compromised.

Reason

It is vital to ensure that functionality of packaging and the critical role it plays in delivering high standards of food hygiene, food safety, public health and consumer protection are not compromised.

Amendment 12*Article 15(2)*

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
2. The Commission shall submit a report on the main findings of the evaluation carried out in accordance with paragraph 1 to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee.	2. The Commission shall submit a report on the main findings of the evaluation carried out in accordance with paragraph 1 to the European Parliament, the Council, the Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee.

Reason

This directive is of great importance for local and regional authorities, in particular for their role in waste collection and management. It is necessary to include the Committee of the Regions in the evaluation and review process.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS****In general**

1. underlines that plastic in its many applications is vitally important for modern society and that its safety and efficiency are improving. Simultaneously the disadvantages of plastic waste have become very obvious and firm attempts to tackle the problem are needed;

2. welcomes the European Commission proposal on the reduction of the impact of certain plastic products on the environment, while noting that its scope is quite narrow. Instead of just listing a limited number of plastic items found on the sea shore and prohibiting them, a more holistic approach as envisaged in the EU Plastic Strategy and in the EU Circular Economy Strategy is necessary in the long term to promote the fundamental changes which are necessary to address this problem covering all the environments as well as broad policy coherence with the Circular Economy Package is needed;
3. In this context, asks the European Commission to present a comprehensive impact assessment clearly outlining the social, economic and environmental implications of the proposed measures;
4. calls for the definitions 'plastic' and 'single-use plastic product' to be further clarified, in particular the definition 'single-use plastic product', which is a product that is made wholly or partly from plastic. The definition of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) is recommendable here;
5. notes that European legislation has made it illegal to dump plastic waste in landfill sites. However, unless new technologies and routes for plastic recycling are rapidly developed, there is a danger that the ban will increase the transportation of plastic waste to third countries, where less developed waste management systems and inadequate plastic recycling production may increase maritime plastic waste;
6. underlines that the EU Plastics Strategy already includes specific measures on microplastics, which are linked to plastic litter as well;
7. reiterates the call to reduce plastic littering in all respects, in order to protect not only maritime environments but also ecosystems in general. It is essential to increase the recovery and recycling of plastic, in line with the waste hierarchy;

Consistency with existing policy

8. emphasises that plastics are used in several applications, where they limit and prevent other losses, e.g. food packaging used in order to reduce qualitative and quantitative nutritional losses;
9. notes that EU plastics policy proposes biodegradable plastics as an alternative to mechanical and chemical recycling when they solve problems related to contamination. Paperboard should be increasingly used here as an alternative;
10. points out that the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive requires Member States to achieve Good Environmental Status of their marine waters by 2020. The requirements are especially strict for sensitive ecosystems, like shallow and Nordic aquatic systems, due to the sensitivity of these natural environments and to their slow recovery from stress. The directive should be extended to include the entire aquatic ecosystem;
11. stresses that in line with the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive modern water treatment plants effectively capture macroplastic contaminants, and calls for this technology to be applied consistently throughout Europe. Simultaneously, the mulch produced from wastewater treatment sludge presents a risk of microplastic waste. More ways should be developed of fractionating plastic waste from artificial mulch;
12. is convinced that urban runoff waters, rain drainage and melting snow have to be considered in the proposal. With climate warming leading to extreme rainfall, snow-dumping in seas and lakes should be prohibited;
13. points out that the current proposal addresses only a part of the issue of plastic marine litter. Shipping and yachting activities in European seas should be thoroughly controlled and regulated to prevent waste-dumping in seas and ensure waste management on shore, especially in the Mediterranean and Baltic seas;

Subsidiarity (for non-exclusive competence) and proportionality

14. notes that the problem of plastic pollution and marine litter is cross-border in nature and therefore cannot be tackled in isolation by Member States sharing seas and waterways. For this reason, and also because of the need to avoid a fragmentation of the single market, the CoR is of the view that the present proposal represents genuine added value at EU level and is in line with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;

15. underlines that the problem should be addressed at source and should be solved by reducing non-degradable plastic waste entering the economy. In cases where problems nonetheless need to be addressed downstream, for example where regional and municipal water treatment works need to filter out microplastics, local and regional authorities must be compensated in full for the cost of these measures, with the costs being borne by the producers;

16. is convinced that plastic waste recycling should be organised close to where the waste was discarded so as to avoid transportation;

17. calls for changes in product design and a switch to more sustainable plastics and substitutes for plastics. Due to the risk of market fragmentation, the Member States should agree on a common deposit system for plastic packaging, especially for packaging of liquids. In the case of caps and lids for plastic beverage containers, it would be recommendable to use recyclable fibre-based solutions. In the case of disposable goods, especially in personal hygiene products, the EU should promote biodegradable alternatives;

18. supports application of the polluter-pays principle, including for fishing gear, and stresses the need to implement new solutions for environmentally safe fishing gear, including affordable biodegradable alternatives, and, where possible, equipping nets with tracking technology and establishing a digital reporting system for lost gear;

19. emphasises that given the differences between Member States and organisation of their waste management, we need more flexibility on the most suitable methods for handling all non-recyclable plastics. There is a need to develop waste collection system that accepts any plastic waste produced during commercial activities at sea or collected in the maritime environment in order to prevent waste dumping offshore;

Measures proposed

20. supports the four options or scenarios presented in the document. Information campaigns, voluntary actions and labelling could increase general awareness and thus influence consumer behaviour. The question is whether this alone would change the actual behaviour of people in the long term, which is the essence of the problem;

21. proposes the following measures for consideration:

- a. labelling requirements are important to inform consumers about appropriate waste disposal operations or disposal methods to be avoided (especially disposable fibre products such as wet wipes), but active support for the development of environmentally sustainable alternatives, like biodegradable nonwoven products, is needed;
- b. restrictions on the placing on the market of single-use plastics with readily available alternatives should be markedly wider than proposed and include more disposable objects than e.g. straws;
- c. general reduction targets, especially for serving packaging (packaging used for fast food, e.g. beverage cups, food containers) should be strengthened, with recommendations for recyclable and biodegradable alternatives, while allowing Member States to adopt their own measures to achieve the reduction;
- d. commitments by retailers to minimise disposable plastic sales based on binding agreements could be offered as an alternative to extended producer responsibility for all items not falling under the market restriction measure;
- e. where plastic use is essential in primary production of food (e.g. fishing gear and agricultural films); new technological solutions should be provided to collect the material after every use and financial incentives offered for recycling and reuse;
- f. product design measures should also be extended to service design as is already the case in several Member States (e.g. drinking bottles with tethered caps).

22. calls for the Directive on Packaging and Packaging Waste, which lays down consumption reduction objectives for lightweight plastic carrier bags, including very lightweight plastic carrier bags, to be extended to all lightweight packaging materials made of non-degradable materials;

23. proposes that fishing gear be available on a lease with a separate company accountable for material collection and recycling. Technical measures to detect and find lost fishing gear could be developed;

24. stresses that sales packaging with polymeric lining that is not filled at the point of sale, such as milk cartons, should not be covered by the definition of a single-use plastic product;

Regulatory fitness and simplification

25. calls for incentives and support measures for more than 50 000 SMEs in the plastics sector to develop alternative products to non-degradable disposable plastics. It is important to facilitate the market entry of new alternative materials and alternative product designs through innovation programmes and investment support for process modification;

26. believes that retailer voluntary agreements to limit disposable plastic sales should be promoted provided their implementation and effectiveness can be properly monitored;

27. considers it necessary to have market restrictions on disposable plastics imported into the EU;

Budget implications

28. emphasises that incentives, support for development and enhanced control, as well as activities for cleaning up disposable plastic waste, should be financed through taxes on the import and manufacture of disposable plastic materials.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

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

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Clean Ports, Clean Seas — port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships

(2018/C 461/18)

Rapporteur: Spyros SPYRIDON (EL/EPP), Municipal Councillor of Poros

Reference document: Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships, repealing Directive 2000/59/EC and amending Directive 2009/16/EC and Directive 2010/65/EU

COM(2018) 33 final

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

Article 5(4)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
Member States shall evaluate and approve the waste reception and handling plan, monitor its implementation and ensure its re-approval at least every three years after it has been approved or re-approved, and after significant changes in the operation of the port have taken place. These changes shall include, but not be limited to, structural changes in traffic to the port, development of new infrastructure, changes in the demand and provision of port reception facilities, and new on-board treatment techniques.	Member States shall evaluate and approve the waste reception and handling plan, monitor its implementation and ensure its re-approval at least every five years after it has been approved or re-approved, and after significant changes in the operation of the port have taken place. These changes shall include, but not be limited to, structural changes in traffic to the port, development of new infrastructure, changes in the demand and provision of port reception facilities, and new on-board treatment techniques.

Reason

The extension of the revision period will help the ports to better evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in application. The possibility remains for earlier adjustments and review in case of significant changes. The amendment is in line with the ongoing discussions in Parliament and Council.

Amendment 2

Article 7(4)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
The information referred to in paragraph 2 shall be kept on board for at least two years and shall be made available upon request to the Member States' authorities.	The information referred to in paragraph 2 shall be kept for reference for at least two years and shall be made available upon request to the Member States' authorities.

Reason

The EU should avoid creating bureaucratic obstacles where it is not necessary. The receipt issued to the ship could be stored in an electronic format as a scanned copy on ships.

Amendment 3

Article 8(4)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
The fees may be differentiated with respect to, inter alia, the category, type and size of the ship and the type of traffic the ship is engaged in, as well as with respect to services provided outside normal operating hours in the port.	The fees may be differentiated with respect to, inter alia, the category, type and size of the ship and the type of activity and traffic the ship is engaged in, as well as with respect to services provided outside normal operating hours in the port.

Reason

The amendment makes it easier to introduce exemptions for short sea shipping (e.g. ro-ro ships). These ships regularly serve the same ports, but differ from those that operate scheduled lines in that they do not necessarily have a specific route. Under both the current scheme and the one under discussion, it will continue to be impossible to explicitly differentiate fees.

The proposal also covers support vessels operating within ports.

Amendment 4

Article 8(6)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
In order to ensure that the fees are fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, and that they reflect the costs of the facilities and services made available, and, where appropriate, used, the amount of the fees and the basis on which they have been calculated shall be made available to the port users.	In order to ensure that the fees are fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, and that they reflect the costs of the facilities and services made available, and, where appropriate, used, <i>including, in accordance with the provisions applicable to services of general economic interest, compensation costs that cannot exceed the costs incurred and a reasonable profit without overcompensation</i> , the amount of the fees and the basis on which they have been calculated shall be made available to the port users.

Reason

The amendment makes it completely clear that the activity of waste reception and management, which is obligatory for both ports and ships, is a service of general economic interest. The provision emphasises the environmental dimension of the activity.

Amendment 5

Article 12(3)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
Member States shall establish procedures for inspections for fishing vessels below 100 gross tonnage as well as for recreational craft below 100 gross tonnage, to ensure compliance with the applicable requirements of this Directive.	Member States shall establish <i>simplified</i> procedures for inspections for fishing vessels below 100 gross tonnage as well as for recreational craft below 100 gross tonnage, to ensure compliance with the applicable requirements of this Directive <i>and with the proportionality principle</i> .

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Maritime activity is an integral part of the circular economy

1. Welcomes the Commission's communication and strategy on the circular economy. Promoting public and corporate environmental awareness and implementing specific policies to reduce waste and to re-use products and materials will contribute to sustainable development.
2. Is therefore pleased that the present directive has been included in the strategy on the circular economy. Although marine pollution is primarily caused by land-based activities, we should not overlook the fact that it is also the result of human activity at sea.
3. Reiterates that the MARPOL Convention establishes the framework for managing waste produced by ships, but does not include enforcement mechanisms. The present directive therefore brings European legislation into line with international treaty obligations, at the same time as clarifying the practical, legal and economic data and obligations regarding access to ships in EU ports.
4. Regrets that Member States have to date interpreted the provisions of the previous directive differently, resulting in ambiguities for users, port authorities and reception facilities.
5. Emphasises that the challenge is now to create incentives to deliver waste to ports, without placing a disproportional financial burden on ships or introducing excessive administrative procedures.
6. Agrees with the Commission's proposal for the sound management of shipping waste on-shore, an important step towards achieving the objectives of environmental protection.
7. Highlights the urgent need to reduce the production of plastic waste and to promote the circular economy.
8. Stresses, therefore, that promoting the circular economy on-board ships is of particular importance. This will call for crews, and passengers, to be trained in sorting and correctly storing waste. Training and separate collection are the preliminary steps for product re-use and entail costs, something that needs to be taken into account in the pricing of port services.
9. In order to improve the management of shipping waste and promote a circular economy, it is important to give shipping companies the possibility of choosing the firms that will be in charge of waste reception from a catalogue of firms certified for this purpose.

Important regional dimension of the directive

10. More than 700 ports in the EU will be required to implement the new directive. Some 750 000 ships call at these ports annually, from all the Member States. These ships produce between five and seven million tonnes of oily residues and over a million tonnes of solid waste annually, a fact that needs to be addressed.

11. Notes the potential impact of the new directive on regional ports, particularly in the outermost regions and areas bordering on third country ports which will not be covered by the directive. By way of example, the cost of developing the necessary infrastructure, the payment of an obligatory fee and the mandatory delivery of waste will increase the administrative costs of ports, costs which will be passed on to users, thus affecting competitiveness, particularly in the case of regional ports.

12. Points out that if each Member State had the freedom to design the system of fees it could lead to regional discrimination regarding responsibility for waste reception and contributions to infrastructure and management costs. The EU should therefore introduce strict controls on the way in which fees proposed by each Member State are calculated.

13. Is also concerned that if the directive is partially implemented by EU ports, without similar measures being taken in respect of third country ports particularly in sea basins, it will have only a limited impact from an environmental point of view.

14. Considers the regional dimension given by the Commission to the issue of waste management by ports as very positive, starting with Article 5 of the proposed directive. This enables Member States, as well as local and regional authorities and port users, to draw up plans for delivering and handling waste with the appropriate involvement of each port, according to local possibilities and needs, and allows for wider regional planning without excluding potential cross-border partnerships.

15. For the above financial and environmental reasons, proposes that efforts be made to apply the directive more broadly to all ports in sea basins and neighbouring areas, by means of incentives and rewards and through more extensive programmes of cooperation in waste management.

16. Welcomes the diversification of the programmes, reflecting the detailed situation and possibilities of each port, depending on the type of traffic they serve.

17. Points out that in line with the subsidiarity principle, port authorities must continue to have the necessary flexibility in setting port fees and charges, and calls on these authorities to make every conceivable effort to ensure that fees are calculated with full transparency and proportionality, in accordance with the provisions of the directive.

18. Supports the five-year timeframe for revising reception and management programmes.

19. Anticipates that the proposed directive will have a positive impact on research into waste management and for the competitiveness of Europe's regions in terms of tourism and quality of life.

The increased clarity of the procedures is a positive step

20. Emphasises that residues from exhaust gas cleaning systems should also be disposed of properly and not end up in the sea. Therefore calls on the Commission to provide guidelines for the proper handling of these residues, while the Member States should then explore how this type of residue could be dealt with at the port level.

21. Acknowledges that the fishing industry is both a source and victim of marine litter. In order to address the problem of passively fished litter, local initiatives like 'Fishing for Litter' have been successfully established, where passively fished litter can be disposed of free of charge — even if the port applies direct fees for delivery of waste. While welcoming the introduction of the 'no special fee' system, the CoR would like to highlight that passively fished litter — a potential source of revenue for the port reception facility, when recycled — should continue to be delivered free of charge, irrespectively of the quantity, in order to ensure that the process of collecting and transporting litter to recycling facilities runs smoothly. That would mean that if the fishing vessel has only passively fished litter to deliver, it should not be obliged to pay any fee.

22. Proposes consequently that consideration be given to the possibility of including exhaust gas cleaning system residues among waste for delivery covered by the single fee, and in particular for regions governed by the environmental protection and controlled emissions system, such as the Baltic.

23. Points out that introducing a single fee would provide a major incentive for waste to be delivered. Notes, however, that no measures are taken to reduce the generation of waste at source, which is at odds with the 'polluter pays' principle.
24. Points out that it may not be possible to base the calculation of the single fee on forecasts of real requirements by receiving companies. It may consequently be difficult to determine in a transparent way.
25. Notes that port facility reception procedures must be rapid and efficient in order to avoid unnecessary delays and additional costs for ships.
26. Proposes that clear provision be made for shipping companies to choose, from a list of certified companies, the company or companies to be responsible for receiving and handling their waste, according to type.
27. Welcomes the intention to define the 'green ship' concept as a step that could lead to a reduction of charges and is in line with the 'polluter pays' principle. Urges however that discussions on and definitions of 'green ships' take place at international rather than European level.
28. Recalls that the lack of controls, or excessively high fees, may lead to waste being dumped in the sea with harmful consequences in not only environmental but also economic terms for surrounding regions and marine ecosystems.
29. Emphasises that port activity is in itself damaging to the natural environment. It is therefore necessary to make it completely clear to the relevant authorities that the cost of receiving and handling shipping waste, which is a joint obligation on ships and ports, is not a permissible profit-making activity for ports.
30. Calls on the Commission to consider attributing reduced fees to vessels engaged in short-sea shipping.
31. Notes that recyclable materials belong to the vessel: the processing of such material can be profitable and commercially exploitable. This significant aspect must be reflected in charges for the delivery of waste collected at sea and of the resulting recyclable materials.
32. At the same time calls on the competent authorities and operators to further develop systems to harness marine waste, making an active contribution to the circular economy.
33. Urges the Commission to further clarify the meaning of 'sufficient storage capacity' in cooperation with the International Maritime Organisation in order to restrict ports' discretion in determining this, and reduce the ensuing uncertainty for users.
34. Calls for the introduction of a time-limit for the rapid completion of the digitalisation of the notification procedures and controls and the standardisation of the required documentation for all ports.
35. Considers that keeping ship operators and port authorities informed regarding possible penalties in the event of infringement will make a significant contribution to the transparency of, as well as compliance with, the new regime.
36. Calls therefore on the Member States, as far as possible, to set up a single framework of penalties, in order to prevent both unfair competition and 'port-shopping'.
37. Acknowledges that the Commission's proposal complies with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, when it comes to implementing EU-wide rules on port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

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

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — Risk assessment in the food chain

(2018/C 461/19)

Rapporteur-general: Miloslav REPASKÝ (SK/EA), Member of the regional parliament of the Prešov Self-Governing Region

Reference document: COM(2018) 179 final

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Amendment 1

Recital 4 of the proposal for a regulation

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
It is therefore necessary to ensure a comprehensive and continuous risk communication process throughout risk analysis, involving Union and national risk assessors and risk managers. That process should be combined with an open dialogue between all interested parties to ensure the coherence and consistency within the risk analysis process.	It is therefore necessary to ensure a comprehensive and continuous risk communication process throughout risk analysis, involving Union and national risk assessors and risk managers. That process should be combined with an open dialogue between all interested parties, including consumers and consumer organisations , to ensure the prevalence of public interest , the coherence and consistency within the risk analysis process.

Amendment 2

Recital 8 of the proposal for a regulation.

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
(8) The general plan should identify the key factors to be taken into account when risk communications' activities are considered, such as the different levels of risk, the nature of the risk and its potential public health impact, who and what are directly or indirectly affected by the risk, the levels of risk exposure, the ability to control risk and other factors that influence risk perception including the level of urgency as well as the applicable legislative framework and relevant market context. The general plan should also identify the tools and channels to be used and should establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure coherent risk communication.	(8) The general plan should identify the key factors to be taken into account when risk communications' activities are considered, such as the different levels of risk, the nature of the risk and its potential public health impact, who and what are directly or indirectly affected by the risk, the levels of risk exposure, the ability to control risk and other factors that influence risk perception including the level of urgency, the uncertainties detected in risk assessment , the applicable legislative framework and relevant market context. The general plan should also identify the tools and channels to be used and should establish appropriate mechanisms to ensure coherent risk communication at all levels of government, including at the level of regional and local authorities .

Reason

A substantial proportion of European legislation is implemented by local and regional authorities, and it is therefore essential that these bodies are properly involved in the implementation of the communication strategy, as well as to ensure that this strategy is coherent.

Amendment 3

New Article 8a of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
Objectives of risk communication	Objectives of risk communication
Risk communication shall pursue the following objectives, while taking into account the respective roles of risk assessors and risk managers:	Risk communication shall pursue the following objectives, while taking into account the respective roles of risk assessors and risk managers:
a) promote awareness and understanding of the specific issues under consideration during the entire risk analysis process;	a) promote awareness and understanding of the specific issues under consideration during the entire risk analysis process;
b) promote consistency and transparency in formulating risk management recommendations;	b) promote consistency and transparency in formulating risk management recommendations with the aim of reaching a high level of protection of nature, human health, animals and the environment;
c) provide a sound basis for understanding risk management decisions;	c) provide a sound basis for understanding risk management decisions;
d) foster public understanding of the risk analysis process so as to enhance confidence in its outcome;	d) foster public understanding of the risk analysis process so as to enhance confidence in its outcome;
e) promote appropriate involvement of all interested parties; and,	e) ensure that the public's awareness of the concepts of 'danger' and 'risk' are understood and that different trade-offs between risks and benefits are accepted;
f) ensure appropriate exchange of information with interested parties in relation to risks associated with the agri-food chain.	f) promote appropriate involvement of all interested parties; and strengthen relations and mutual respect between them and,
	g) ensure appropriate exchange of information with interested parties in relation to risks associated with the agri-food chain.

Reason

Given the different approaches to understanding the concepts of risk and hazard in the Member States and the related debate between policy makers, academics, regulators and the industry, it is worth highlighting the importance of raising public awareness of these concepts and ensuring that the public understands and accepts the trade-offs between risks and benefits.

Amendment 4

New Article 8c of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002

Text proposed by the Commission	CoR amendment
<p>General plan for risk communication</p> <p>1. The Commission, in close cooperation with the Authority, the Member States and following appropriate public consultations shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 57a establishing a general plan for risk communication on matters relating to the agri-food chain, taking into account the relevant objectives and general principles set out in Articles 8a and 8b.</p> <p>2. The general plan for risk communication shall promote an integrated risk communication framework to be followed both by the risk assessors and the risk managers in a coherent and systematic manner both at Union and national level. It shall:</p> <p>a) identify the key factors that need to be taken into account when considering the type and level of risk communications' activities needed;</p> <p>b) identify the appropriate main tools and channels to be used for risk communication purposes, taking into account the needs of relevant target audience groups; and,</p> <p>c) establish appropriate mechanisms in order to strengthen coherence of risk communication amongst risk assessors and risk managers and ensure an open dialogue amongst all interested parties.</p> <p>3. The Commission shall adopt the general plan for risk communication within [two years from the date of application of this Regulation] and shall keep it updated, taking into account technical and scientific progress and experience gained.;</p>	<p>General plan for risk communication</p> <p>1. The Commission, in close cooperation with the Authority, the Member States and following appropriate public consultations shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 57a establishing a general plan for risk communication on matters relating to the agri-food chain, taking into account the relevant objectives and general principles set out in Articles 8a and 8b.</p> <p>2. The general plan for risk communication shall promote an integrated risk communication framework to be followed both by the risk assessors and the risk managers in a coherent and systematic manner at Union, national, regional and local levels. It shall:</p> <p>a) identify the key factors that need to be taken into account when considering the type and level of risk communications' activities needed;</p> <p>b) identify the appropriate main tools and channels to be used for risk communication purposes, taking into account the needs of relevant target audience groups; and,</p> <p>c) establish appropriate mechanisms in order to strengthen coherence of risk communication amongst risk assessors and risk managers and ensure an open dialogue amongst all interested parties.</p> <p>3. The Commission shall adopt the general plan for risk communication within [two years from the date of application of this Regulation] and shall keep it updated, taking into account technical and scientific progress and experience gained.;</p>

Reason

Same as for amendment 1.

Amendment 5

Article 39.2.1

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
<p><i>‘Article 39</i></p> <p>Confidentiality</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>(1) the method and other technical and industrial specifications relating to that method, used to manufacture or produce the subject matter of the request for a scientific output, including a scientific opinion;</p> <p>[...]</p>	<p><i>‘Article 39</i></p> <p>Confidentiality</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>(1) the method and other technical and industrial specifications relating to that method, used to manufacture or produce the subject matter of the request for a scientific output, including a scientific opinion, <i>provided that the applicant demonstrates that such method has no harmful impacts on health and environment;</i></p> <p>[...]</p>

Reason

The amendment aims at giving better consideration to health and environmental protection.

Amendment 6

Article 39.4.b

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
<p><i>‘Article 39</i></p> <p>Confidentiality</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>4. Notwithstanding paragraphs 2 and 3, the following information shall nevertheless be made public:</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>(b) information which forms part of conclusions of scientific outputs, including scientific opinions, delivered by the Authority and which relate to <i>foreseeable</i> health effects.’;</p>	<p><i>‘Article 39</i></p> <p>Confidentiality</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>4. Notwithstanding paragraphs 2 and 3, the following information shall nevertheless be made public:</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>(b) information which forms part of conclusions of scientific outputs, including scientific opinions, delivered by the Authority and which relate to <i>potential human or animal health or environmental</i> effects.’;</p>

Reason

The amendment aims at giving better consideration to health and environmental protection.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Background

1. welcomes the Commission's initiative aimed at increasing the transparency and sustainability of EU risk assessment in the food chain as a move in the right direction that clarifies the transparency rules particularly regarding the scientific studies used by EFSA in its risk assessments, improves EFSA management, bolsters scientific collaboration between the Member States and EFSA and their involvement in EFSA's scientific work and develops a comprehensive and effective communication strategy in the field of risk;
2. believes that this initiative is a move in the right direction but doubts persist about whether the proposed changes will enable an independent scientific scrutiny of studies and data used in the risk assessments of regulated products and substances due to the current legal framework on data protection and confidentiality rules;
3. notes that this legislative proposal responds to the findings of the fitness check carried out by the Commission of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 on food law⁽¹⁾, as well as to the European Citizens' Initiative 'Ban glyphosate and protect people and the environment from toxic pesticides', and amends several sector-specific laws;
4. points out that the fitness check for Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 revealed that people are calling for a more transparent risk assessment procedure in the area of food law, as well as a more transparent decision-making process based on risk assessment. The conclusions of the fitness check also identified other areas where change is needed, namely EFSA's management (negative signals regarding its ability to maintain the high quality and independence of scientific studies and the need to strengthen cooperation with all Member States), and the lack of communication about risk more generally;
5. points out that risk assessment is carried out at EU level by EFSA, which was set up by the GFL Regulation. EFSA is an independent scientific body responsible for carrying out expert assessments of aspects relating to the safety of EU food and animal feed at the request of the Commission, the Member States and the European Parliament, as well as on its own initiative. These risk assessments are carried out separately from risk management, for which the European Commission is largely responsible;

Transparency, independence and reliability of the EU risk assessment process

6. highlights the fact that citizens and other stakeholders have raised concerns about the transparency and independence of industry generated studies and data used by EFSA in its risk assessments in the context of authorisation procedures for regulated products or substances;
7. acknowledges that the Commission's proposal complies with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;
8. observes that the current authorisation process is based on the applicant (industry) directly commissioning the studies required for application dossiers. Central to this concept is the idea that public money should not be used to commission studies that will eventually help industry to put a product on the market;
9. points out that as a result of the above, intellectual property rights over the studies and their content used in risk assessments lie within the industry, and thus an independent scientific scrutiny might not be possible considering the wording of the new paragraph 1a of Article 38 of the GFL Regulation, which states that 'the disclosure to the public of the information mentioned in paragraph (1)(c) shall not be considered as an explicit or implicit permission or license for the relevant data and information and their content to be used, reproduced, or otherwise exploited';
10. notes that if independent researchers are not able to publish their findings, there will be no incentives for them to cross-check the results of a study used in the EFSA risk assessments;

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety.

11. notes that for independent researchers to be able to form a judgement about the validity of an analysis and to reproduce the findings of a study or make additional discoveries, it is fundamental to have access not only to data but also to the software used to obtain the results. It would be therefore very useful to clarify the position of the Commission and EFSA as far as access to the proprietary software used in sponsored studies is concerned, not least in view of EFSA's proclaimed aim of making its scientific output reproducible;

12. also notes that experience has shown that public access to information and data, which would make it possible to check the correctness of the safety assessment of a substance, may not be straightforward and can involve the intervention of the EU courts ⁽²⁾;

13. notes in this context that Article 12 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 on Public Access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents allows for, and indeed encourages, proactive publication; it takes the view that the EU rules on public access to information should be applied in a coherent way by all EU scientific advisory bodies and their proactive disclosure policy should be coherent to guarantee predictability;

14. in this context notes that the European Medicines Agency, under its Policy 0070 aimed at enabling public scrutiny and application of new knowledge in future research in the interest of public health ⁽³⁾, published in 2016 a guidance document on the Agency's proactive disclosure policy for clinical data;

15. supports the proposal to set up a register of all studies managed by EFSA which should make publication bias and withholding of important safety information more difficult; notes that such an EU register is already in place for clinical trials ⁽⁴⁾;

16. with regard to assessing the confidentiality of data, feels that harmonisation is important and therefore does not consider the passing of this obligation on to the Member States to be the best solution. The confidentiality of the data should be decided by EFSA, thus ensuring a unified approach to assessing applications on this sensitive issue;

Sustainability of the EU risk assessment procedure and EFSA management

17. welcomes the fact that one of the aims of this legislative proposal is to improve the management of EFSA, strengthen Member States' scientific cooperation with this body, and increase their participation in its scientific work;

18. welcomes the considerable increase in EFSA's budget, enabling it to perform its newly assigned tasks, such as commissioning independent safety tests in exceptional circumstances, while pointing out that sufficient funding must be guaranteed for the EFSA to be able to carry out its core tasks without constraints;

19. welcomes the alignment of the membership of EFSA's management board and the procedure for the external assessment of EFSA set out in the annex to the 2012 inter-institutional joint statement on Union decentralised agencies;

20. notes that at present there are 14 elected members of the EFSA board, which is expected to rise to 35 under the present proposal. Each Member State should nominate its own representative and alternate, thereby ensuring greater involvement on the part of the Member States in the management of EFSA. The Commission nominates two members and the European Parliament has one representative; four members will represent the interests of civil society and the food chain;

21. observes that, in the event of inadequate staffing capacity, especially with regard to smaller Member States (up to 12 national experts per Member State will need to be appointed), the proposal allows for the possibility of appointing experts from other Member States to EFSA panels; this would however undermine the targeted balance of cooperation among all Member States;

⁽²⁾ Hautala and Others v EFSA (case T-329/17), action brought on 24 May 2017.

⁽³⁾ http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Other/2014/10/WC500174796.pdf

⁽⁴⁾ European Clinical Trials Database (EudraCT) managed by the European Medicines Agencies.

Better communication about risk

22. welcomes the fact that the general plan on risk communication, as set out in the Commission's proposal, takes into account risk perceptions and stresses in this regard that it is very important to raise awareness among the general public about concepts such as 'danger' and 'risk';
23. observes that despite the uniform principles for evaluation and authorisation of regulated products, inconsistencies are apparent across Member States in relation to the regulation of certain substances, which may arise from different approaches to the concepts of hazard and risk and social acceptance of the level of risk involved;
24. highlights the general decline in trust in policymakers in Europe and points out that public trust is one of the most important explanatory variables of the public's perceptions of risk⁽⁵⁾. If the public trusts policymakers or regulators, they will perceive risks to be less than when they do not trust them;
25. therefore supports the notion of raising the confidence of the public and interested parties in the transparency and sustainability of the EU's approach to food safety, especially in relation to risk assessment, maintaining at the same time that for a risk communication strategy to be effective it is necessary to engage with the public and other relevant stakeholders in a proactive and productive way, making sure that different trade-offs between risks and benefits are understood and accepted;
26. stresses that the EU risk communication strategy must be inclusive and must ensure that all levels of government, from the level of central government to that of local and regional authorities, as well as other relevant players, are duly involved to guarantee a coherent risk communication strategy addressing risks associated with the food chain;
27. points out that, on the basis of the analysis and discussion of the proposal to date, account must be taken of the expected increased administrative burdens, greater demands on national experts in the context of their membership of the EFSA board and their activities on EFSA scientific panels, possible political influence on the nomination of national experts, with a resulting impact on EFSA's independence, and a significant financial impact on all Member States as a result of a considerable increase in EFSA's budget, as well as in view of the anticipated budgetary consequences of Brexit.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

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

⁽⁵⁾ From research carried out by Ragnar Löfstedt and other researchers in the field of risk communication and management.

Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions — A new deal for consumers

(2018/C 461/20)

Rapporteur-general: Samuel AZZOPARDI (MT/EPP), Councillor, Rabat Citta Victoria, Local Council, Gozo

Reference documents: Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on representative actions for the protection of the collective interests of consumers, and repealing Directive 2009/22/EC

COM(2018) 184 final

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 93/13/EEC of 5 April 1993, Directive 98/6/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Directive 2005/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards better enforcement and modernisation of EU consumer protection rules

COM(2018) 185 final

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee, A New Deal for Consumers

COM(2018) 183 final

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS

Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on representative actions for the protection of the collective interests of consumers, and repealing Directive 2009/22/EC

(COM/2018/0184 final — 2018/089 (COD))

Amendment 1

Chapter 2, Article 6(1) — amend as follows:

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
For the purposes of Article 5(3), Member States shall ensure that qualified entities are entitled to bring representative actions seeking a redress order, which obligates the trader to provide for, inter alia, compensation, repair, replacement, price reduction, contract termination or reimbursement of the price paid, as appropriate. A Member State may require the mandate of the individual consumers concerned before a declaratory decision is made or a redress order is issued.	For the purposes of Article 5(3), Member States shall ensure that qualified entities are entitled to bring representative actions seeking a redress order, which obligates the trader to provide for, inter alia, compensation, repair, replacement, price reduction, contract termination or reimbursement of the price paid, as appropriate. A Member State may require the mandate of the individual consumers concerned before a redress order is issued.

Reason

The mandate of the individual consumers should only be required where a redress order is requested by the qualified entity. In the case of declaratory decisions whereby an infringement is established, the consumers' mandate should not be required. This is consistent with Article 5(2) which states that 'In order to seek injunction orders, (including hence, an injunction order establishing that the practice constitutes an infringement of law) qualified entities shall not have to obtain the mandate of the individual consumers concerned or provide proof of actual loss or damage on the part of the consumers concerned or of intention or negligence on the part of the trader'.

Amendment 2

Chapter 3, Article 18(2) — delete the paragraph

Monitoring and evaluation

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
<i>No later than one year after the entry into force of this Directive, the Commission shall assess whether the rules on air and rail passenger rights offer a level of protection of the rights of consumers comparable to that provided for under this Directive. Where that is the case, the Commission intends to make appropriate proposals, which may consist in particular in removing the acts referred to in points 10 and 15 of Annex I from the scope of application of this Directive as defined in Article 2.</i>	

Reason

It is essential to preserve the wide scope of the proposal, including passenger rights.

Amendment 3

Annex I — amend as follows:

List of provisions of Union law referred to in Article 2(1)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
[...]	[...] (60) <i>Directive 2004/35/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 April 2004 on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage (OJ L 143, 30.4.2004, p. 56)</i>

Reason

The scope of the directive should be widened to make a real impact in areas where mass harm occurs, covering all practices detrimental to consumers and citizens.

Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 93/13/EEC of 5 April 1993, Directive 98/6/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Directive 2005/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards better enforcement and modernisation of EU consumer protection rules

(COM(2018) 185 final — 2018/0090(COD))

Amendment 4

Recital 2 — new point

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	<p><i>Increasing digitisation is changing the foundations of our existence. In the digital age, enormous shifts of power occur between individuals, governments and companies. However, technical progress must always remain at the service of mankind in the digital age.</i></p> <p><i>The design of the digital world must also be a European task, so that the European Union can succeed in preserving freedom, justice and solidarity in the 21st century.</i></p> <p><i>Fundamental rights and democratic principles must also be safeguarded in the digital world by the rule of law, by obliging state and non-state actors to ensure the application of fundamental rights in the digital world, thus creating the foundations of a rule of law in the digital age.</i></p>

Reason

Taking into account the preamble of the Charter of Digital Fundamental Rights of the EU (<https://digitalcharta.eu/>), specific democratic, constitutional and fundamental rights challenges that accompany the digitisation process should be identified.

Amendment 5

Recital 5 — new point

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	<p><i>In line with the established case-law of the European Court of Justice, the freedom to provide services guaranteed by the Treaties may be restricted for overriding reasons of general interest, for example in order to achieve a high level of consumer protection, provided that those restrictions are justified, proportionate and necessary. Member States may therefore take certain measures to ensure compliance with their consumer protection rules, which are not covered by the scope of this Directive. The measures taken by a Member State to enforce its national consumer protection regime, including e.g. gambling advertising, should, as warranted by EU case-law, be proportionate and necessary in view of the objective pursued.</i></p>

Reason

Self-explanatory

Amendment 6

Recital 18 — amend text as follows:

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Online marketplaces should be defined for the purposes of Directive 2011/83/EU in a similar manner as in Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 ⁽¹⁾ and Directive (EU) 2016/1148 ⁽²⁾. However, the definition should be updated and rendered more technologically neutral in order to cover new technologies. It is therefore appropriate to refer, instead of a 'website', to the notion of an 'online interface' as provided by Regulation (EU) 2018/302 ⁽³⁾.</p> <p>⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes and amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 and Directive 2009/22/EC (Regulation on consumer ODR) (OJ L 165, 18.6.2013, p. 1).</p> <p>⁽²⁾ Directive (EU) 2016/1148 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 concerning measures for a high common level of security of network and information systems across the Union (OJ L 194, 19.7.2016, p. 1).</p> <p>⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2018/302 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 February 2018 on addressing unjustified geo-blocking and other forms of discrimination based on customers' nationality, place of residence or place of establishment within the internal market and amending Regulations (EC) No 2006/2004 and (EU) 2017/2394 and Directive 2009/22/EC (OJ L 60 I, 2.3.2018, p. 1).</p>	<p>Online marketplaces should be defined for the purposes of Directive 2011/83/EU in a similar manner as in Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 ⁽¹⁾. However, the definition should be updated and rendered more technologically neutral in order to cover new technologies. It is therefore appropriate to refer, instead of a 'website', to the notion of an 'online interface' as provided by Regulation (EU) 2018/302 ⁽²⁾. The IT services provided by the online marketplace may include the processing of transactions, the aggregation of data, or the creation of user profiles. Online Store Application Stores that enable the digital distribution of third-party applications or software programs should be viewed as a kind of online marketplace.</p> <p>⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes and amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 and Directive 2009/22/EC (Regulation on consumer ODR) (OJ L 165, 18.6.2013, p. 1).</p> <p>⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) 2018/302 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 February 2018 on addressing unjustified geo-blocking and other forms of discrimination based on customers' nationality, place of residence or place of establishment within the internal market and amending Regulations (EC) No 2006/2004 and (EU) 2017/2394 and Directive 2009/22/EC (OJ L 60 I, 2.3.2018, p. 1).</p>

Reason

Article 2.4 defines important information requirements in online marketplaces and should explicitly include application stores, as does Regulation (EC) No 524/2013. In order to avoid the disclosure of the ranking criteria being circumvented, there should be no reference to Directive (EU) 2016/1148.

Amendment 7

Recital 21 — amend text as follows:

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Digital content and digital services are often supplied online under contracts where the consumer does not pay a price but provides personal data to the trader. Digital services are characterised by continuous involvement of the trader over the duration of the contract to enable the consumer to make use of the service, for instance, access to, creation, processing, storing or sharing of data in digital form. Examples of digital services are subscription contracts to content platforms, cloud storage, webmail, social media and cloud applications. The continuous involvement of the service provider justifies the application of the rules on the right of withdrawal provided in Directive 2011/83/EU that effectively allow the consumer to test the service and decide, during the 14-day period from the conclusion of the contract, whether to keep it or not. In contrast, contracts for the supply of digital content which is not supplied on a tangible medium are characterised by one-off action by the trader to supply to the consumer a specific piece or pieces of digital content, such as specific music or video files. This one-off nature of the provision of digital content is at the basis of the exception from the right of withdrawal pursuant to Article 16(m) of Directive 2011/83/EU, whereby the consumer loses the right of withdrawal when the performance of the contract is started, such as download or streaming of the specific content.</p>	<p>Digital content and digital services are often supplied online under contracts where the consumer does not pay a price but provides data to the trader. Digital services are characterised by continuous involvement of the trader over the duration of the contract to enable the consumer to make use of the service, for instance, access to, creation, processing, storing or sharing of data in digital form. Examples of digital services are subscription contracts to content platforms, cloud storage, webmail, social media and cloud applications. The continuous involvement of the service provider justifies the application of the rules on the right of withdrawal provided in Directive 2011/83/EU that effectively allow the consumer to test the service and decide, during the 14-day period from the conclusion of the contract, whether to keep it or not. In contrast, contracts for the supply of digital content which is not supplied on a tangible medium are characterised by one-off action by the trader to supply to the consumer a specific piece or pieces of digital content, such as specific music or video files. This one-off nature of the provision of digital content is at the basis of the exception from the right of withdrawal pursuant to Article 16(m) of Directive 2011/83/EU, whereby the consumer loses the right of withdrawal when the performance of the contract is started, such as download or streaming of the specific content.</p>

Reason

The scope of the Consumer Rights Directive should be extended beyond the EU Commission's proposal and include payment of non-personal data. Especially non-personal data, such as some machine-generated information, is playing an increasingly important role as a commodity.

Amendment 8

Recital 26 — amend text as follows:

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
<p>Directive 2011/83/EU should also not apply to situations where the trader only collects metadata, such as the IP address, browsing history or other information collected and transmitted for instance by cookies, except where this situation is considered a contract under national law. It should also not apply to situations where the consumer, without having concluded a contract with the trader, is exposed to advertisements exclusively in order to gain access to digital content or a digital service. However, Member States should remain free to extend the application of the rules of Directive 2011/83/EU to such situations or to otherwise regulate such situations which are excluded from the scope of that Directive.</p>	<p>Directive 2011/83/EU should also apply to situations where the trader collects metadata, such as the IP address, browsing history or other information collected and transmitted for instance by cookies. It should also apply to situations where the consumer, without having concluded a contract with the trader, is exposed to advertisements exclusively in order to gain access to digital content or a digital service. However, Member States should remain free to restrict through legislation the application of the rules of Directive 2011/83/EU to such situations by expressly referring to them in the text of the law or to otherwise regulate such situations which are excluded from the scope of that Directive.</p>

Reason

A sustainable level of consumer protection in the digital age can be achieved by reversing the rule-to-exception relationship in relation to the scope of application of Directive 2011/83/EU in cases where the trader uses metadata collected through cookies.

Amendment 9

Recital 27 — new point

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	<p><i>In the future, Directive 2011/83/EU should also provide a framework for verifying algorithmic and AI-based decisions, services and products to protect consumers, in particular as regards possible undue discrimination, disadvantage and fraud. To this end, mechanisms should also be developed in order to be able to regulate in the case of dubious developments.</i></p> <p><i>Providers of high penetration digital communication systems should be required to enable lossless switching to other systems.</i></p> <p><i>Brokering, accounting and comparison platforms should be able to increase the transparency of their valuation systems, the weighting of their results, commissions and market coverage, and the links between portals and economic links. Consumers should be better protected from counterfeiting, data misuse and elemental risks. In addition, placement platforms should inform users in a transparent manner whether their offers are private or commercial.</i></p>

Reason

Self-explanatory

Amendment 10

Article 1(1)(a) — amend text as follows:

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
(1) Article 3 is amended as follows:	(1) Article 3 is amended as follows:
(a) Paragraph 5 is replaced by the following:	(a) Paragraph 5 is replaced by the following:
<p>This Directive does not prevent Member States from adopting provisions to protect the legitimate interests of consumers with regard to aggressive or misleading marketing or selling practices in the context of unsolicited visits by a trader to a consumer's home, or with regard to commercial excursions organised by a trader with the aim or effect of promoting or selling products to consumers, provided that such provisions are justified on grounds of public policy or the protection of the respect for private life.</p>	<p>This Directive does not prevent Member States from adopting provisions to protect the legitimate interests of consumers with regard to aggressive or misleading marketing or selling practices in the context of unsolicited visits by a trader to a consumer's home, including unsolicited advertising in the form of spam emails, or with regard to commercial excursions organised by a trader with the aim or effect of promoting or selling products to consumers, provided that such provisions are justified on grounds of public policy or the protection of the respect for private life or the data sovereignty of the consumer.</p>

Amendment 11

Article 1 — Amendments to Directive 2005/29/EC

paragraph (2) — include proviso

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
(2) The following point (c) is inserted in paragraph 2 of Article 6:	(2) The following point (c) is inserted in paragraph 2 of Article 6:
(c) Any marketing of a product as being identical to the same product marketed in several other Member States, while those products have significantly different composition or characteristics;	(c) Any marketing of a product as being identical to the same product marketed in several other Member States, while those products have significantly different composition or characteristics:
	<p><i>Provided that, for the purpose of Point (c) of Paragraph 2 of Article 6, a product is considered to be marketed as being identical when it is marketed with the same packaging and branding in several Member States;</i></p>

Reason

The inclusion of this proviso is necessary for legal certainty on what constitutes 'identical' products and to differentiate 'dual-quality of goods' from 'copycat packaging' where the packaging of products is identical to products of a competitor.

Amendment 12

Article 1 — Amendments to Directive 2005/29/EC
paragraph (4) — amend as follows:

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(4) The following Article 11a is inserted:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>‘Article 11a</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Redress</p> <p>1. In addition to the requirement to ensure adequate and effective means to enforce compliance in Article 11, Member States shall ensure that contractual and non-contractual remedies are also available for consumers harmed by unfair commercial practices in order to eliminate all the effects of those unfair commercial practices in accordance with their national law.</p> <p>[...]</p>	<p>(4) The following Article 11a is inserted:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>‘Article 11a</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Redress</p> <p>1. In addition to the requirement to ensure adequate and effective means to enforce compliance in Article 11, Member States shall ensure that <i>appropriate and non-deterrent</i> contractual and non-contractual remedies are also available for consumers harmed by unfair commercial practices in order to eliminate all the effects of those unfair commercial practices in accordance with their national law.</p> <p>[...]</p>

Reason

The further qualification of remedies in relation to timeliness and cost-effectiveness would ensure that remedies are not merely made available but that such remedies are available in a timely and cost-effective manner. It would be futile to merely have such remedies available under national law, if such remedies cannot, however, be obtained in a cost effective and timely manner. The consumer is always the weaker party in the situation and when faced with the resources available to traders, consumers may be reluctant to avail themselves of such remedies if such remedies, although available are significantly costly.

Amendment 13

Article 1 — new point

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	<p>(7) <i>A commercial practice is considered to be aggressive if, in the specific case, taking into account all factual circumstances, the consumer's freedom of decision or freedom to conduct the product may be affected by harassment, including in digital form, coercion, including the use of bodily force, or by improper interference even in digital form and if the consumer is actually or likely to be materially affected and thereby likely to make a business decision which he/she would not have made otherwise.</i></p>

Reason

Self-explanatory

Amendment 14

Article 2 — (4)(a) — amend text as follows:

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
<i>‘Article 6a</i>	<i>‘Article 6a</i>
Additional information requirements for contracts concluded on online marketplaces	Additional information requirements for contracts concluded on online marketplaces
Before a consumer is bound by a distance contract, or any corresponding offer, on an online marketplace, the online marketplace shall in addition provide the following information:	Before a consumer is bound by a distance contract, or any corresponding offer, on an online marketplace, the online marketplace shall in addition provide the following information:
(a) the main parameters determining ranking of offers presented to the consumer as result of his search query on the online marketplace;	(a) the main parameters determining ranking of offers presented to the consumer as result of his search query on the online marketplace and the reasons for the special weighting of these main parameters compared to other parameters.

Reason

Self-explanatory

Amendment 15

Article 2(7)(a)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
(a) paragraph 3 is replaced by the following: ‘3. Unless the trader has offered to collect the goods himself, with regard to sales contracts, the trader may withhold the reimbursement until he has received the goods back.’	

Reason

The right of withdrawal is a central consumer right in online trading and other distance selling. The existing regulations on the right of withdrawal are fair and balanced. The rules on the modality of repayment should also be maintained.

Amendment 16

Article 2 — new point

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	Where an electronically-contracted contract requires the consumer to pay or provide data, the trader shall clearly inform the consumer, immediately before placing his order, of the terms of Articles 6(1)(a), (e), (o) and (p).

Reason

Consumers need to be clearly informed before concluding a contract whether the data they provide are being processed for commercial purposes.

Amendment 17

Article 2 — new point

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
	<i>The following Article 6c is inserted: The trader waives the processing of the data provided by the consumer for the duration of the revocation period insofar as the data processing is not necessary for the fulfilment of the contract.</i>

Reason

Companies can no longer 'retrieve' the data once passed on to third parties. Companies must be obliged not to forward the personal data provided to consumers 14 days after the conclusion of the contract to third parties and to delete the data in the case of declarations of effective revocation.

Amendment 18

Article 2 — Amendments to Directive 2011/83/EU

paragraph (9) — delete subparagraph (3)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
<p>(9) Article 16 is amended as follows:</p> <p>(a) point (a) is replaced by the following:</p> <p>‘(a) service contracts after the service has been fully performed if the performance has begun with the consumer’s prior express consent’;</p> <p>(2) point (m) is replaced by the following:</p> <p>‘(m) contracts for the supply of digital content which is not supplied on tangible medium if the performance has begun and, if the contract places the consumer under an obligation to pay, where the consumer has provided prior express consent to begin the performance during the right of withdrawal period and acknowledged that he thereby loses his right of withdrawal;’</p> <p>(3) <i>the following point is added:</i></p> <p>‘(n) <i>the supply of goods that the consumer has handled, during the right of withdrawal period, other than what is necessary to establish the nature, characteristics and functioning of the goods.</i>’</p>	<p>(9) Article 16 is amended as follows:</p> <p>(a) point (a) is replaced by the following:</p> <p>‘(a) service contracts after the service has been fully performed if the performance has begun with the consumer’s prior express consent’;</p> <p>(2) point (m) is replaced by the following:</p> <p>‘(m) contracts for the supply of digital content which is not supplied on tangible medium if the performance has begun and, if the contract places the consumer under an obligation to pay, where the consumer has provided prior express consent to begin the performance during the right of withdrawal period and acknowledged that he thereby loses his right of withdrawal.’</p>

Reason

There is no conclusive evidence of large-scale misuse which would justify this amendment to the Consumer Rights Directive. The right to return a product bought online is one of the most important consumer rights and should not be in any way diluted.

Amendment 19

Article 3 — Amendments to Directive 93/13/EC

Amend as follows:

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
Directive 93/13/EEC is amended as follows:	Directive 93/13/EEC is amended as follows:
The following Article 8b is inserted:	The following Article 8b is inserted:
<i>'Article 8b</i>	<i>'Article 8b</i>
(...)	(...)
4. Member States shall ensure that the penalties for widespread infringements and widespread infringements with a Union dimension within the meaning of Regulation (EU) 2017/2934 include the possibility to impose fines, the maximum amount of which shall be at least 4 % of the trader's annual turnover in the Member State or Member States concerned.	4. Member States shall ensure that the penalties for widespread infringements and widespread infringements with a Union dimension within the meaning of Regulation (EU) 2017/2934 include the possibility to impose fines, the maximum amount of which shall be at least 8 % of the average turnover generated by the trader in the preceding three financial years in the Member State or Member States concerned.

Reason

It is not clear from which year the annual turnover is to be calculated. It is therefore proposed to increase the minimum amount of the fines to 8 % of the average turnover achieved by the trader in the previous three financial years in the Member State(s) concerned.

Amendment 20

Article 4 — Amendments to Directive 98/6/EC

Amend as follows:

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
Directive 98/6/EC is amended as follows:	Directive 98/6/EC is amended as follows:
Article 8 is replaced by the following:	Article 8 is replaced by the following:
<i>'Article 8</i>	<i>'Article 8</i>
(...)	(...)

Text proposed by the European Commission	CoR amendment
4. Member States shall ensure that the penalties for widespread infringements and widespread infringements with a Union dimension within the meaning of Regulation (EU) 2017/2934 include the possibility to impose fines, the maximum amount of which shall be at least 4 % of the trader's annual turnover in the Member State or Member States concerned.	4. Member States shall ensure that the penalties for widespread infringements and widespread infringements with a Union dimension within the meaning of Regulation (EU) 2017/2934 include the possibility to impose fines, the maximum amount of which shall be at least 8 % of the average turnover generated by the trader in the preceding three financial years in the Member State or Member States concerned.

Reason

Same explanation as for amendment to Article 3 to Directive 93/13/EC.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. welcomes the publication of a long-awaited proposal to set a minimum EU-wide framework for collective redress scheme mechanisms across the Member States, which could bring a real opportunity to consumers to obtain redress in the case of mass damage and should fill in the existing gap in the enforcement of EU consumer rights; the proposal, however, is considered as a first step in the right direction, as it contains a number of shortcomings;
2. supports the wide scope of the proposal to make a real impact in areas where mass harm occurs to cover other practices that are detrimental to consumers and more largely to citizens;
3. acknowledges that the European Commission's proposal complies with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;
4. regrets that the scope of the current proposal to set a minimum EU-wide framework for collective redress scheme mechanisms across the Member States is limited only to consumer disputes;
5. recommends that collective redress mechanisms be extended to other cases of mass harm, including cases of mass environmental damage, harm done to common goods, and in respect of health and safety regulations or violations of employment rights, to bring about easier access to justice for all citizens;
6. therefore calls on the European Commission to explore ways of extending relief to these sectors and to expand the scope of the proposal for collective redress to cover all forms of harm occasioned by violations of fundamental rights, as granted under EU law;
7. promotes the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as a means to allow the parties to negotiate and often mediate disputes. Consensual negotiation and mediation between qualified entities and potential defendants before the beginning of proceedings should be promoted. Before launching lengthy and costly collective redress actions, the ADR processes, such as negotiations and/or mediation, could be encouraged whenever possible in order to reach comprehensive and amicable settlements;
8. highlights the minimum harmonisation character of the directive, which does not preclude existing better or stricter national rules in the existing collective redress systems, thus allowing Member States to have higher standards and to maintain or introduce other national procedures;
9. opposes the possibility for the Member States to derogate in the case of complex quantification of the damage. This would mean that consumers have to act individually in these cases, which would require them to seek expensive legal and technical assistance. This could turn out to be an overwhelming obstacle for individual consumers;

10. recommends that the mandate of individual consumers should not be required in the case of a declaratory decision requested by the qualified entity;
11. draws attention to the fact that consumer organisations which can be designated as qualified entities may have limited financial capacities. Consumer organisations in smaller Member States are particularly concerned. The lack of financial capacity should not hinder organisations from being designated as qualified entities;
12. strongly supports the update and better enforcement of EU consumer rules;
13. welcomes the proposed requirements under the Consumer Rights Directive for contracts concluded in online marketplaces regarding transparency. Recommends adding consequences and remedies if traders do not comply with those requirements;
14. considers it important to envisage further remedies alongside the right to compensation and the right to terminate the contract, such as the right to ask for specific performance or right of restitution. Recommends setting clear definitions of the remedies and elaborating on what they could entail;
15. considers it important for the Commission to ensure that remedies should not merely be made available by Member States but be made available in a timely and cost-effective manner;
16. considers the right of withdrawal as being an important consumer right that should not be weakened in the absence of any conclusive evidence of misuse;
17. supports the approach taken by the Commission to introduce fines based on a trader's turnover in the case of widespread infringements;
18. believes, however, that the minimum fine of 4 % of the trader's annual turnover for widespread infringements is not adequately dissuasive;
19. recommends that the minimum fine be increased to 8 % of the average turnover generated by the trader in the preceding three financial years in the Member State or Member States;
20. regrets that the rules on the liability of online marketplaces are missing in the proposal. Operators of the online platforms should be liable, in cases where they fail to inform the consumer that a third party is the actual supplier of the goods or services or where they fail to remove misleading information disseminated by the supplier and which has been reported to the operator;
21. regrets the absence of rules for better and more transparent user feedback/review systems.

Brussels, 10 October 2018.

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

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