

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions



# For a Europe with regions and cities: the view of young people



Conference on  
1 April 2014 in Brussels  
and on the web

Committee of the Regions

Programme

in cooperation with



**Debating  
Europe**

## Outline and objective

As part of its 20th anniversary celebrations, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) is organising a youth conference with 150 young people from a variety of youth organisations and European political parties, including a selection of students and interns from the EU institutions, regional representation offices and Brussels-based think-tanks, to discuss the future of a multi-level Europe and of the CoR itself – the only EU institution that truly represents the views of Europe's cities and regions. In tandem with the CoR's internal reflection process, the event aims to elicit some feedback from the younger generation about what form they expect the CoR to take in the next 20 years.

The event is prepared with the help of a number of universities specialised in European studies. Specially selected professors and master students are invited to take part in the event.

The opening and closing sessions will be web streamed live. Participation is also possible online, e.g. with the help of "Debating Europe" ([www.debatingeurope.eu](http://www.debatingeurope.eu)) or via twitter #EUregions).

## Target group

As a general rule, participants are aged 30 or under and fall into one of the following categories:

- Members of youth organisations and young members of European political parties selected by the CoR's political groups;
- Master of European affairs students;
- Interns from the EU institutions, regional representation offices or major Brussels-based think-tanks.

After submitting an application to attend, over 150 participants were elected to take part, taking care to ensure a good geographical and gender balance.

## Programme

**9:30 – 10:30** **The Committee of the Regions: the first 20 years of an EU body of regional and local representatives**  
(Room JDE62)

**Keynote speech** (15 min)

**Mercedes Bresso**, first Vice-President of the CoR

Debate (40 min)

**Moderator**

**Karen Coleman**, broadcaster and journalist, Ireland

**10:45 - 12:30** **Parallel workshops**

**(1) Is all EU politics local? What are the CoR's future political priorities?**

(Room JDE63)

**Chair: Kolja Raube**, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven

With subnational governments being responsible for one third of public expenditure and two thirds

of public investment and for implementing 80% of EU legislation, institutionalising regional interests through the Committee of the Regions was a logical step to complete the EU's governance structure. Subsequent revisions of the EU Treaties have given the CoR a stronger role in policy-making, and a large body of literature on multi-level governance in the EU has emerged in recent years. However, the CoR's influence as an advisory body to the EU institutions remains limited.

The objective of this workshop is to present up to **seven specific recommendations** on the future of a more regional and local Europe and on the CoR's role therein at the closing session. The debate will be structured around the following questions:

- What added value can regions/cities bring to EU policies?
- What can the EU learn from successful regional/local policy measures?

- What role should the EU play in ensuring the achievement of EU objectives at regional and local level?
- How can territorial cohesion be fostered and in what ways can the EU encourage greater cooperation and exchange between regional/local authorities?

## (2) Voice and visibility: how can regions and cities bring Europe closer to the public?

(Room JDE62)

**Chair:** Luciano Morganti, Vrije Universiteit Brussel

The Committee of the Regions' arrival on the EU's institutional stage fostered hopes that a body composed of local and regional representatives would help bring Europe closer to its citizens. With public support for the EU and its institutions at a historical low, the question arises as to whether and how regions and cities can contribute to a "European identity".

The objective of this workshop is to present up to **seven specific recommendations** on how regions and cities could foster a sense of European identity, to be presented at the closing session. The debate will be structured around the following questions:

- Bringing Europe home: mission impossible or can regional/local politicians help communicate Europe?
- What European narrative can local politics use?
- What participative instruments and e-tools could be useful in involving local citizens, platforms or political representatives in EU policy making?

## (3) How should the CoR fit into the EU's institutional architecture in the future?

(Atrium 5)

**Chairs:** Heidi Mercenier, Université Saint-Louis Bruxelles, Institut d'études européennes and **Cristina Stanculescu**, Université Libre de Bruxelles

Under the EU's current institutional set-up, the Committee of the Regions – together with the European Economic and Social Committee – is one of the two existing "advisory bodies" to the EU institutions, in particular the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission. However, in view of the division of powers in a number of Member States and of the importance of regions in implementing EU

policies, it seems appropriate to think about a stronger role for regions and cities at European level in the future.

The objective of this workshop is to present no more than **seven specific recommendations** on the CoR's future institutional position at the closing session. The debate will be structured around the following questions:

- The subsidiarity principle revisited: what is at stake for regions and cities?
- The CoR in the future: between an advisory body and a Senate of the Regions and Cities at EU level?
- What should the CoR's main tasks and key priorities be for the next term?

12:30 – 14:00 **Networking lunch**  
(Atrium 6)

14:00 – 15:00 **20 recommendations for the next 20 years**  
(same rooms as previous)

(Workshops 1-3 continued)

15:15 – 16:00 **Closing session**  
(Room JDE62)

Recommendations from the workshops, voting by the plenary and reporting back via live video link from "Debating Europe"

### Conclusions

**Luc Van den Brande**, Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions

### Moderator

**Karen Coleman**, broadcaster and journalist, Ireland

16.00-18.00 **Networking reception**  
(Foyer 6)

[www.cor.europa.eu/20yearsCOR](http://www.cor.europa.eu/20yearsCOR)



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March 2014

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