



## **Commission for citizenship, governance, institutional and external affairs (CIVEX)**

### **Conference The future of the EU and the role of the regions**

#### **Programme**

10 April 2018, 11:00-18:00

European Committee of the Regions  
Rue Belliard/Belliardstraat 99-101, Brussels

A wide debate on the future of Europe is taking place, at a time of multiple challenges for the European integration. At the same time, we see the striking calls for greater autonomy or even independence by several regions in Europe, an intensified regional lobbying, transnational regional cooperation and macro-regional strategies. These developments illustrate the need to discuss what role the regions could and should play in the future EU27.

Towards the background of the debate about the future of the EU, the subsidiarity principle and the role of regions and cities in European affairs, this one-day conference will bring together politicians and academics in order to discuss some of the most important questions in this respect:

- What role is there for regions to foster democracy in the EU?
- What are the potential effects of a “multi-speed Europe” on regions?
- How can the “subsidiarity mechanism” be enhanced?
- How do regions respond to the changes in the EU’s economic governance?
- Do “macro-regions” have an impact on governance across borders?
- What are the challenges for regions with regards to a “social Europe” and the future of EU cohesion policy?

The two rounds of three parallel workshops are at the heart of the conference. Based on inputs from elected politicians and CoR members and academics, they will allow discussing these questions in more detail. The event invites representatives of regional, national and European parliaments, governments and associations as well as researchers and experts from EU institutions, universities and think tanks. Two plenary sessions and six working groups will be held in an interactive way; the results will feed in the activities of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) on the future of the EU and academic research in the field.

The conference is co-organised by the CoR and Prof Dr Gabriele Abels, Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence PRRIDE, University of Tübingen, Germany, in cooperation with Prof Dr Ulrike Guérot, Danube University Krems, Austria, founder of the European Democracy Lab.

- 10:30 Registration**
- 11:00 - 11:30 Welcome addresses**  
(Room JDE 52)
- **Barbara Duden**, Member of Hamburg City Parliament and Chair of the CoR Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX)
  - **Prof Dr Gabriele Abels**, Director of Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence PRRIDE, University of Tübingen, Germany
- 11.30 - 13:00 Panel debate: regions and the future of the EU**  
(Room JDE 52)
- **Prof Dr Danuta Hübner**, Member of the European Parliament, Chair of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO)
  - **Barbara Duden**, Member of Hamburg City Parliament and Chair of the CoR Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX)
  - **Iiona Raugze**, Director of the ESPON EGTC, Luxembourg
  - **Prof Dr Gabriele Abels**, Director of Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence PRRIDE, University of Tübingen, Germany
- Moderator: Prof Dr Stefan Gänzle, University of Agder, Norway
- In the sessions above, participants may speak and listen to in DE, EN, FR, IT and PL.
- 13:00 - 14:30 Networking Lunch, Foyer 5**
- 14:30 - 15:45 Parallel workshops I**
- 1) Multi-speed Europe and its potential effects on regions**  
(Room JDE 52)
- **Mercedes Bresso**, member of the European Parliament
  - **Apostolos Tzitzikostas**, Head of the Region of Central Macedonia, Greece, and CoR member;
  - **Prof Dr Simona Piattoni**, University of Trento
- Moderator: David Simmonds, Councillor, London Borough of Hillingdon and CoR member
- Interpreting: EN/IT
- 2) Enhancing the subsidiarity mechanism**  
(Room JDE 51)
- **Michael Schneider**, State Secretary, Representative of the Land of Saxony-Anhalt to the German Federal Government and CoR member
  - **Prof Dr Christian Callies**, European Commission, Team Leader, European Political Strategy Centre
- Moderator: Prof Dr Gabriele Abels
- Interpreting: EN/DE

### 3) The role of macro-regions in European governance

(Room VMA1)

- **Olgierd Geblewicz**, President of Westpomerania Region and CoR member
- **Prof Dr Stefan Gänzle**, University of Agder, Norway

Moderator: Doreen Huddart, Member of Newcastle City Council and CoR member

Interpreting: EN/ PL

**15:45 - 16:15** Coffee Break, Foyer 5

**16:15 - 17:30** **Parallel workshops II**

### 4) Regions and changes in economic governance

(Room VMA1)

- **Christophe Rouillon**, Mayor of Coulaines, France, and CoR member
- **Dr Dieter Plewe**, Berlin Social Science Centre (WZB), Germany

Moderator: Michael Murphy, Councillor, Tipperary County Council and CoR member

Interpreting: EN/FR

### 5) Democratic requirements for European regional governance

(Room JDE 51)

- **Mairi Angela Gudgeon**, Member of the Scottish Parliament and CoR member
- **Prof Dr Ulrike Guérot**, Danube University Krems, Austria

Moderator: Prof Dr Gabriele Abels

### 6) Social Europe and the challenges for cohesion policy

(Room JDE 52)

- **Simonetta Saliera**, President of the Emilia-Romagna Regional Assembly and CoR member
- **Claire Dhéret**, EPC Brussels, Head of Social Europe & Well-being programme

Moderator: **Ilona Raugze**, Director of ESPON Programme

Interpreting: EN/IT

**17:30 - 18:00** **Conclusions**

(Room JDE 52)

- **Karl-Heinz Lambertz**, President of the European Committee of the Regions
- **Prof Dr Gabriele Abels**

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## Evening Event

### BREXIT: a regional perspective 18:30 – 20:00 Panel debate (Room JDE 51)

During this debate, the current state of the Brexit negotiations and its impact on the economic and social situation of the regions in the UK and the 27 member states of the EU will be discussed.

- **Mairi Angela Gudgeon**, Member of the Scottish Parliament and CoR member (tbc);
- **Michael Murphy**, Councillor, Tipperary County Council and CoR member ,
- **Prof Dr Raquel Ortega Argilés**, University of Birmingham, United Kingdom;
- **Prof Dr Ulrike Guérot**, Danube University Krems, Austria

Moderator: **Prof Dr Gabriele Abels**, Director of Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence PRRIDE, University of Tübingen, Germany.

Interpreting: EN/FR/IT

### **Background**

*While in the early 1990s a discussion over the role of the regions in the European Union led to demands for a “Europe of the regions” and to a number of reforms, the current debate over the future of European integration is, by and large, “region-blind”. Certainly, simplistic visions of a “Europe of the regions” were not realized in the past, yet more differentiated ideas and concepts about a “Europe with the regions” gained prominence. Yet, the question remains how they can feed into the ongoing debate about the future of the EU.*

*Given the existing multiple challenges to European integration, we can observe an intense debate about the future of the EU. This had led to some policy proposals that are worth inspecting: In the context of the British negotiations the EU Commission published its White Paper on the Future of Europe: Reflections and scenarios for the EU27 by 2025 on March 1, 2017. The White Paper outlines five different scenarios and discusses their implications and associated risks. By and large, the White Paper remains silent about the role of the regions in the future EU governance architecture. This finding also pertains to Commission President Juncker’s “State of the Union” speech delivered in September 2017. Again, regions are marginal. Finally, while the French President Macron calls for a new founding momentum, again the role of regions is not addressed.*

*At the same time, we see the striking calls for greater autonomy or even independence in Catalonia and in several other regions in Europe. In addition, there is intensified regional lobbying, transnational regional cooperation, macro-regional strategies and the like. These developments illustrate the need to discuss what the role the regions could and should play in the future EU27.*

*Among the EU institutions, the European Committee of the Regions has taken up these issues. Furthermore, several academic projects and centres do exist, which focus on these important issues by conducting empirical studies on regions in Europe and by theorizing about the role of regions. The co-organizers of the proposed conference are among the key research groups/centres in this field.*