



**European Committee  
of the Regions**

The Secretary General

Brussels, [*date of the official registration*]  
SGCab-D-269-2023

**Regions and cities as beacons of European values and principles!  
Increased cooperation opportunities with the European Committee of the Regions**

Dear Sir/Madam,

As you know, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) represents the voice of more than a million regionally and locally elected politicians, 300 regions and 90 000 municipalities in Europe, and contributes to the EU policy shaping and decision-making processes from the viewpoint of Local and Regional Authorities (LRAs). At the same time, the Committee's members contribute to making the Union more effective and bringing it closer to the citizens by implementing EU law and communicating the Union's policies on the ground.

In his speech on the [State of Regions and Cities in the European Union](#) on 11 October 2022, President Vasco Alves Cordeiro paid tribute to the essential work that mayors, local councillors, governors and regional ministers, along with all public administrations across the Union, are doing every day, everywhere.

Our members' political activity and knowledge of the ground, rooted in the regions and cities, is the Committee's unique selling point and biggest strength. CoR members are powerful multipliers in their communities and in their national associations of local and regional authorities.

In order to build up synergies and promote exchanges of best practices, the CoR is fostering the secondment of national experts and encouraging time-limited study visits for officials from LRAs' public administrations.

**Opportunities for secondment of national experts to discover the work of the CoR from the inside and to enhance cross-cooperation between LRAs and the CoR**

Applying for such a position will allow officials from LRAs' public administrations to learn how an EU consultative body works from the inside. Our future colleagues will actively contribute to the EU decision-making process from a different point of view while increasing the cooperation between the LRAs and the CoR.

The CoR offers three types of secondment (foreign national experts, national experts with Belgian citizenship and cost-free secondment), in addition to short-term study visits (ideal for government officials already established in Brussels).

During a secondment to the CoR, each national expert will have the opportunity:

- to benefit from a tailor made programme adapted both to their needs and expectations and those of the CoR;
- to have a fully equipped working environment, including access to our networks, working tools and training programmes;
- to work on a time-limited assignment beneficial for both the CoR and LRAs' public administrations;
- to be actively involved in the main activities of the institution;
- to attend CoR plenary sessions;
- to see how our opinions are drawn up;
- to discover any other aspects of our work.

In return, the CoR would like assistance in organising local dialogues in EU regions together with our members and alternates. This would allow your regional concerns and your voice to be properly heard when discussing the future of Europe so that its shape and direction also reflect the needs and expectations of the European regions.

The possibilities for secondments involving the payment of daily allowances being limited, we strongly encourage local, regional and national governments to consider cost-free secondments (without payment, by the CoR, of any additional allowance to the national expert in addition to the salary provided by the employer of the expert). Even during a cost-free secondment, the CoR would provide the national expert with an office space, a work station/appropriate working tools, training possibilities, networking opportunities, and a dedicated mentor to make their stay a fruitful and useful experience for them and their region.

Secondments are limited in time (minimum six months and maximum two years, renewable up to four years in total).

Several cost-free seconded national expert positions are expected to be filled in 2023. Potential candidates interested in a secondment to the CoR are free to register at any time on [our website](#). They can choose up to three profiles/areas of interest in which they would like to work (by order of priority). The specific requirements for a secondment are listed in appendix 1 and 2. Please consult [our Jobs page](#) to find the decision on the rules applicable to national experts seconded to the CoR.

As members and alternates, I invite you to relay this letter in order to reach a larger number of colleagues in the public administrations of the LRAs.

I am happy to welcome you and your region to the CoR and look forward to increasing our cooperation. **Let's work together to meet the challenges of the future of Europe!**

Petr Blížkovský  
"electronically signed"

## **Appendix 1**

### **Under Decision 438/2015 on the rules applicable to national experts seconded to the European Committee of the Regions**

Please consult the complete text of the decision 438/2015 on [our Jobs page](#).

#### **Conditions for secondment:**

Employees of local, regional and national bodies or intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) may apply for positions as seconded national experts. Several conditions must, however, be met.

Applicants must:

- be employed by a national, regional or local public authority or IGO;
- have worked for at least three years, full-time, in an administrative, scientific, technical, advisory or supervisory post;
- have been in the service of their current employer for at least twelve months;
- have thorough knowledge of one official language of the European Union and a satisfactory knowledge of another language of the European Union;
- be under the age limit of 66 for the duration of the secondment; and
- be able to prove that their employer will continue to pay their salary, maintain their established or contractual employment status and guarantee their social rights and benefits, particularly as regards social security and pension rights, throughout the period of secondment.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Extract from Decision 188/2022 of the European Committee of the Regions on the rules governing traineeship schemes**

#### **Chapter III PROVISIONS REGARDING STUDY VISITS FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

##### **Article 16 - Definition of study visits for government officials**

16.1 The scheme is open to staff or trainees from a national, regional or local public authority of an EU Member State and may give both the CoR and the official's employing institution the opportunity to enhance collaboration and networking opportunities. Moreover, officials participating in this type of exchange scheme may have the opportunity to gain insights into the work of the CoR while at the same time developing their skills, competencies and knowledge.

16.2 By definition, whereas only Cicero traineeships are remunerated, in the form of a grant as defined in Article 11, study visits for government officials are not remunerated by the CoR but by the official's employing institution. However, government official trainees may be eligible for social measures under the conditions stated in Article 5(6).

##### **Article 17 - Admission criteria**

17.1 This programme is intended primarily for government officials from the Member States of the European Union. Government officials may come from national, regional or local authorities.

17.2 Government officials applying for a study visit must comply with the following criteria:

- be an EU national working for a national, local or regional public authority of an EU Member State; however, applicants from non-EU countries may be granted a study visit for government officials by the Secretary-General in exceptional and duly justified cases. The CoR reserves the right to revoke its offer and select another suitable candidate if, by the beginning of the study visit period, the candidate has not proven that they meet requirements under national immigration law for residing and working legally in Belgium;
- hold at least a Bachelor's degree (or have completed half the cycle of a Bachelor's degree deemed relevant to the CoR's work);
- work in a position at a level and with content corresponding to the duties performed by EU staff within the CoR;
- receive confirmation of engagement by the official's employing authority and its agreement to a study visit at the CoR, as well as proof of financing by the official's employing authority for the duration of the study visit;
- be fluent in French or English.

##### **Article 18 - Duration and start of government officials' study visits**

18.1 A study visit for government officials may be granted for a period of two to six months. The Director in charge of Human Resources may authorise an extension for a total period of twelve

months.

18.2 The date on which the study visit is to start shall be agreed with the participant.

#### **Article 19 - Management of the selection process for government officials' study visits**

19.1 The Head of Unit or Director of the requesting service is responsible for requesting a government official's study visit, in accordance with the internal procedure in place.

19.2 The Traineeships Office is responsible for managing requests for government officials' study visits, in accordance with the internal procedure in place.

19.3 Authorisation to grant a government official's study visit may be given by the Director in charge of Human Resources, in accordance with the internal procedure in place.

#### **Article 20 - Submission of applications**

Applications for a study visit for government officials are to be made via the online application form available on the CoR's website.

#### **Article 21 - Insurance**

21.1 Health insurance is compulsory for all individuals taking part in the study visit for government officials and is not funded by the CoR. Proof of health insurance cover must be provided by the candidate.

21.2 All individuals taking part in the study visit for government officials must also be insured against the risk of accident, in accordance with the conditions set out in the CoR's insurance policy. The CoR shall bear the entire costs of the corresponding insurance premium.