



Declaration

"The debate on the Future of Cohesion Policy starts now!"

A joint call from the #CohesionAlliance

Strengthening **cohesion as an overall value of the European Union** is more pressing than ever. Recent crises, such as the consequences of the ongoing climate emergency, the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the current record inflation rates triggered by increased food and energy prices recall for more cohesion.

Cohesion Alliance partners commit to work together to develop joint proposals to reinforce Cohesion Policy and to make it fit for the challenges of the post-2027 period. They share a common understanding of key principles underpinning Cohesion policy, including:

- **Cohesion Policy is the EU's most important investment policy**, covering all regions, cities and municipalities
- **Cohesion Policy is the EU's most visible instrument at local and regional level**, demonstrating the EU's support for economic, social and territorial development
- **Cohesion Policy is a long-term development policy** promoting a fair, green and digital transition and inclusive growth
- **Cohesion Policy is based on principles of shared management, partnership and multilevel governance** with regions and cities as well as additionality
- **Cohesion Policy follows a place-based approach** and addresses the territorial diversity within the European Union. It pays particular attention to regions with specific natural and demographic handicaps
- **Cohesion Policy supports territorial cooperation and promotes solidarity and integration** across European regions and cities, and beyond, particularly in cross-border areas

Let us remind all EU and national decision-makers of the indispensable role that Cohesion policy plays in the European integration process! The Cohesion Alliance will also address aspects of Cohesion policy, including:

- **Overcoming the fragmentation of Cohesion Policy funds**, by working towards a stronger common framework and synergies of funds under shared management
- **Improving the effective delivery of Cohesion policy**, by ensuring that all relevant EU policies contribute to achieve the objectives and principles of cohesion integrating the 'do not harm to cohesion' principle in EU legislation to ensure that Cohesion remains an overall objective, and making full use of the flexibility measures recently introduced within Cohesion Policy
- **Efficient implementation of the 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy**, notably by reinforcing European and national support for capacity building of regional and local authorities
- **Further simplifying Cohesion policy** to reduce the complexity of the management, audit and control rules for managing authorities and beneficiaries

- **Ensure a better alignment** between cohesion policy and the European economic governance based on a constructive rather than a punitive approach
- **Improving the result orientation of cohesion policy** and exploring in the future a more extended use of performance-budgeting financing
- **Better communicating the impact and success of Cohesion Policy** at local and regional level
- **Stronger aligning the future of Cohesion Policy with current and future trends in regions and cities** in terms of spatial planning and including the need of strategic foresight
- **Strengthening the central role of Cohesion policy within an overall long-term strategy for the EU**

Local communities, cities, municipalities and regions, social partners and other stakeholders are invited to join the **#CohesionAlliance**. **Cohesion Alliance partners will work together towards a stronger Cohesion Policy now and in the future.**