

**The Role of Local and Regional Authorities  
in the Europe 2020 National Reform  
Programmes**

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# List of Acronyms

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| CoR    | Committee of the Regions               |
| EC     | European Commission                    |
| EU     | European Union                         |
| LAs    | Local authorities                      |
| LRA    | Local or regional authority            |
| LRAs   | Local and regional authorities         |
| MLG    | Multilevel governance                  |
| MS(s)  | Member State(s)                        |
| NPR(s) | National Progress Report(s)            |
| NRP    | National Reform Programme              |
| PPMI   | Public Policy and Management Institute |
| RAs    | Regional authorities                   |
| R&D    | Research and development               |
| SMEs   | Small and medium-sized enterprises     |



# Executive Summary

The Europe 2020 Strategy sets the goal for the European Union and its individual Member States to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive community by 2020. These three mutually reinforcing objectives are aimed to help lift Europe out of the global economic and financial crisis by creating jobs, increasing productivity and strengthening internal cohesion. The Europe 2020 Strategy contains quantifiable targets and flagship initiatives to achieve these goals. In 2011, the new European Semester was launched. This is a six-month period every year during which the Member States' budgetary and structural policies will be reviewed to detect any inconsistencies and emerging imbalances. The 27 EU Member States must provide the European Commission with written documentation demonstrating how they are implementing and how they will be implementing the goals and targets set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy. These documents are the National Reform Programmes (NRPs).

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) supports the Europe 2020 Strategy, while simultaneously emphasising the need to coordinate and implement actions at all levels of government, including local and regional authorities (LRA). The CoR accomplishes this through a variety of mechanisms and initiatives, including the Europe 2020 Monitoring Platforms (EUROPE2020MP), which are networks of more than 150 cities and regions working together to create jobs and sustainable economic growth, and what are known as the Territorial Pacts, which aim to ensure collaborative and coordinated implementation of the Europe 2020 actions at all relevant public governance levels.

As part of the new European Semester and the Europe 2020 Strategy, EU Member States are required to submit National Reform Programmes (NRPs). The CoR is undertaking a review of the NRPs in order to:

Objective 1: analyse whether and to what extent local and regional authorities (and their representatives) were involved in the drawing up the NRPs. Were the LRAs involved? If so, were they consulted, or have they had a say in the decisions taken? Will this involvement continue to take place in the implementation phase of the NRPs?

Objective 2: examine whether the NRPs have fulfilled the request made last year by the European Commission stipulating that their NRPs “should indicate how the national authorities plan to involve/have involved local and regional authorities and relevant stakeholders in defining and implementing the NRPs and how they communicate/plan to communicate an Europe 2020 and on their

own NRP, and what the results have been. They will also be invited to report on their experiences with collecting, sharing and implementing good practices”.

To meet these objectives, the present study examined all 27 NRPs on a set of 12 questions and a cumulative score.

These results indicate that the majority of countries submitted NRPs that fulfil many but not all of the aspects that would achieve a vertically integrated Europe 2020 Strategy with solid links and collaboration across different levels of government. There are also substantial differences between the countries with the most comprehensive NRPs and those with the least informative programmes in terms of the LRAs' role in drafting, implementing, coordinating and monitoring the NRP actions.

Belgium (ranked 1st: 84%), The Netherlands (2nd: 81%), Sweden (3rd: 73%) and the UK and France (joint 4th with 68%) are evaluated to have the most LRA-relevant NRPs. Characteristic of these countries' NRP is the systematic reference to how, when and who represented the LRAs at all stages of the NRP drafting, implementation and monitoring process.

On the bottom rungs are Lithuania (27th: 5.6%), Poland and Estonia (joint 25th: 10%) and the Czech Republic (24th: 15%). These countries mention hardly any authorities apart from central government in their NRPs, while the leading countries devote extensive sections and even separate documents to issues of multi-level governance, collaboration, financial flows between the different levels of government, and shared responsibilities in implementing and monitoring the measures included in their respective NRPs.

Generally, the gaps in the NRPs, defined as the questions for which more than 50% of NRPs received zero points, are:

*Question 4: Is any written contribution from LRAs annexed to the NRP?*

*Question 8: Is any mention made of the role of local and regional authorities in monitoring the NRP?*

*Question 9: Is there any mention or clarification of the role of LRAs in mitigating economic and financial crises?*

*Question 10: Is a clear description provided of the financial aspects of the activities related to local and regional authorities?*

*Question 11: Is any information provided on strengthening the administrative capacity of local and regional authorities?*

Even the NRPs that provided the most detailed descriptions of the role and influence of the LRAs are not perfect. The areas in which further gains can be made are:

*Question 3: Does the NRP state to what extent LRA input has been taken into account?*

*Question 4: Is any written contribution from LRAs annexed to the NRP?*

*Question 5: Is any mention made of Territorial Pacts, equivalent approaches (even if given another name, such as regional pacts, territorial contracts, etc.) or multi-level cooperation agreements other than Territorial pacts?*

*Question 8: Is there any mention of the role of local and regional authorities in monitoring the NRP?*

*Question 9: Is there any mention or clarification of the role of LRAs in mitigating economic and financial crises?*

*Question 10: Is a clear description provided of the financial aspects of the activities related to local and regional authorities?*

*Question 11: Is there any information on strengthening the administrative capacity of local and regional authorities?*

On the other hand, nearly all NRPs state that LRAs were in some form or another involved during the initial drafting stage and LRAs are mentioned frequently as having implemented the actions outlined in the NRP. The level of influence and/or control that LRAs have in this process appears to be more heterogeneous. In some cases, LRAs are given merely consultative roles while, in the cases of the highest scoring countries, LRAs contribute to decision-making throughout the entire process in at an institutional level.





# 1. Introduction

The Europe 2020 Strategy, the successor to the Lisbon strategy for the period 2000-2010, reaffirms the goal of the European Union and its individual Member States to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive community by 2020. These three mutually reinforcing objectives are aimed to help lift Europe out of the global economic and financial crisis by creating jobs, increasing productivity and strengthening internal cohesion.<sup>1</sup> The Europe 2020 Strategy contains quantifiable targets and flagship initiatives for achieving these goals. In 2011, the new European Semester was launched. This is a six-month period every year during which the Member States' budgetary and structural policies will be reviewed to detect any inconsistencies and emerging imbalances, and the 27 EU Member States must provide the European Commission with written documentation as to how they are implementing the goals and targets set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy and how they will do so in the future. These documents are called National Reform Programmes (NRPs).

The mission of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) is to:

*“... involve regional and local authorities in the European decision-making process at the earliest stage through:*

- ***mandatory consultation by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers on key policy areas of regional concern***
- ***own-initiative opinions enabling the CoR to put issues on the EU agenda.***

*The 344 members of the CoR carry out this work through six thematic commissions and five plenary sessions, consultations with national and European associations as well as networks and platforms of regions and cities set up to exchange information on EU priority issues.”<sup>2</sup>*

The CoR therefore supports the Europe 2020 Strategy, while simultaneously emphasising the need for measures to be coordinated and implemented at all levels of government, including by local and regional authorities (LRA). The CoR provides this support through, inter alia, the Europe 2020 Monitoring

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. European Commission (2011). Europe 2020 Strategy. Available online at [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm) (last accessed 5 June 2011).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Committee of the Regions (2011). CoR at Work. Available online at <http://www.cor.europa.eu/pages/CoRAtWorkTemplate.aspx?id=2286a583-ee8d-48d7-a282-ba99dbbeb2da> (last accessed 5 June 2011).

Platforms (EUROPE2020MP), which are networks of more than 150 cities and regions working together to create jobs and sustainable economic growth.<sup>3</sup> The specific aims of EUROPE2020MP are to:

- support the diffusion of multilevel policymaking for growth and jobs by facilitating the exchange of information and good practices between local and regional policy-makers,
- help the EU and its Member States to address challenges and obstacles, primarily by means of monitoring exercises at the territorial levels feeding into the CoR's consultative activity.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the Europe 2020-related initiatives such as the European Semester and the submission of National Reform Programmes (NRPs) by all 27 Member States, tools used by the EUROPE2020MP include a public website, policy workshops, targeted questionnaires and surveys, thematic initiatives and social networking tools.

The CoR has also created so-called Territorial Pacts, which are designed to ensure collaborative and coordinated implementation of the Europe 2020 actions at all relevant public governance levels.

The CoR is currently undertaking a review of the NRPs with a view to:

Objective 1: determining if and to what extent local and regional authorities and their (representations) were involved in the design of the NRPs. Were LRAs involved? If yes, were they consulted, or did they have a say in the decisions taken? Will this involvement continue during the NRPs' implementation phase?

→ to be achieved by (a) assessing whether or not the LRAs were involved and (b) gauging the extent to which they were involved.

Objective 2: confirming whether the NRPs are complying with the request made last year by the European Commission, for their NRPs to “indicate how the national authorities plan to involve/have involved local and regional authorities and relevant stakeholders in defining and implementing the NRPs and how they communicate/plan to communicate on Europe 2020 and on their own NRP, and what the results have been. They will also be invited to report on their experiences with collecting, sharing and implementing good practices”.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://portal.cor.europa.eu/europe2020/Knowledge/Pages/welcome.aspx> (last accessed 5 June 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

→ to be achieved by assessing how the NRPs provide information on the involvement of the local and regional authorities in implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The two objectives are closely related and Objective 1 will be answered by reading the NRPs and assessing a set of 12 issues and questions (shown below) based on a stepwise procedure, while Objective 2 will be achieved by ranking the NRPs according to a sub-set of these criteria gauge compliance with the EU Commission's request.

This report summarises the findings of the review of the 27 National Reform Programmes and their assessment.

The remainder of the document is structured as follows. Section 1 discusses the Data and Methodology used to assess the NRPs, including the guiding questions considered while reading the NRPs for Objective 1, the specific questions used to accomplish Objective 1, the approach applied to score and aggregate the scores, and finally a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the scoring and weighting mechanisms. Section 2. presents the findings of the assessment exercise. For each EU Member State, it summarises the extent to which LRAs were involved in drafting, implementation and monitoring the Europe 2020 Strategy's goals and targets. It highlights the presence of multi-level governance arrangements such as the CoR-initiated Territorial Pacts. It also contains a box showing an example of cooperation among the different tiers of government to implement at least one policy action under the Europe 2020 Strategy. All seven flagship initiatives and the single market topic are represented.



## 2. Data and Methodology

### 2.1 Data Source

The data source is the National Reform Programmes, published on the EU Commission's website at [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/documents/documents-and-reports/type/member-states-documents/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/documents/documents-and-reports/type/member-states-documents/index_en.htm). The deadline for the NRPs was the end of April 2011 and by mid-May 2011 all national reform programmes had been uploaded to the website. Ecologic Institute and its partner WU/RIMAS divided the 27 NRPs between them according to (a) capacity to analyse them and (b) the language they were written in (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Summary of NRPs.**

| <b>Country</b> | <b>Language version used in assessment</b> | <b>Analysed by:</b> |
|----------------|--|---------------------|
| Austria        | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Belgium        | French, Dutch                              | Ecologic Institute  |
| Bulgaria       | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Cyprus         | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Czech Republic | Czech                                      | WU/RIMAS            |
| Denmark        | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Estonia        | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Finland        | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| France         | French                                     | Ecologic Institute  |
| Germany        | German                                     | Ecologic Institute  |
| Greece         | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Hungary        | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Ireland        | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Italy          | Italian                                    | WU/RIMAS            |
| Latvia         | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Lithuania      | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Luxembourg     | French                                     | Ecologic Institute  |
| Malta          | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Netherlands    | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Poland         | Polish                                     | WU/RIMAS            |
| Portugal       | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Romania        | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |
| Slovakia       | English                                    | Ecologic Institute  |

|                |         |                    |
|----------------|---------|--------------------|
| Slovenia       | English | Ecologic Institute |
| Spain          | English | Ecologic Institute |
| Sweden         | English | Ecologic Institute |
| United Kingdom | English | Ecologic Institute |

## 2.2 Methodology

Each NRP was read on the basis of the following specific, harmonised set of questions or operational guidelines, with Objective 1 in mind:

- Does the NRP state whether LRAs were involved in drafting the NRP?
- What information does the NRP contain regarding how LRAs were involved, i.e.,
  - What is the role of the LRAs in the NRP development and implementation phases?
  - Through what processes, meetings, forms of dialogue and other forms of participation were they involved?
  - At what stage of NRP design, drafting, finalisation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation were they involved?
- Does the NRP provide information on how LRA involvement will continue during the implementation phase?
  - on the kind of communication and input/feedback loops that may exist or are planned?
  - on the specific pathways by which LRAs will continue to be able to provide input, responses, etc.?
- Does the NRP explain the flow of information and communication between different levels of government and how LRAs contribute to this?
- Does the NRP provide additional context about the role of LRAs, for example, or about the type and mechanisms of multi-level governance (and any existing cooperation agreements) prevailing in the country?
- Does the NRP include other information about the role of LRAs, e.g., vis-à-vis country-specific features or special circumstances?

The information gathered this way was added to an *information fiche* for each country, which serves as the basis for assessing the NRPs according to Objective 2.

The type of information collected on the basis of the above criteria are shown in **Table 2**.

They also incorporate existing information such as the CoR's Questionnaire "*Contribution by the local and regional authorities to the Europe 2020 National Reform Programmes: Survey of CoR National Delegations*" that is currently underway (the deadline for responses from national delegations is 10 June 2011), as well as the 2009 analysis produced by the Public Policy and Management Institute on behalf of the CoR entitled "*After Lisbon, the Role of Regional and Local Authorities in a New Strategy for Sustainable Growth and Better Jobs: Comparative Analysis of 27 National Progress Reports*".

It is noted that each country has unique circumstances and that a standardised set of criteria is likely to miss some of these, especially if they do not use any of the keywords or phrases commonly associated with LRA involvement. Thus, the criteria presented below will be viewed against the backdrop of national circumstances, in order to give a fair and balanced picture (e.g., the governance structure and historical diversification/devolution of power from central to local authorities).

In addition, the criteria aim to provide, as far as possible, a tailored set of answering options that can reflect the wide variety of ways in which an NRP can demonstrate how LRAs contribute to the design, implementation and communication of the NRPs. With regard to the quality of the report, *in terms of the amount of information provided on the involvement of the LRAs in the NRPs*, a scoring system has been developed, as shown in Table 2. On this basis, an overall ranking will be shown in the final report. Table 2. will be completed as an information fiche for each NRP and submitted in a separate file accompanying the final document.



**Table 2: Assessment criteria.**

| Aspect used to evaluate the quality of the NRP with respect to Objectives 1 and 2                      | Description   | Answer categories and scores  | Where in the NRP (provide page number or other appropriate reference)? |
|--|---|---|--|
| 1. Does the NRP clearly state who represented the viewpoints of local and regional authorities (LRAs)? | Does the report state which LRAs were consulted/involved in the drafting of the NRP, or who represented their viewpoints?   | <b>Yes (1 point) or No (0 points)</b><br>Additional information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>names of those representing the LRAs</li> </ul>               |  |
| 2. Does the NRP state how the LRAs contributed to the drafting of the NRP?                             | Does the report state what form the contribution of the LRAs took, e.g., legally mandated consultation, non-legally mandated consultation, negotiations, etc., and how the LRAs contributed, including written comments, drafting sections, participation in working groups, or participation in round tables, stakeholder consultation meetings, etc.? | <b>Yes (1 point) or No (0 points)</b><br>Additional information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How the contribution was made and the form it took</li> </ul> |  |
| 3. Does the NRP state to what extent LRA input has been taken into account?                            | This addresses the actual impact of the LRA involvement on the design and content of the NRP. It may include explicit procedures for considering LRA input, a good-will approach, or ad-hoc approaches.   | <b>Not at all (0 points)</b><br><b>To a limited extent (1 point)</b><br><b>Substantially (2 points)</b><br><b>Fully (3 points)</b>                                    |  |

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>4. Is a written contribution from LRAs annexed to the NRP?</p>  | <p>Does the NRP reflect the contribution of LRAs by giving them due credit in the form of documents annexed to the NRP?</p>   | <p><b>Yes, annexed to NRP (2 points)</b><br/> <b>No, separate documents (1 point)</b><br/> <b>No (0 points)</b></p>  |  |
| <p>5. Is there any mention of Territorial Pacts, equivalent approaches (even if given another name, such as regional pacts, territorial contracts, etc.) or multi-level cooperation agreements other than Territorial pacts?</p> | <p>Does the NRP make any reference either to the Territorial Pacts as proposed by the CoR or to any other kind of multilevel governance agreement? Multilevel cooperation arrangements usually take the form of written agreements or regular consultation/coordination of policy agendas. Does the NRP include any such arrangements? Reference is made here not only to vertical multilevel governance arrangements (i.e. linkages between higher and lower levels of government – EU, national/federal, regional, local), but also to those at the horizontal level (i.e. cooperation arrangements between regions or between municipalities including cases of cross-border governance), if possible cooperation between LRAs and territorial private stakeholders – SMEs, chambers of commerce, NGOs, social partners (horizontal cooperation)</p> | <p><b><u>Territorial Pacts:</u></b><br/> <b>Yes (1 point) or No (0 points)</b><br/> <b><u>For other multi-level governance agreements:</u></b><br/> <b>Not at all (0 points)</b><br/> <b>To a limited extent (1 point)</b><br/> <b>Substantially (2 points)</b><br/> <b>Fully (3 points)</b></p> |  |
| <p>6. Are there any relevant paragraphs or even separate sections?</p>   | <p>Does the NRP contain relevant paragraphs in which the role of local and regional authorities and/or their contribution given substantial consideration? (apart from the specific one</p>   | <p><b>Yes (1 point) or No (0 points)</b><br/> Additional descriptive information if available</p>  |  |

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
|   | mentioned below)   |   |  |
| 7. Is any mention made of the role of local and regional authorities in implementing the NRP?                             | Does the NRP mention the involvement of local and regional authorities in <i>implementing</i> it, including examples, case studies or links to further information/documents on activities of local and regional authorities provided in the report? | <b>Not at all</b> (0 points)<br><b>To a limited extent</b> (1 point)<br><b>Substantially</b> (2 points)<br><b>Fully</b> (3 points)                                |  |
| 8. Is any mention made of the role of local and regional authorities in monitoring the NRP?                               | Does the report mention how LRAs are or will be involved in monitoring the NRPs (e.g., local assessments, stakeholder review dialogues, progress monitoring)?  | <b>Yes (1 point) or No (0 points)</b><br>Additional descriptive information if available  |  |
| 9. Is there any mention or clarification of the role of LRAs in mitigating economic and financial crises?                 | Does the NRP duly consider the role of local and regional authorities in policy measures aimed at mitigating the negative effects of the current financial crisis and economic downturn?   | <b>Yes (1 point) or No (0 points)</b><br>Additional descriptive information if available  |  |
| <b>Additional criteria:</b>   |  |   |  |
| 10. Is a clear description provided of the financial aspects of the activities related to local and regional authorities? | Is the financing of LRA activities adequately described in the document – is it clear which administrative level of government finances which activity and what are the financial amounts allocated to it?   | <b>Yes (1 point) or No (0 points)</b><br>In addition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptive information on type and amount of financing</li> </ul> |  |

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>11. What is the administrative capacity of local and regional authorities?</p>    | <p>Does the NRP contain any examples of measures aimed at strengthening the administrative capacity of local and regional authorities in the report?</p> <p>(In the old Lisbon Strategy, the lack of administrative capacity of local and regional authorities was one of the major issues of concern in the implementation of the NRPs. Frequent, more systematic and innovative strengthening of administrative capacity signals a more developed institutional framework for multilevel cooperation in a country. Consequently, if the institutional environment is favourable, the number and quality of multilevel governance arrangements are likely to be higher.)</p> | <p><b>Yes (1 point) or No (0 points)</b><br/>Additional descriptive information if available</p>   |  |
| <p>12. Are there any additional relevant issues that might be raised in the NRP?</p> | <p>This addresses any issues relating to the role of the LRAs not addressed by the above questions and which may be specific to the country's national circumstances.</p>   | <p><b>Descriptive</b>, if there is additional information not covered by the above questions. Used to further assess the quality of the NRP but no points are awarded.</p> |  |

Following completion of the 27 information fiches (available separately to this report), an aggregate assessment was produced, reflecting the ways in which LRAs have been (or will be) involved in the preparation and/or implementation of their countries' NRPs and the quality of the report in terms of the amount of information provided. Aggregating qualitative information to a single statistic in a meaningful way is a challenging task and the quantitative scores for some of the 12 questions, of which one is open ended, were developed with the aim of balancing specificity with breadth, to assess not only all relevant information provided in the NRPs about the role of local and regional authorities, but also to preserve enough flexibility to recognise the diversity of the formats and content of the NRPs.

A two-step procedure was applied. First, it was decided to use only questions 1-3 and 6-10 in the scoring exercise, because they capture the essence of LRA involvement and also show the most evidence of differences between the NRPs. Second, different ways to aggregate and weight the eight questions were considered to obtain a single, informative summary measure. Since the questions with little variation were already excluded from the assessment, an equal weighting scheme was chosen. Considering the qualitative nature of the information gathered, a simple summary of the extent to which the questions were answered affirmatively is probably sufficient. This permits both a cross-country comparison as well as an assessment of the degree to which individual NRPs meet all of the desired criteria.

It is noted that of the 27 NRPs, 21 were available in English and the following countries submitted NRPs only in their official national language(s):

- Belgium: French and Dutch
- Czech Republic: Czech
- France: French
- Italy: Italian
- Luxembourg: French
- Poland: Polish

## 3. Analysis

The findings of the assessment are summarised by question, i.e., issue by issue, in corresponding sub-sections. All 27 individual country NRP fiches are also available separately. Each sub-section first summarises the results and then also gives a concrete, verbatim national example in a box at the end. These selected examples demonstrate how different NRPs describe the various approaches and possibilities for involving local and regional tiers of government and how such cooperation can facilitate implementation of Europe 2020 policies.

### 3.1 Is it clearly stated who represented the viewpoints of local and regional authorities in the NRP?

Analysis shows that slightly more than half of the EU Member States (16 of 27) mention LRA involvement in the development and drafting of the NRP. Among them, the exact naming of who represented local and regional viewpoints varied from simple statements that local and/or regional government bodies were involved to the inclusion of actors' names.

**Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Poland and Romania** made no mention at all of which LRAs provided their viewpoints in the drafting of the NRP.

In **Belgium**, the two cultural and linguistic communities, together with the Brussels capital region, developed their own NRP.

**Bulgaria** involved unnamed members of central and local government and of State, District and Municipal administrations.

**Denmark** established a Contact committee with representatives of relevant ministries and professional organisations and LRAs were consulted for the NRP (set up in 2001 after the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy). The named LRAs are the Danish Regions and Local Government Denmark.

In **France**, the Association of local authorities was involved and co-operation between national and local authorities is mentioned.

In **Germany**, the responsible/relevant “Länder” ministries were consulted by the federal government and the Ministry of Economy and Technology.

**Hungary** conducted a written nationwide consultation on the draft final NRP between 24 January – 14 February 2011. Representatives of 32 organisations

including NGOs, not-for-profit organisations, research institutions of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, authorities, chambers of commerce and local government (county municipalities, mayors, regions) sent in their opinions and comments using a questionnaire on the website of the Ministry of National Economy. Several regions, counties and towns with county rights sent in their comments on the draft final NRP as well. The most common contribution was a request for central government to consult LRAs and criticism of the lack of detailed information on certain measures of the preliminary NRP.

**Ireland's** government cooperated with unnamed "Regional bodies" as well as stakeholders, social partners and the relevant Parliamentary Committee.

The **Latvian** Association of Local and Regional Governments participated in the working group tasked with drawing up the NRP, in line with the decree of the Minister for Economic Affairs.

In **Luxembourg**, the LRAs were represented by the Syndicat des Villes et Communes Luxembourgeoises (Association of Luxembourg Towns and Communes).

**Malta's** Ministries and bodies responsible for implementing the measures contained in the NRP consulted and are to liaise, where applicable, with the respective Local Councils and the Local Councils' Association.

In the **Netherlands**, LRAs (12 provinces and 418 municipalities) were consulted, including local and regional government umbrella organisations, but municipalities and provinces were not involved in the adoption of the national objectives.

The drafting of the **Portuguese** NRP mobilised Portuguese society, particularly the regions and the different sectors: Regional Governments of Madeira and Azores (Madeira 2020 and Azores 2020), Regional Coordination Committees of Lisbon and the Tagus Valley and the North (Lisbon 2020 and North 2020).

The **Slovakian** NRP is vague about the involvement of LRAs and states that the preparation of the NRP 2011-2014 involved representatives of economic, social and regional partners and the National Council of the Slovak Republic.

The NRP of **Slovenia** states that an invitation was sent to the Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia and the Association of Municipalities of Slovenia calling on them to contribute suggestions to improve the document.

**Spain's** NRP states in Section V that the government is aware of the crucial role to be played by Parliament, the Autonomous Communities, local government (through the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces), the social partners and the Third Sector of Social Action in the process of designing and implementing the NRP in order to increase the degree of responsibility with respect to the Europe 2020 Strategy.

**Sweden** explicitly states that the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) was involved in the drafting of the NRP.

In the **UK's** NRP, the Devolved Administrations have also set out their priorities in their plans for government.

### **Box 1: Examples from Question 1**

#### ***1. Does the NRP clearly state who represented the viewpoints of local and regional authorities (LRAs)?***

The range of local and regional authorities involved varied across countries and can be summarised as follows:

- The Dutch and Flemish regional governments in Belgium as well as the Brussels capital region
- State, district and municipal administrations (Bulgaria)
- Danish Regions and Local Government Denmark
- Association of local authorities (France)
- Relevant "Länder" ministries (Germany)
- County municipalities, mayors, regions (Hungary)
- Regional bodies (Ireland)
- Association of Local and Regional Governments (Latvia)
- Association of Luxembourg Towns and Communes
- Local Councils and with the Local Councils' Association (Malta)
- 12 provinces and 418 municipalities (The Netherlands)
- Regional Governments of Madeira and the Azores, Regional Coordination Committees of Lisbon and Tagus Valley and the North (Portugal)
- Regional partners (Slovakia)
- Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia and the Association of Municipalities of Slovenia
- Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces
- Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR)
- Devolved Administrations of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales (UK)



### **3.2 How did LRAs contribute to the drafting of the NRP?**

The NRPs of the **Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Lithuania and Poland** do not mention how the LRAs contributed to the drafting of the NRP.

The **Austrian** NRP makes reference to a great number of comments from many stakeholders, which are published separately. The Austrian reform measures in the NRP document their multiplicity and wide range and show that many stakeholders actively take responsibility for implementing and shaping the Europe 2020 Strategy.

In **Belgium**, each regional authority/language community (Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia) drew up its own 'regional reform programme', combined to make the NRP.

In **Bulgaria**, the NRP was drafted on the basis of several stages of consultation, including a public discussion of the preliminary NRP with the active involvement of stakeholders and direct input to a revision of the draft NRP on 20 September 2010. On 28 September 2010, the Council for Public Consultation drew up and included key priority areas in the NRP and since February 2011 a public discussion of the NRP has taken place on the Finance Ministry website. On 28 March 2011, the NRP was presented and discussed at a public debate attended by representatives of the national government, the social partners, NGOs, academia and municipalities, with a view to gathering comments, feedback and contributions to the consultation.

**Cyprus** also held a consultative process, although it is not explicitly mentioned whether and how the LRAs contributed: on 8 February 2011, a public consultation involving all stakeholders (political actors, social partners and civil society) was held, in which the draft NRP was presented and participants could make comments and recommendations. On 4 April, the revised NRP was presented by the Minister of Finance to the Parliamentary Committee on European Affairs in the presence of social partners, who expressed satisfaction at the degree of their involvement in the preparation stage and asked to be equally involved in the implementation process.

In **Denmark**, the Contact Committee is the platform for the systematic, coordinated exchange of information and views between ministries, LRAs and professional organisations. The Contact Committee has been involved in the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy and is regularly informed about relevant developments at EU level. Members of the Committee help design the NRP, revisions of the Strategy and annual discussions of the Strategy at the spring

summit of the European Council. The Committee also ensures national involvement by the most important stakeholders and actors, including LRAs. The Parties contribute formally and informally and have generated ongoing dialogue. Committee members have also secured a direct channel to the decision-making process, which provides transparency, influence and an overview.

In the **French** NRP, LRAs are given credit for playing an integral role in compiling the NRP, and the association of local authorities was one of the stakeholders consulted during the drafting of the plan.

**Germany's** NRP drafting involved several meetings between federal ministries and the Länder, represented by their respective line ministries (not specifically named) to coordinate and calibrate the content of the NRP. This consultative process resulted in several contributions from the participating "Länder" line ministries, produced at conferences held on the matter, which are also documented verbatim in a separate document. Position papers by the social advocacy groups, unions, church organisations and other civil society groups consulted were also produced.

**Hungary** sought written comments and a nationwide public consultation was held.

**Ireland** involved the LRAs through written and direct participation.

The **Latvian** LRAs contributed as members of a working group.

In **Luxembourg**, the broad lines and concrete measures of the NRP were drawn up following extensive consultation between 'executive and legislative powers, national and local public authorities and social and civil society partners.' LRAs were involved in the drafting of the NRP through the CIPU (Cellule National d'Information pour la Politique Urbane – National Information Cell for Urban Policy, see 14 below) with regard to matters of urban policy and the contribution of LRAs to Europe 2020.

The **Maltese** NRP only mentions the consultation and active involvement of stakeholders and LRAs.

The **Netherlands** involved LRAs substantially, using consultations and negotiations based on the Triple Helix model of cooperation and multi-level governance. The government maintains dialogue with local authorities and the social partners on the implementation of the NRP measures.

**Portugal** is unique among the 27 EU Member States in that its NRP development process spawned individual plans through debates, consultation, direct intervention in public debates and then in the form of written contributions. These individual action plans exist for regions and cities and include Madeira 2020, Azores 2020, Lisbon 2020 and North 2020.

**Romania** drew up its NRP through consultation, meetings, round tables and dialogues.

**Slovakia** does not refer extensively to LRAs in its NRP. The drafting stage included LRAs as ‘regional partners’, in which they contributed through direct negotiation and, informally, through participation in conferences and seminars.

**Slovenia’s** NRP included comments, suggestions for improvement and a public consultation via its NRP website.

**Spain** conducted talks between the central government and the representatives of the Autonomous Communities to canvas their opinions on the NRP before it is formally adopted and while tracking the progress that is achieved. Discussions between national ministries and the Autonomous Communities took also place in bilateral thematic meetings.

**Sweden** consulted with the social partners and SALAR.

In the **UK**, all the actions reported in the NRP have been subject to extensive public consultation, and examples of stakeholder involvement in delivering structural reforms are provided in the document. In addition, the UK’s draft NRP 2010 was placed on the Treasury’s website and in the case of Northern Ireland, on the Department of Finance and Personnel’s website for comment by the public. In Scotland, a stakeholder engagement seminar with local and national interest groups was held on 23 February 2011 and in Wales a similar event was held on 22 March 2011.

## Box 2: Examples from Question 2

### ***2. How did LRAs contribute to the drafting of the NRP?***

The different NRPs reflect the broad spectrum of contributions that local and regional authorities provided to the drafting of the NRP. Particular detail is given, for example, in Romania's NRP, where Europe 2020 Strategy working groups for each of its objectives involving members from all relevant institutions – coordinated by the central government ministry with the major powers in their respective areas of expertise – made a considerable effort to gather and incorporate input. This process included discussions of intermediate and final results in setting national targets during the working groups' meetings, consultation on and approval of various NRP versions by all stakeholders involved in its implementation, consideration of their amendments and proposals, publication of the results on the website of the relevant ministries and the organisation of public debates, thematic round tables and conferences nationwide.

### **3.3 Does the NRP state to what extent LRA input has been taken into account?**

**Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland and Slovakia** make no mention of the extent to which any contribution or input of the LRAs were taken into consideration.

In **Belgium**, the input of the LRAs, at least at the regional level of Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels, was taken fully into account because of the devolved nature of the regional NRPs.

**Bulgaria's** NRP states that most of comments made at these events are reflected in the NRP.

The **Cypriot** NRP only states that the consulted parties were satisfied with the level of their involvement and that the Government is committed to continue this involvement during the implementation stage. All submitted comments are also posted on website of the Planning Bureau.

In **Denmark**, the NRP only states that the Contact Committee has since the beginning been involved in the development of the NRP 2011 and that this involvement will continue in the future and will also include implementation.

The NRP of **France** states the LRAs were as responsible for carrying out the NRP as the national government, each LRA participating within its particular

area of competence. The NRP was drawn up in consultation with the various stakeholders, including the ‘collectivités territoriales’ – the LRAs. These stakeholders’ views and observations were attached to the report.

The **German** NRP does not state explicitly to what extent the LRAs’ contributions have been taken into account but the NRP contains several references to initiatives and agreements that involve LRAs, mostly at Länder level and – as previously noted – the LRA comments of the Länder are published separately.

**Ireland’s** NRP states “While the NRP does not reflect all the views received, it incorporates amendments where possible and appropriate. The Government also acknowledges that there will be a need for continued engagement with stakeholders in the implementation and further development of the National Reform Programme in the years ahead.”

The NRP of **Luxembourg** does not make an explicit reference regarding this question but shows LRA involvement in a number of actions and policy measures.

The **Netherlands’** NRP states that the central government is still negotiating the details of the measures with the local authorities and social partners who took the initiative to prepare separate documents outlining their contribution to the National Reform Programme and the Europe 2010 Strategy.

The **Portuguese** NRP only states that appropriate account has been taken of LRA inputs.

In **Romania**, the supplementing and amending proposals submitted by the LRAs were considered and taken into account (when appropriate), and the resulting document was debated at the meeting of the High Level Working Group.

**Slovenia’s** NRP only states that comments sent by the Municipality of Novo Mesto were taken into account in preparing an upgraded document.

In **Spain**, due to the considerable independence of the Autonomous Communities in many of the policies covered by the Europe 2020 Strategy, an attempt will be made to promote the design of regional policies that are consistent with the goals of the NRP and to ensure that regional objectives are aligned with any European and national objectives.

**Sweden’s** NRP does not make specific comments on how much LRA input was taken into account but it reflects a clear commitment to central-regional-local

collaboration in the form of joint initiatives, to explicit recognition of the relevance of the LRA and to independent strategies that also deal with LRAs.

The **UK's** NRP states that the actions and policies relating to Northern Ireland outlined in this document have been subject to approval by the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Northern Ireland Executive, in terms of either relevant legislation or, where appropriate, new policy developments. The Scottish Parliament's European and External Relations Committee published a report on the Europe 2020 Strategy on 4 May 2010 and a debate was held in the Scottish Parliament on 12 May 2010. In addition, Scottish Ministers appeared before the Committee in September 2010, December 2010 and January 2011. The Committee was sent a copy of the Scottish National Reform Programme in March 2011. The National Assembly for Wales' European and External Affairs Committee discussed the Europe 2020 Strategy on 16 March 2010, with further discussions of Europe 2020 as part of other policy debates. The Welsh Assembly Government held a stakeholder event on the NRP on 22 March 2011.

### **Box 3: Examples from Question 3**

#### ***3. Does the NRP state to what extent LRA input has been taken into account?***

Although most countries' NRP states that LRAs were involved in some form or other, whether and how much of their input was ultimately reflected in the NRP is discussed to a lesser extent. For example, The Netherland's NRP states that "The central government is still negotiating the details of the measures with local authorities and social partners who took the initiative to prepare separate documents outlining their contribution to the National Reform Programme and the Europe 2010 Strategy."

### **3.4 Is a written contribution from LRAs annexed to the NRP?**

Only five NRPs mention how written contributions from LRAs were dealt with, specifically whether they were published as part of the NRP or elsewhere as separate documents. These are **Austria** (published separately), **Belgium** (annexed), **France** (annexed<sup>5</sup>), **Germany** (published separately) and the **Netherlands** (annexed).

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<sup>5</sup> The French NRP states that the comments are provided in an annex but it was not part of the downloadable material from the EU Commission's Europe 2020 website.

#### Box 4: Examples from Question 4

##### ***4. Is any written contribution from LRAs annexed to the NRP?***

This question received the fewest number of positive answers. The most notable exception is The Netherlands, which provided a separate annex to its NRP detailing the involvement of local and regional authorities, titled “Appendix to the National Reform Programme 2011: involvement of local and regional authorities”

### **3.5 Is any mention made of Territorial Pacts, equivalent approaches (even if given another name, such as regional pacts, territorial contracts, etc.) or multi-level cooperation agreements other than Territorial pacts?**

Overall, Territorial Pacts or agreements of a similar nature but with a different name are very scarce in the 27 NRPs. The only clear reference to Territorial Pacts was made by **Romania**. More frequently, other forms of multi-level cooperation agreements are mentioned. Country NRPs making no reference to such vertical cooperation are **Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia**.

**Belgium’s** NRP makes no mention of Territorial Pacts or equivalent agreements, but there are efforts to cooperate across the different levels of government in the implementation of the NRP. Specifically, in Wallonia, the Walloon authorities and the French-speaking Community are working together under the banner of a common strategy called ‘Plan Marshall 2.vert’. In essence, Belgium is one big regional agreement: each local authority compiles its reform programme in close consultation with the federal government.

**Bulgaria’s** NRP makes no mention of Territorial Pacts or similar agreements. Other multi-level government agreements exist under development plans at State, District and Municipal level.

**Denmark’s** NRP does not mention Territorial Pacts or equivalent agreements but the Contact Committee is a multi-level forum for cooperation. The Government has concluded an agreement with Local Government Denmark to strengthen inclusion in the *Folkeskole* in order to increase the number of students enrolled in ordinary *Folkeskole* (2011).

**Finland** does not refer to Territorial Pacts in its NRP. The Government-owned Housing Finance and Development Centre of Finland (ARA) are financing the

bulk of the sum through investment and subsidised loans. To implement the action plan, agreements have been contracted between the State and the 10 largest cities in Finland, whereby the cities have made a binding agreement to construct the required housing for rental accommodation and accommodation that includes support services for special groups.

**France's** NRP does not refer to Territorial Pacts but multi-level governance cooperation includes the National Strategy for Research and Innovation, which is outlined in terms of regional strategies ('STRATER') whereby a common vision was outlined for each region. This vision will form a frame of reference in the relationship between national government and local players (presumably including LRAs). This is complemented by regional innovation strategies for 2011-2013, which co-ordinate support for innovation. In addition, as part of the programme 'France numérique 2012', national government grants subsidies to LRAs through one-stop financing points to invest in infrastructure for providing high-speed internet.

Territorial Pacts are not mentioned in **Germany's** NRP either, but there are several references to collaboration and coordination between federal, regional and in a few cases also local government ("Kommunen"). Mention is also made of cooperation between federal and local/regional authorities (e.g., INQA) but with no clear explanation of how or within what rules or constrictions (see the "agreement" between the federal and regional governments regarding increased provision of childcare centres)

**Greece's** NRP refers to five Regional Operational Programmes and two Territorial Cooperation Programmes (at EU level).

**Hungary's** NRP makes no mention of Territorial Pacts or equivalent agreements. Reference is made to multi-level government cooperation in the form of the Magyary Programme, which aims to modernise public administration.

**Italy's** NRP states: the Programme for the inclusion of Women in the labour market (Italia2020) contains an integration plan for regional and local authorities called the "Piano per la Conciliazione" (April 2010). Control of public expenditure will be achieved by regions (Intesa Stato-Regioni, 3/12/2009) and there is an agreement among Government, Regions and social/civil organisations on professional education. Occupational and placement services by universities have been created and will be strengthened in collaboration with regions and local authorities. Regional programmes also exist to achieve the 20-20-20 objectives with regard to renewable energies.



**Luxembourg** does not mention Territorial Pacts in its NRP but on numerous occasions refers to multi-level agreements and collaboration.

The **Netherlands'** NRP makes no mention of Territorial Pacts or equivalents but does refer to other forms of multi-level government cooperation: Cooperation between central government and local authorities (municipalities) through the Work Capacity Act to move toward a locally implemented scheme for the lower end of the labour market. Furthermore, in the field of lifelong learning, the government has vigorously encouraged long-term regional cooperation between educational institutions, industry and local authorities in recent years. The parties involved will continue to cooperate on learning and working without further government involvement. The government wants to conclude agreements with the social partners on training, the use of R&D funds and long-term employability, to be laid down in collective agreements.

**Slovenia's** NRP specifies cooperation across governance levels only as a measure: Objective 3, 2007-2013 and territorial cooperation.

The NRP of **Spain** makes no mention of Territorial Pacts or equivalent agreements either, but the Government aims to reach agreement with the Autonomous Communities and local governments on making minimum welfare benefits more efficient, by providing flexible linkage to access to quality employment and making the range of primary social services more responsive to the protection and social insertion of individuals in situations of greatest social vulnerability, particularly the homeless.

**Sweden** participates in 13 programmes and additional cross-border cooperation programmes with non-EU countries. The Government also plays an active role in the process and strives to ensure that the implementation of the NRP will contribute to closer territorial and inter-sectoral cooperation in the region.

No mention of Territorial Pacts or equivalent agreements is made in the **British** NRP, but the existing agreements and laws governing the power distribution between central government and the devolved authorities is referred to.

## Box 5: Examples from Question 5

### **5. Is there any mention of Territorial Pacts, equivalent approaches (even if given another name, such as regional pacts, territorial contracts, etc.) or multi-level cooperation agreements other than Territorial pacts?**

**Romania:** the Territorial Pact plays an important role in the effective implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy through the opportunity it gives local communities to make a more effective contribution. The Committee of the Regions, as originator of the concept of Territorial Pacts, supports the involvement of municipalities and local authorities in their efforts to achieve the national targets related to Europe 2020. This mechanism must be analysed in collaboration with local authorities and concrete ways of achieving this task must be identified. Given that the Territorial Pact requires the agreement of various levels of government (national, regional and local) the concerned parties must act in a coordinated manner. Developing the Territorial Pact at the national level thus requires:

a study showing regional differences (at the administrative-territorial unit level) in terms of reaching the Europe 2020 objectives, to identify appropriate policy measures at regional, county and local levels;

an analysis by MDRT, MAI, DAE and associations of local authorities regarding the appropriateness and methods of using the Territorial Pact in Romania

the signing of pilot Territorial Pacts on a voluntary basis with those municipalities or county councils willing to contribute specifically to achieving the targets set at national level.

**1. Hungary:** The preparation of the Magyary Programme aimed at modernising public administration goes hand in hand with the preparation of Hungary's new Constitution with the purpose of establishing an efficient national public service. Key pillars of the Programme are: updating the responsibilities of public administration (taking into account government responsibilities, review of their location and delegation, linking responsibilities, powers and resources to one another), establishing efficient organisational practises (deliberate planning of resources, reviewing the internal functioning of public administration to make it more efficient, performance measurement and an audit system based on indicators), a review of the public administration's internal procedures (strategic policy design, reducing the burden on customers and clients) and increasing the skills and commitment of public servants.

**Denmark:** The Government has concluded an agreement with Local Government Denmark to increase inclusion in the *Folkeskole* in order to raise the number of students enrolled in the ordinary *Folkeskole* (2011).

### **3.6 How many relevant paragraphs or even separate sections are included?**

Albeit of initial interest, determining the exact number of paragraphs that address the role of LRAs in the NRP turned out to be a somewhat precarious metric to use in assessing the quality of the NRP, because each NRP is structured differently and has its own style and flow of text. Some NRPs contain long sections of text in a single paragraph while others create paragraphs for very small blocks of information, thereby greatly increasing the number of paragraphs.

Instead of counting paragraphs, this question was used to assess the overall representation of LRAs in the NRP, i.e., are LRAs present throughout the development, implementation and monitoring/evaluation phases of the NRP? Are LRAs involved horizontally across all or most sectoral activities and policy development under the NRP?; Is there a dedicated section on LRAs? etc. A simple yes/no categorisation was used because it would be difficult to make qualitative distinctions between some of the mentioned forms of LRA representation and involvement. Therefore, most countries gained a point for this question. The exceptions were **Lithuania and Poland**, whose NRPs are nearly void of references to LRAs.

**Austria's** NRP measures with LRA involvement are listed in tables for each Europe 2020 target (area).

**Belgium**, due to its governance structure, has drawn up separate NRPs and therefore directly involved the high-level regional authorities. Paragraphs dealing with LRAs were therefore not further evaluated.

In **Bulgaria's** NRP, a separate Section (V) is dedicated to issues of local and regional authority involvement.

In **Cyprus' NRP**, a separate Section (11) is dedicated to issues of local and regional authority involvement.

The **Czech Republic's** NRP contains three paragraphs on pages 15-17 dealing with LRAs.

In **Denmark's** NRP, a separate Section (4) is dedicated to issues of local and regional authority involvement.

**Estonia's** NRP weaves LRA involvement into the specific measures to be taken under the NRP. They are concentrated on pages 16 to 20.

**Finland's** NRP also addresses LRA involvement in the specific measures to be taken under the NRP. These references are found on pages 16, 24, 25 and 32.

**France's** NRP makes a number of references to LRAs (more than 30 paragraphs were counted).

The **German** NRP reveals LRA cooperation in numerous places. More than 20 explicit references were found, primarily focussing on implementation of the NRP measures as opposed to the consultation process leading to the drafting of the document. The latter is discussed in the introduction (and was discussed in previous questions).

**Greece's** NRP, which focuses heavily on the fallout of the economic and financial downturns and the Greek sovereign debt crisis, discusses LRAs in many instances, mainly in the context of reform initiatives in the public sector (employment, pensions, efficiency, devolution of responsibilities, etc). There is no separate section on the role of LRAs but more than 20 paragraphs discuss their relevance in the reform process throughout the NRP.

In **Hungary's** NRP, Annex 2 discusses the role of LRAs.

**Ireland's** NRP primarily uses Section 5 and some NRP initiatives and measures to reflect on the role of LRAs. These include lowering the number of early school leavers, targeted social inclusion programmes as part of local and community development programmes and help with job-seeking from local employment services.

**Italy's** NRP mentions LRAs as part of its strategic and reform-oriented NRP measures, including regional contribution to encouraging research and innovation, regional policy and education, the role of the regions and environmental sustainability, regional actions to support SMEs, the Jeremie South Italy programme (Jeremie Mezzogiorno) and diversity in regional and development policies.

**Latvia's** NRP only marginally addresses LRAs and does so in the Foreword and as part of specific NRP measures (2 measures).

**Luxembourg's** NRP mentions LRAs frequently as part of its NRP measures and initiatives.

**Malta** uses Section 4 to address the involvement and relevance of LRAs, albeit to a rather limited extent (not least due to the small size of the country).

**The Netherlands'** NRP contains 4 paragraphs dealing with NRP measures but, more importantly. Section 5 addresses horizontal issues and the annex on local and regional cooperation gives very specific examples on how the NRP was developed and will be implemented through coordinated action at all levels of government.

**Portugal's** NRP mentions LRAs in the Introduction and in Section 7.

The **Romanian** NRP stands out for the considerable detail it provides for its NRP measures and the associated use of financial and other resources. Issues concerning the role of LRAs are addressed in Section 7 and its sub-sections.

The **Slovakian** NRP contains no separate section on this matter, but mentions the role of LRAs indirectly in the Introduction and as part of NRP initiatives in several paragraphs.

**Slovenia's** NRP primarily refers to the LRAs in Annex 6 and the specific measures in the NRP that involve LRAs.

**Spain's** governance structure facilitates and requires the involvement of LRAs. Therefore, the Spanish NRP contains multiple references to their role and relevance as a part of (a) specific NRP measures and (b) as a partner in the development of the NRP.

In **Sweden**, local self-government plays a leading role in implementing some of the targets set out by the central government. Its NRP contains multiple paragraphs and Section 5.3 specifies the role of LRA in the NRP measures and the NRP development process in detail.

The **UK's** NRP contains a large number of short paragraphs addressing LRA involvement as part of NRP measures, usually referring to the devolved authorities in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This is done primarily in Section 4.

### **3.7 Is any mention made of the role of local and regional authorities in implementing the NRP?**

Only **Hungary's** NRP does not explicitly refer to LRAs with regard to implementing the NRP. All other EU Member States at least partially link their activities under the NRP to local or regional authorities as important actors, contributors or overseers of policies relevant to the Europe 2020 Strategy.

In **Austria's** NRP, local and regional authorities play an active role in implementing the NRP: In tables, the NRP lists initiatives either led or owned by or involving provincial or municipal government. Frequent references are made to local and regional initiatives under the individual measures (e.g., the Province of Salzburg education cheque, the WAGE network of Upper Austria, Strategy Carinthia, Viennese Strategy for RTI, etc.).

In **Belgium**, each regional authority implements the measures set out in its own plan.

**Bulgaria's** NRP states that LRAs are partners in coordinating and implementing sectoral policies at regional and local level and through their involvement in specific NRP measures. These measures include: Strategic documents for regional and local development after 2012, which will be developed in 2011-2013, and include Regional Development Plans (2014-2020), District Development Strategies (2014-2020), Municipal Development Plans (2014-2020). The aim is to give Bulgaria's targets under Europe 2020 the maximum territorial representation by developing local and regional partnerships and by implementing mechanisms for effective coordination.

**Cyprus' NRP** mentions only that consultations were held and that the government is committed to continuing the process of involving stakeholders during the implementation phase.

The NRP of the **Czech Republic** states that “the Government of the Czech Republic cannot set development priorities for its regions and municipalities” but the document “attempts to reflect also the territorial dimension of economic policy”. It also states that for a successful cohesion policy, mid-term sectoral development programmes need to be interlinked with regional strategies and programmes and that the future cohesion policy has to target an “intersection of priorities formulated at the supra-national, national, regional and local (municipal) levels”. The process of drawing up local and regional priorities is yet to occur and is perceived as complementary to the national priorities identified in the NRP. The areas falling within the competence of local and

regional government and where the priorities are expected to be drawn up include culture, tourism, social and public services, local and regional transport infrastructure or the completion of environmental infrastructure. With regard to high-school reform, cooperation with municipal authorities “will take place”. In terms of support for entrepreneurship through innovation clusters etc. “the Government will more closely cooperate with local and regional authorities.

**Denmark’s** NRP states that LRAs are involved in initiatives under the NRP. For example, in association with regional and municipal authorities, the government has established the Ethnic Promotion of Trade to help entrepreneurs of an ethnic background to succeed. In addition, through the Contact Committee, the LRAs are actively involved in the implementation of the NRP and are also informed about the progress of implementation.

NRP measures that highlight the role of LRAs in implementing the NRP in **Estonia** include plans to improve cooperation with local government institutions. Such cooperation plays a significant role in reducing long-term unemployment and unemployment among young people, improving institutional cooperation and more clearly defining the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Research, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Unemployment Insurance Fund and local governments in reducing and preventing unemployment and increasing the impact of active labour market measures through closer cooperation between national and local government. In addition, the NRP states that the measure for supporting major investors stimulating supply chains must be continued, along with the measure for developing local government infrastructure. The capacity of county development centres and local governments to deal with regional investor services must also be boosted.

**Finland** also uses specific NRP measures to demonstrate how LRAs contribute to and play a role in implementing the NRP. For example, improving productivity is the principal means by which local government expenditure will be curbed. In addition, the municipal and service structure will be reformed to make it cost-efficient and effective. Letters of intent will be used between local government and central government to ensure swift employment for immigrants. So far there have been more than 150 development projects and nearly 40 research projects. Most of the funding has gone to small and medium-sized enterprises and to local government projects.

**France** makes numerous references to LRAs in the implementation phase of the NRP: In the context of sustainability, the Law on the Modernisation of Agriculture (adopted on 13 July 2010) is aimed at curbing the decrease in agricultural land. One measure for achieving this is to provide LRAs with points of reference, presumably as a tool for implementation. A regional plan is also

laid down for sustainable agriculture in each region. The LRAs are given the tasks of centralising regional points of contact with the government (e.g. chambers of commerce) for businesses, and of simplifying and digitising administrative procedures for businesses, particularly with regard to the creation of new businesses. With regard to social inclusion, and in particular greater participation by women in the workforce, LRAs are funding investment in an increasing variety of childcare facilities. National government and LRAs are working together in order to help adults and young people with social and professional problems return to work. LRAs are playing a role in addressing homelessness through the Department Plan for Receiving, Sheltering and Reintegrating the Homeless or Inadequately Housed (PDAHI) in cooperation with local players.

**Germany's** NRP describes various initiatives, mainly in the education and job sectors, that involve LRAs, both in the main document and in the Annex that lists all the initiatives, regulations, laws, etc. relevant to the NRP's implementation.

**Greece** – as was the case in previous questions assessed in this report – addresses the role of LRAs in implementing the NRP through the initiatives, actions and measures to be adopted under the NRP. Examples include involving LRAs in a number of reform initiatives and key reform pillars such as “Further reform of state-owned enterprises and local governments”, restructuring the local public administration, reforming the public administration's fiscal framework, including expenditure ceilings for local governments, removing local tariff barriers, improving effectiveness and better coordination between ministries, agencies and local government, cooperating with local authorities on special programmes offering childcare services and promoting local and regional measures to integrate Roma.

**Ireland's** NRP considers LRAs to have a part to play in the NRP's initiatives and measures, including regional research development and innovation capacity and the Irish Regional Development Strategy. Otherwise, LRAs role in implementation is not further mentioned.

**Italy** explicitly states that LRAs play a role and outlines a number of specific NRP measures that involve LRAs in the implementation of the NRP: Local and regional authorities will be involved and will have a great(er) responsibility for all policies related to implementing the NRP. According to the NRP, there should be close coordination among State, Regions and local authorities to combat unemployment. Because of the explicit links made in the NRP between the measures and LRAs, they are listed below:



- Fiscal Federalism: reform of Italian fiscal system towards regional and local decision-making
- Control of public expenditure by regions (Intesa Stato-Regioni, 3/12/2009)
- Placement services by universities in collaboration with regions and local authorities
- Employment measures by regions and local authorities
- Use of European funds for employment and for inclusion, especially by regions in Southern Italy
- Regions are included in the work to reduce the ‘digital divide’ and to improve digital infrastructure
- Regional contribution to encouraging Research and Innovation
- Regional programmes to support education
- Regional programmes to reach 20-20-20 objectives with regard to renewable energies
- Regions and Environmental Sustainability: in this area, regions have the following objectives: 1) environmental risk prevention; 2) improvement of water resources’ quality and efficiency; 3) energy efficiency and renewable energies production; 4) rationalisation and optimisation of the waste cycle; 5) biodiversity conservation
- Regional policies on energy and the environment using EU funding
- Governance of health expenditure by regions: in the last five years, regions have been subject to a stronger accountability with regard to health expenditure
- Taxation reform in favour of local authorities
- Regional measures to support SMEs
- Inclusion of Local and Regional authorities in the reform of Public Administration
- Regional and development policies diversity: there are considerable differences between Italian regions, especially in terms of economic development and unemployment. According to the NRP, greater investment should be made favouring regions in Southern Italy.

The **Latvian** NRP states that its measures include launching reforms aimed at optimising the state institutional structure – the secretariats of specific ministers have been closed, the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government has been incorporated into the Ministry of Environment, the number of state agencies has been reduced by 50%, and savings have been made in the area of support functions by centralising them.

**Lithuania** makes only one reference to LRAs in this context, namely to get local authorities involved in implementing RES development policy.

In **Luxembourg's** NRP the Syndicat des Villes et Communes Luxembourgeoises was fully involved in the Partnership for the Environment and the Climate, launched in Feb. 2010, the aim of which is to draw up the 2nd national action plan for the reduction of CO2 emissions, accompanied by the national plan for adaptation to climate change.

**Malta** only mentions that the national government will actively involve and liaise with local councils and the Local Councils' Association. One relevant and specific NRP initiative is the Community Work Scheme, supervised by local councils and NGOs.

The **Netherlands** provides an extensive description of the role of LRAs in implementing the NRP, as demonstrated by the following specific examples.

Examples of the involvement of LRAs in implementing the NRP in the Appendix:

- Strengthening Research & Innovation, organising the knowledge triangle: the national government announced a new Research and Innovation policy. Local and regional authorities are pleased that this new policy – in cooperation with all the involved ministries - means that strengthening the economy of the Netherlands will be a coherent effort.
- Efficient use of natural resources and reduction of CO2 emissions
- Improving the business environment, reducing administrative burdens and strengthening the industrial base
- Improving the operation of labour markets by investing in employability, mobility and social inclusion
- Education, which is of huge economic and social importance

Specific measures listed in the Dutch NRP:

- Cooperation between central government and local authorities (municipalities) through the Work Capacity Act, to move toward a locally implemented scheme for the lower end of the labour market
- In the field of lifelong learning, the government has in recent years vigorously encouraged long-term regional cooperation between educational institutions, industry and local authorities. The parties involved will continue to cooperate on learning and working without further government involvement. The government wants to make agreements with the social partners on training, the use of R&D funds and long-term employability, to be laid down in collective agreements.

- Local authorities will promote investments in networks and the sustainable generation and use of alternative energy in urban and regional transport in the years ahead.
- The government has opted for a comprehensive approach, in which central and local government, educational institutions and youth care services work together at regional level. This approach has met with some success. The government is continuing to pursue a programme to tackle dropout rates in order to meet the national target.

**Poland's** NRP mentions the role of LRAs in the implementation process only to a limited extent. For example, the role of regional authorities is mentioned as an actor supporting the development of innovation clusters through regional innovation schemes.

**Portugal** addresses the issue of LRA involvement in implementing the NRP indirectly, through the statement that LRAs will be consulted and actively involved in the implementation of the NRP and through specific NRP measures:

- Reform of public administration
- Intensification of international cooperation efforts between companies and universities, including the development of internationally relevant demonstration units and projects involving local actors
- Giving greater encouragement to an entrepreneurial culture in the education system and to stepping up the experimental component, also involving local bodies.

**Romania's** attention to detail in its NRP means that LRAs are often mentioned in the various plans to implement the NRP. These are listed below:

- The Romanian Government Strategy on Roma Inclusion 2011-2020 aims to include on the agenda of central and local public authorities a number of measures to boost the socio-economic inclusion of Roma people.
- The Romanian government's new vision for on economic growth and living standards, which is clearer and more dynamic, has led to closer collaboration between central government, parliament, social partners, local government associations , NGOs, academia and international financial institutions, aiming at implementing the necessary reforms to correct financial imbalances and restore growth.
- Increasing the efficiency of public administration is a priority, which includes a series of key reforms, such as restructuring and modernising central and local public administration, [...], making local public administration more effective.

- OP ACD, Priority Axis 1 – Structural and process-based improvements in public policy cycle management in central and local administration
- Strategic management and leadership in education, with the emphasis on decentralisation, ensuring that local players are involved in the decision-making process in education
- The National Certification Programme for Civil Servants in central and local public administration.
- The Working Group for drafting the Administrative Code composed of representatives of central and local public authorities
- Stricter horizontal rules for granting pre-financing to projects, [...], for some of the beneficiaries of the central and local public administration for approved priority projects.
- Supporting business incubators, with the support of local authorities.
- Developing a sectoral cluster model for innovation-driven clusters, which sets out to identify involvement by businesses, research institutes, universities and local administration.
- Reducing arrears in the economy caused by local authorities.
- The budgetary discipline of local authorities.
- The National Programme for Infrastructure Development (NPID), as beneficiaries represented by the local public administration authorities
- The Co-financing scheme from structural funds to the local public administration.
- The Sectoral Operational Programme “Increasing Economic Competitiveness (SOP-IEC) for producing green energy promotes investment for both economic operators and local authorities.
- Energy efficiency and local decentralised heating systems at local government level.
- A high degree of decentralisation, accountability and financing of the system will be achieved by transferring responsibilities to the School Board of Administration and local authorities.
- Establishment by local authorities of the Community Centres for Lifelong Learning.
- Reform of the social assistance system aims to better redistribute the financial and human resources within the system, including the decentralised bodies of the local public administration
- Granting social aid so that a minimum income is guaranteed to every citizen, payment being made by the National Agency for Social Benefits (ANPS) through its local agencies, with responsibility falling to local public authorities/municipalities
- Setting up standardised public daycare system for children within local authorities (municipal, city and/or villages), training of supervisors in the local/county councils

- Social housing projects, applicants for which can only be local public administration authorities

**Slovakia's** NRP strategy coordinators involved representatives of economic, social and regional partners in the preparation of the NRP, including through direct negotiations at the operational level, supplementing standard procedures. These partners also took part in the preparation and implementation process through various informal platforms, such as conferences and seminars. They will be asked to participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the tasks arising from the NRP.

As part of specific NRP measures, the following references to LRAs in implementing the NRP are made:

- Better regulation of local governments in the context of debt repayment.
- More precise rules for economic and financial management of municipalities, towns and higher territorial units.
- Tightening of the rules for local government through the Fiscal Responsibility Act.
- Supporting socially excluded communities via governmental support of local governments, churches, charities and third-sector organisations that deliver demonstrable results in addressing SEC problems
- Developing a central public administration system to record and analyse data on the public administration systems in operation and for facilitating the effective and simple linkage of information systems in the individual general government sectors, in both state and local administration.
- A transparent environment, free of corruption in the handling of state property, in public institutions and local government bodies and in public procurement,

**Slovenia** makes only indirect references to LRAs in implementing the NRP.

**Spain's** NRP also contains specific NRP measures that involve LRAs to implement them.

- Low international profile of our R&D centres and innovative SMEs, with coordination between regional, national and European policies also needing to be improved.
- The Spanish Science and Technology Strategy, which will establish criteria and areas of common action for central and regional government to ensure that their policies are coordinated and that they share goals for scientific and technical research

- The Ministry of Innovation will work specifically with regional innovation agencies and provide for supra-regional projects.
- The need for greater coordination between national, regional and local policies with regard to different sectors, in particular transport and housing
- Agreement to be reached with the Autonomous Communities and local governments in order to increase the efficiency of minimum welfare benefits, by providing flexible linkage to access to quality employment and making the range of primary social services more responsive to the protection and social integration of individuals in situations of greatest social vulnerability, particularly the homeless.

**Sweden's** NRP, as previously highlighted, states that the regional actors play a role in implementing the NRP based on their particular conditions and opportunities primarily within the framework of the regional development programmes. Local self-government has a leading role to play in implementing some of the targets set out by the central government.

In addition, Innovationsbron AB is a state-owned company promoting the commercialisation of knowledge-intensive business ideas across Sweden. The company invests seed capital in companies with significant market potential and develops, together with local and regional partners, a network of business incubators.

Specific NRP measures:

- In order to facilitate and strengthen cooperation in skills provision, the government has given actors with responsibility for regional development in each county a remit to establish skills platforms in 2010 for the coordination of skills provision and plans for training in the short and long term. This forms part of the government's ambition to strengthen the coordination of regional development policy, labour market policy and education policy.
- Regional development provides an important perspective in a national innovation strategy. Increased and effective cooperation between the different levels – EU, national and regional – and between the three parts of the knowledge triangle –education, research and innovation – are important and help reinforce the whole.
- The national strategy for regional competitiveness, entrepreneurship and employment 2007-2013 and the ministry communication Skr. 2009/10:221 "Strategic development efforts for regional competitiveness, entrepreneurship and employment" form the basis for a coordinated regional development effort in Sweden.

- Measures aimed at ensuring services are readily available are important for creating attractive environments for both the public and the business sector across the country. The government allocated SEK 80 million at the regional level for 2011-2014, in addition to the priorities that the counties themselves set annually for approximately SEK 43 million.
- The government allocated SEK 575 million for the period 2010-2012 for further energy efficiency initiatives at the local and regional levels and for initiatives for sustainable energy use. The main measures are support for municipal energy and climate advisory services for households and small business and work on encouraging the market introduction of systems solutions for making the housing and service sectors more energy efficient.

The references in the UK's NRP to the role and responsibilities of LRAs in implementing the NRP measures are numerous and substantial, in other words, they are given a legislative basis. They are too numerous and extensive all to be listed here and the NRP organises them primarily according to the three high-level, devolved authorities of Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

#### **Box 6: Examples from Question 6**

***7. Is any mention made of the role of local and regional authorities in implementing the NRP?***

**Sweden:** Regional actors play a role in implementing the national reform programme based on their particular conditions and opportunities, primarily within the framework of the regional development programmes. Given the level of local self-government in Sweden, the local level plays a leading role in implementing some of the targets set by the Swedish Government.

**Malta:** political responsibility for monitoring and implementing the NRP falls to the Minister for Finance, the Economy and Investment. The Policy Development Directorate (PDD) within the same ministry is responsible for its co-ordination. Each line Ministry and key public sector entity has a designated contact person who reports on the progress of every measure falling under their respective responsibility. The NRP was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers and will be tabled and debated in Parliament together with the Stability Programme 2011-2014. To increase the involvement of local authorities, the ministries and bodies responsible for the implementation of the measures contained in the NRP are to consult and liaise, where applicable, with the respective local councils and with the Local Councils' Association.

### **3.8 Is any mention made of the role of local and regional authorities in monitoring the NRP?**

There was a noticeable absence of discussions on how LRAs can and/or will be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of activities and policies under the NRP. Indeed, monitoring and evaluation was overall given rather scant attention. Even the 13 Member States that do discuss monitoring activities in some cases do so in passing or in an almost implicit way. The countries that do not address the issue at all are: the **Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland and Sweden.**

**Austria's** NRP makes no explicit mention of monitoring activities by LRAs but several NRP measures are cited to be monitored through a specific monitoring programme.

In **Belgium**, the Walloon government has put in place a permanent monitoring and evaluation process for the Marshall Plan 2.vert. The special delegate in charge of its monitoring has developed a dashboard and regularly monitors measures. A first implementation report was finalised at the end of February 2011. Moreover, regular independent evaluations are provided for. In addition, a number of systems for specific monitoring and evaluation tools are mentioned among the measures outlined in the above document.

**Bulgaria's** NRP states that monitoring is critical and will be coordinated by Working Group 31 "Europe 2020" of the Council for European Affairs. The National Statistical Institute (NSI) will prepare monitoring indicators but there is no specific mention of LRAs in any of these monitoring activities.

**Cyprus'** NRP states that all stakeholders are involved in order to maintain ownership and ensure the efficient implementation of the measures outlined in the NRP. In addition, there are eight Technical Committees for monitoring NRP implementation, each headed by the appropriate ministry, which also coordinates all activities and holds discussions with the social partners.

**Denmark's** NRP states that through the Contact Committee, LRAs are actively involved in monitoring the NRP.

The **Irish** NRP makes no direct or explicit mentioning of LRA monitoring activities but does so indirectly, as part of the general monitoring and review of the NRP, as part of certain NRP measures and initiatives. These include internal monitoring mechanisms in the education sector to reduce the rate of early



school-leaving and targeting and monitoring poverty trends in tertiary education through in-depth analyses carried out in conjunction with national statistical agencies and independent research bodies, including the Economic and Social Research Institute.

In the NRP of the **Netherlands**, NRP monitoring is addressed in the Appendix dedicated to regional and local ownership and the distribution of power. It therefore, forms part of the entire process, from the NRP's drafting to its implementation and finally the evaluation of its results.

**Portugal's** NRP makes no specific mention of how LRAs will be involved in monitoring, but this will take place for each action line and target in the framework of the Europe Strategy Coordination Network 2020.

In **Romania**, monitoring will take place internally, under the leadership of each of the institutions responsible for carrying out the measures within its area of competence and at the government level, led by DAE as national coordinator. Progress will be assessed periodically (quarterly). There is otherwise no explicit mention of LRAs.

**Slovakia's** NRP states that the strategy coordinators also involved representatives of economic, social and regional partners in the preparation of the NRP, including through direct negotiations at an operational level, supplementing standard procedures. The partners also participate in the preparation and implementation process through various informal platforms, such as conferences and seminars. The partners, including the academic community and non-governmental organisations, will be asked to participate in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the tasks arising from the NRP.

**Slovenia** only mentions that the basis for monitoring the implementation of development policies and objectives, along with their documents is a hierarchical set of programme and contextual policy indicators.

**Spain's** NRP says that a transparent, homogeneous and harmonised reporting system is maintained to ensure that monitoring of the NRP is implemented. With regard to the monitoring mechanism and ensuring an independent evaluation of the NRP, a mechanism will be established with the State Agency for the Evaluation of Public Policies and Service Quality to conduct an annual assessment of the degree of application and success of the main measures under the NRP in all public administrations that are involved.

The Devolved Administrations in the **UK** have in some instances a different approach to performance and transparency, and where this is the case it has been detailed in the NRP as shown in the following:

- Indicators for the current Northern Ireland Programme for Government 2008 to 2011 provide information on changes in the region's labour market performance, levels of educational attainment and workforce quality, levels of R&D and greenhouse gas emissions. Work is currently underway to develop a new Programme for Government for the period 2011 to 2015.
- Progress towards achieving the Scottish Government Purpose is monitored transparently on the Scottish Government website, through its Scotland Performs portal. This measures progress on a number of targets and indicators, including those relating to the Europe 2020 targets.
- In Wales, a Framework for Measuring Success was issued in March 2011, which shows progress on a range of social, environmental and economic indicators.

## Box 7: Examples from Question 7

### *8. Is any mention made of the role of local and regional authorities in monitoring the NRP?*

**Cyprus:** The monitoring body has been set up with a view to better coordinating the preparation and implementation of the NRP for EU2020. In this body, all stakeholders are involved in order to maintain ownership and ensure efficient implementation of the measures outlined in the Programme (see Figure 10 below [in NRP]). There are eight Technical Committees responsible for every main chapter/priority of the NRP, coordinated by the Planning Bureau. The Ministry chairing the particular technical committee is responsible for the formulation and implementation of the policy, for coordinating all other services involved and for holding discussions with the social partners on preparing the specific policy chapter.

**Bulgaria:** Bulgaria has an established and well functioning mechanism for monitoring progress on achieving the targets and implementing the reforms of the National Reform Programme, which can be identified as a good practice in this field. Reporting on the progress of implementation of NRP reforms is carried out on a quarterly basis and is defined pursuant to the Council of Ministers Decision No. 416 of 18 June 2007. It is coordinated by Working Group 31 “Europe 2020” in the Council for European Affairs.

### **3.9 Is there any mention or clarification of the role of LRAs in mitigating economic and financial crises?**

The economic and financial crisis clearly had an effect on all 27 NRPs, with those from the countries that have suffered the most paying it special attention and vowing to avoid a repetition of events through a series of reforms of the financial, economic, and regulatory sectors (e.g., Greece, Hungary, Portugal, Spain and Ireland). The Scandinavian countries, which have by and large coped well with the crisis, also use their NRPs to reaffirm their commitment to making the public and private sectors more resilient and to moving towards more sustainable economic models (e.g., Sweden). These countries all recognised that LRAs had and have a role to play, be it through the control of local bodies’ finances, enforcement of existing rules and regulations or through being the community’s first line of contact and response with the government. However, a few countries did not explicitly link LRAs to or gave them a role in mitigating economic and financial crises in their NRPs and these are **Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany,**

**Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal and Romania.**

In the **Belgian** NRP, in which each region administers its own economic plan, LRAs play a central role in mitigating the crisis.

The **Greek** NRP emphasises strict budget and expenditure restrictions, restructuring of local administrations and efficiency improvements.

**Italy's** NRP states that government, regions and social stakeholders tried to mitigate the impact of the crises with two agreements: 1) on the management of social security services; 2) on the improvement of training and vocational education. Now, the Regions will implement plans aimed at combating the crisis. In addition, occupational and placement services by universities have been set up and will be strengthened, in collaboration with regions and local authorities.

The **Netherlands'** NRP plans to achieve this by reducing public indebtedness and by removing structural weaknesses in the public administration system, e.g., through consolidation.

**Poland's** NRP states that LRAs' ability to create debt will be limited by new regulations. The aim is to limit the public budget deficit and neutralise the effects of the crisis.

**Slovakia's** NRP refers to the role of LRAs in causing/contributing to the economic and financial crisis, and tighter rules and constraints for LRAs will consequently be established for borrowing and spending funds.

In **Slovenia**, the NRP recognises the role of LRAs mainly through regulating public finances, debt and growth in financial liabilities, as stated in the NRP's measures.

**Spain's** NRP emphasises the role of LRAs through budget and fiscal reform and enhanced transparency and the importance of the Autonomous Communities to economic and financial recovery, due to their considerable degree of independence.

**Sweden's** NRP discusses financial and budget measures but not in the context of LRAs. However, it also mentions that public consumption also increased strongly as a result of higher central government grants to the local government sector and that as a result of economic contraction, the number of local government employees continues to decline.

The UK's NRP states that the Northern Ireland Executive's Budget for 2011 to 2015 was revised and issued on 7 March 2011. The Budget (Scotland) Act 2011 was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 9 February 2011 and received Royal Assent on 16 March 2011. The Welsh Assembly Government's Budget for 2011-2012 was issued on 1 February 2011.

### **Box 8: Examples from Question 8**

***9. Is there any mention or clarification of the role of LRAs in mitigating economic and financial crises?***

**Slovenia:** In Slovenia, development planning has been regulated by a new Decree on Development Planning Documents and Procedures for the Preparation of Central and Local Government Budgets, which governs the methodology of development planning, policy-making and the setting of development priorities, and establishes closer links with the drafting of a programme budget. The Decree has also set up a new framework for the coordination of development policies: an umbrella task force for development planning, a fiscal policy group and working groups for individual policies. In order to ensure systematic development planning, a special legal act will be prepared in 2011. More about development planning in Annex 1 [of the NRP].

### **3.10 Is a clear description provided of the financial aspects of activities concerning local and regional authorities?**

Explicit financial information related to activities and policy implementation under the NRP is generally scant. Use of European Union funds, such as the European Structural Fund (ESF), is mentioned by several EU Member States, especially the new Member States. Other countries name domestic sources of funding for LRAs but often not in concrete terms. A few countries, however, have tabulated financial aspects in their NRPs.

Overall, missing or very vague information on the financial aspects of the activities related to LRAs were found in **Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Spain.**

**Belgium's** NRP states that sources of financing are outlined for the various development programmes, and budgeted amounts are stated, e.g. EUR 388 million to nurture the policy of 'competitiveness centres' in Wallonia

**Greece's** NRP includes a substantial number of financial aspects, reforms and initiatives. These include the Ministry of Finance ensuring tight supervision of expenditure commitments by, inter alia, government departments and local government.

**Italy's** NRP contains tables at the end of the NRP document detailing the financial aspects.

**Latvia's** NRP only states that the funds for implementing the NRP will largely come from the EU.

Annex 3 of **Slovenia's** NRP contains a list of all projects and measures with indicators and budget lines, but no reference is made to specific LRAs.

**Sweden's** NRP discusses to some extent how financial disbursements to regional and local entities are provided but makes no explicit mention of who in local and regional government receives them.

**The UK's** NRP states that to encourage investment across the regions, the June 2010 Budget announced a GBP 1.4 billion Regional Growth Fund, operating over three years across England to stimulate private sector-led, sustainable economic growth and employment, particularly in those areas most dependent on the public sector. The first round of bidding closed in January 2011. The Government is encouraged by the strength of the response, which saw over 450 bids from across England, supporting a wide range of sectors. On 12 April 2011 The Government announced final decisions on the first round of the Regional Growth Fund and on the same day launched a second round of bidding, calling for proposals for further projects and programmes to stimulate private sector-led economic growth in certain areas. Through the New Homes Bonus, announced on 17 February 2011, communities are now being offered significant incentives to build new houses. Over the Spending Review period, almost GBP 1 billion has been set aside, including nearly GBP 200 million in 2011-12 and GBP 250 million for each of the following three years.

## Box 9: Examples from Question 9

*10. Is a clear description provided of the financial aspects of activities concerning local and regional authorities?*

**UK:**

3.63 To encourage investment across the regions, the June 2010 Budget announced a GBP 1.4 billion Regional Growth Fund, operating over three years across England to stimulate private sector-led, sustainable economic growth and employment, particularly in those areas most dependent on the public sector. The first round of bidding closed in January 2011. The Government is encouraged by the strength of the response, which saw over 450 bids from across England, supporting a wide range of sectors.

3.64 On 12 April 2011, the Government announced the final decisions on the first round of the Regional Growth Fund and on the same day launched a second round of bidding, inviting proposals for further projects and programmes to stimulate private sector-led economic growth in certain areas.

### **3.11 Is the administrative capacity of local and regional authorities addressed?**

In light of the economic and financial crises and the Europe 2020 Strategy's goals to promote employment, productivity and cohesion, LRAs are facing several challenges, which can be summarised as "doing more with fewer resources". Therefore, many countries' NRPs refer to streamlining public sector services, reducing the administrative burden and making government more effective and efficient. However, detailed plans for strengthening local and regional authorities' capacities are relatively scarce in the NRPs. The following countries earned no point for this issue: **Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Spain and the UK.**

**Belgium's** NRP states that in Wallonia the public employment and training service is being made more efficient. In the regions generally, efforts are being made to make administrative processes for businesses in particular simpler and more efficient.

**Bulgaria's** NRP includes improving administrative efficiency measures under the Operational Programme "Administrative Capacity" (OPAC) for 2007-2013, co-financed by the ESF. But no mention is made of what LRAs are involved.

The same is true for other initiatives and laws (e.g., for establishing an integrated system for managing government procedures (central and municipal) and sustainable and integrated urban development.

The NRP of **Cyprus** states that the Managing Authority issued the necessary detailed guidelines and organised intensive training sessions and workshops to boost the administrative capacity of all the authorities involved.

**France's** NRP says little about capacity-building other than that LRAs are modernising and simplifying the administrative requirements for businesses interacting with local authorities.

**Germany's** NRP recognises the importance of boosting the capacity of LRAs to better serve, monitor, anticipate and respond to needs and challenges in the job market and in the education sector. The main LRAs involved in the NRP activities are the Länder.

**Hungary's** NRP states that Hungary's local government bodies are important employers, creating many economic and social stimuli for local economies. They are also among the most fragmented in the EU. Strengthening their efficiency is therefore of key importance. Relevant programmes are the Magyary Programme, the new career model for civil servants, and the restructuring of local services through the revision of regulations concerning local/central government responsibilities.

**Ireland** discusses this issue as part of its NRP initiatives and measures and only in broad terms, including regional research development and innovation capacity and in the form of the National Employment Action Plan (NEAP) with respect to streamlining the NEAP with a view to ensuring greater capacity and efficiency.

**Latvia** mentions capacity-building only indirectly, in the context of NRP measures aimed at streamlining government services and making them more efficient, by removing administrative barriers, the use of ICT, new municipal territorial structures, etc.

The **Dutch** NRP does not discuss building administrative capacity directly but mentions making it more efficient and effective and thereby removing administrative burdens.

**Portugal** recognises the need to strengthen the administrative capacity of LRAs through specific NRP measures, including by improving the process of drawing up the State Budget and [...] increasing the budget management capacity of



public decision-makers and by improving the response capacity of public administration and its contribution towards meeting the needs of both individuals and businesses.

In its NRP, **Romania** refers to the Administrative Capacity Development Operational Programme and other targeted measures aimed at improving the efficacy and efficiency of the public sector at all levels, including LRAs.

**Slovenia's** NRP makes no specific reference to LRAs but administrative burden is a much-mentioned aspect in the reform packet proposed under the NRP, e.g. modernising the practices of public sector and public service operators.

**Sweden** also raises the issue of capacity of the LRAs as part of specific NRP measures, including special initiatives that will be launched to strengthen the capacity for development in the interior of northern Sweden (Inlands innovation), including increased capacity for innovation.

#### **Box 10: Examples from Question 10**

*11. Is any reference made to strengthening the administrative capacity of local and regional authorities?*

**Romania:** The second major action line refers to the implementation of the strategy for better regulation - namely the measurement of administrative costs and identification of the administrative burden (eight projects funded through ESF within OP ACD). Footnote: The 8 projects for measuring administrative costs and identifying the administrative burden related to national legislation deal with the areas regulated by the following ministries: MAI & MDRT; MCSI & MECMA; MTI; MFP; MJ; MMFPS & MECTS; MADR; MMP.

**Sweden:** A special initiative will be launched to strengthen the capacity for development in the interior of northern Sweden (Inlandsinnovation).

### **3.12 Are there any additional relevant issues that appear in the NRP?**

This open-ended question was designed to capture anything else not covered in the 11 previous questions, as well as aspects that provide a unique and important context for the NRPs. The following countries included such relevant information in their NRP.

According to **Austria's** NRP, the country plans to organise for the early summer and together with the representatives of the European Commission in Austria, an information event on the National Reform Programme and the closer economic and political coordination. Further information events are to follow, with the format as well as the target group to be worked on, in the second half of the year.

**Bulgaria's** NRP contains a specific Section (V) dealing with horizontal and methodological issues.

**Denmark's** NRP contains a separate section on "Participation, Communication and Identification of Good Practice".

**Germany's** NRP reflects the dominant role of the Länder in the NRP's references to LRAs.

The **Netherlands'** NRP is the only country that has a special Appendix addressing local and regional issues, entitled "TO THE NATIONAL REFORM PROGRAMME 2011: involvement of local and regional authorities".

**Romania's** LRAs are extensively involved in the measures to be carried out under the NRP and to a substantial degree also in the development and implementation of the NRP.

**Spain's** NRP emphasises that the Autonomous Communities wield substantial power and are therefore an integral part of and critical to the political decision-making process. Their voices have been heard regarding the NRP design, implementation and monitoring.

**Sweden's** NRP makes it clear that LRAs play an important role in Sweden's governance structure and have been an integral part of the NRP development process. They will also be part of the implementation and monitoring processes, but the NRP does not always provide details as who will be doing what and how.

In the **UK**, the special context of the devolved authorities essentially requires the UK to outline their involvement in the design, implementation and monitoring of the NRP.

### **3.13 The National Reform Programmes and the 7 Europe 2020 Flagship Initiatives**

The Europe 2020 Strategy encompasses seven Flagship Initiatives to boost growth and help create jobs while ensuring greater social cohesion and sustainability. These initiatives are also reflected – to a varying degree – in the National Reform Programmes, as shown in the following examples for each pillar and flagship initiative.

### **3.13.1 Smart growth:**

#### **Digital Agenda for Europe**

##### **Italy:**

Regions are involved in the task of narrowing the ‘digital divide’ and improving digital infrastructure.

##### **Slovakia:**

The central public administration system is to be developed to record and analyse data on the public administration systems in operation and to facilitate the effective and simple linkage of information systems in the individual general government sectors, in both national and local administrations.

#### **Innovation Union**

##### **Estonia:**

The measure for supporting major investors that stimulate supply chains is to be continued, along with the measure for developing local government infrastructure, the capacity of county development centres and local government to deal with regional investor services is to be raised.

##### **Ireland:**

The NRP specifies a Regional Research Development and Innovation Capacity and Regional Development Strategy.

##### **Italy:**

Placement services by universities in collaboration with regions and local authorities, regional contribution to encouraging Research and to Innovation and regional programmes to support education.

### **The Netherlands:**

Strengthening Research & Innovation, organising the knowledge triangle: the national government announced a new policy regarding Research and Innovation. Local and regional authorities are pleased that this new policy – in cooperation with all the involved ministries - means that strengthening the economy of the Netherlands will be a coherent effort.

### **Romania:**

Ensuring a high degree of decentralisation, accountability and financing of the system will be achieved by transferring responsibilities to the School Board of Administration and local authorities.

Establishment by local authorities of Community Centres for Lifelong Learning

Welfare system reform aims to better redistribute financial and human resources within the system, including in the decentralised bodies of the local public administration

Strategic management and leadership in education, with the emphasis on decentralisation, so that local players are involved in the decision-making process in education

The National Certification Programme for Civil Servants in the central and local public administration.

Developing a sectoral cluster model for innovation-driven clusters, which sets out to identify the involvement of businesses, research institutes, universities and local government...

Reducing arrears in economy caused by local authorities

Local authority budgetary discipline

The National Programme for Infrastructure Development (NPID) [...] the beneficiaries of which would be the local public administration authorities

The Co-financing scheme between the structural funds and local government

The Sectoral Operational Programme “Increasing Economic Competitiveness (SOP-IEC) for producing green energy, which promotes investment for both economic operators and local authorities.

### **Spain:**

Low international profile of its R&D centres and innovative SMEs, and room to improve coordination between regional, national and European policies

The Spanish Science and Technology Strategy, which will establish criteria and areas of common action for the central and regional governments so that their policies are coordinated and they have the same goals for scientific and technical research

The Ministry for Innovation will work specifically with regional innovation agencies and provide support for supra-regional projects.

The need for greater coordination between national, regional and local policies with regard to different sectors, in particular transport and housing.

### **Sweden:**

Innovationsbron AB is a state-owned company set up to promote the commercialisation of knowledge-intensive business ideas across Sweden. The company invests seed capital in companies with significant market potential and develops, together with local and regional partners, a network of business incubators.

Regional development provides an important perspective for a national innovation strategy. Increased and effective cooperation between the different levels – EU, national and regional – and between the three parts of the knowledge triangle –education, research and innovation – are important and help reinforce the whole.

The national strategy for regional competitiveness, entrepreneurship and employment 2007-2013 and the ministry communication Skr. 2009/10:221 "Strategic development efforts for regional competitiveness, entrepreneurship and employment" form the basis for a coordinated regional development effort in Sweden.

Measures aimed at ensuring good service availability are important in creating attractive environments for both the public and the business sector across the

country. The government has allocated SEK 80 million at the regional level for 2011-2014, in addition to the priorities that the counties themselves set annually, totalling some SEK 43 million.

The government has allocated SEK 575 million for the period 2010-2012 for further energy efficiency initiatives at the local and regional levels and for initiatives for sustainable energy use. The main measures are support for municipal energy and climate advisory services for households and small business and projects to encourage the market introduction of systems solutions for making the housing and service sectors more energy-efficient.

## **Youth on the Move**

### **The Netherlands:**

In the field of lifelong learning, the government has in recent years vigorously encouraged long-term regional cooperation between education institutions, industry and local authorities. The parties involved will continue to cooperate on learning and working without further government involvement. The government wants to make agreements with the social partners on training, the use of R&D funds and long-term employability, to be laid down in collective agreements.

The government has opted for a comprehensive approach, in which central and local government, educational institutions and youth care services work together at regional level. This approach has met with some success. The government is continuing its programme to tackle dropout rates in order to meet the national target.

### **Portugal:**

International cooperation efforts between companies and universities are being stepped up, including the development of internationally relevant demonstration units and projects involving local actors, [...].

## **3.13.2 Sustainable Growth**

### **Resource efficient Europe**

#### **France:**

Along with other stakeholders (social partners, private industry and environmental organisations), LRAs were extensively consulted in the ‘*Grenelle de l’environnement*’ – a major national environmental summit launched at the

end of 2007 and which forms the main framework structuring France's work on the sustainable management of natural resources.

### **Italy:**

Regional programmes to achieve the 20-20-20 objectives with regard to renewable energies.

Regions and Environmental Sustainability: in this area, regions have the following objectives: 1) environmental risks prevention; 2) improvement of water resources' quality and efficiency; 3) energy efficiency and renewable energies production; 4) rationalisation and optimisation of waste cycle; 5) biodiversity conservation.

Regional policies on energy and environment using EU funding.

### **The Netherlands:**

Local authorities will promote investments in networks and the sustainable generation and use of alternative energy in urban and regional transport in the years ahead.

Improving the business environment, reducing administrative burdens and strengthening the industrial base.

### **Romania:**

Energy efficiency and local decentralised heating systems at local administration level.

## **An Industrial Policy for the Globalisation Era**

### **Finland:**

Improving productivity is the principal means by which local government expenditure will be curbed. In addition, the municipal and service structure will be reformed to make it more cost-efficient and effective.

### **Latvia:**

Reforms to optimise the state institutional structure have been launched – the secretariats of specific ministries have been closed down, the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government has been incorporated into the

Ministry of the Environment, the number of state agencies has been reduced by 50%, and savings have been made in the area of support functions by centralising them.

### **Sweden:**

To facilitate and strengthen cooperation in skills provision, the government has given the actors with responsibility for regional development in each county a remit to establish skills platforms in 2010 to coordinate skills provision and plans for training in the short and long term. This is part of the government's ambition to strengthen the coordination of regional development policy, labour market policy and education policy.

## **3.13.3 Inclusive Growth**

### **An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs**

#### **Greece:**

The “Operational Plan for the Support of Work 2011” includes centrally and regionally Integrated Programmes for the Support of Employment for 37 000 Beneficiaries

#### **Italy:**

According to the NRP, there should be close coordination between the State, the regions and local authorities to combat unemployment. In addition, the NRP specifies employment measures by regions and local authorities.

#### **Malta:**

The Community Work Scheme, overseen by local councils and NGOs.

#### **The Netherlands:**

Improving the operation of labour markets by investing in employability, mobility and social inclusion.

Cooperation between central government and local authorities (municipalities) through the Work Capacity Act, to move toward a locally implemented scheme for the lower end of the labour market.

### **European Platform against Poverty**



### **Czech Republic:**

The Czech NRP states that to achieve a successful cohesion policy, mid-term sectoral development programmes need to be interlinked with regional strategies and programmes (p. 6) and that the future cohesion policy has to target an “intersection of priorities formulated at the supra-national, national, regional and local (municipal) levels” (p. 17). The process of formulating local and regional priorities is yet to occur and is perceived to be complementary to the national priorities identified in the NRP. The areas which fall within local and regional competence and where the priorities are expected to be formulated include culture, tourism, social and public services, local and regional transport infrastructure and environmental infrastructure.

### **Greece:**

Child poverty is multidimensional and needs to be addressed at national, regional and local level. Cooperation with local authorities on special programmes offering childcare services. Territorial measures to integrate Roma.

### **Italy:**

The NRP specifies the use of European funds for employment and for inclusion, especially by the regions in southern Italy.

## 4. Results of the NRP Assessment

The simple but transparent and sufficiently detailed point-scoring system used in the assessment is shown in Table 2 above. It covers eleven of the twelve questions asked. The final question is open-ended and not scored. It serves to pick up on any specific features of the NRP not reflected in the answers to the other questions. This question would, for example, highlight specific governance structures or other circumstances that particularly favour, mandate, or hamper efforts to involve local and regional authorities. It would also be used to qualify a country's NRP fiche in a more nuanced way, for example, where the NRP does not use references to LRAs directly but shows, either 'between the lines' or in a more implicit manner, that LRAs do in fact play a role, albeit not a clearly visible or dominant one, in the Europe 2020 actions.

The point scores for the other 11 questions, albeit quantitative, are intended to capture what the NRP is saying vis-à-vis Objectives 1 and 2, but not what is implied or stated indirectly. Most questions follow a simple Yes (1 point)/ No (0 points) or a 4-level scale that ranges from Fully (3 points), Substantially (2 points), To a limited extent (1 point) to Not at all (0 points).

The results of the assessment reveal several noteworthy facts about the NRPs:

- There is substantial variation across countries in terms of the degree to which the NRP reflects the role of local and regional authorities.
- While nearly all countries' NRPs at least acknowledge the existence and relevance of LRAs, by and large, they do not feature prominently (because they were or are not involved or because the NRP simply does not reflect their involvement). In a small number of countries (mostly the Baltic countries and some former Eastern Bloc countries) LRAs are hardly mentioned at all and central government is by far the most documented NRP reference.
- A few countries (e.g., Belgium, Netherlands, the UK and Sweden) give their LRAs a very visible role, which is sometimes embedded in the country's legal and governance structures (Belgium and the UK), while in others (The Netherlands and Sweden) it seems to reflect a tradition of involving LRAs in the decision-making process.

- Smaller countries such as Malta and Luxembourg tend – unless the governance structure effectively prescribes otherwise (as in Belgium) – to show less LRA involvement in their NRPs.
- Larger countries such as Germany, France and Italy mention several levels of local and regional cooperation, although the focus may be on one of them, as in the case of Germany (the Länder).
- Areas that attracted the greatest number of references to LRAs are:
  - o the role of LRAs in implementing the NRP (Question 7, 26 out of 27 NRPs)
  - o the form of LRAs' contribution to the NRP (Question 2, 19 out of 27 NRPs)
  - o the mention of Territorial Pacts or other forms of multi-level governance cooperation (Question 5, 16 out of 27 NRPs)
- Areas that showed the lowest presence of LRA involvement in the NRP are:
  - o the inclusion of comments or contributions from LRAs to the drafting of the NRP (Question 4, 5 out of 27 NRPs)
  - o a clear description of the financial aspects of activities concerning local and regional authorities (Question 10: 7 out of 27 NRPs)
- Considering the expectation to succeed in achieving the goals and objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, the emphasis given to LRAs in monitoring and evaluating the NRP measures is limited (Question 8, 13 out of 27 NRPs).
- Only 15 out of 27 NRPs also state clearly how the contributions of the LRAs were taken into account and among these there is substantial variation (ranging from ‘somewhat’ to ‘fully’ and this includes giving them additional weight by annexing or publishing them separately to the NRP).
- Two NRPs stand out due to the role they give to LRAs as a result of their institutional and legal governance structure. These are Belgium, which produced separate, regional NRPs for its main linguistic and cultural groups in addition to Brussels, and the United Kingdom, which refers frequently to its devolved authorities for Northern Ireland, Scotland and

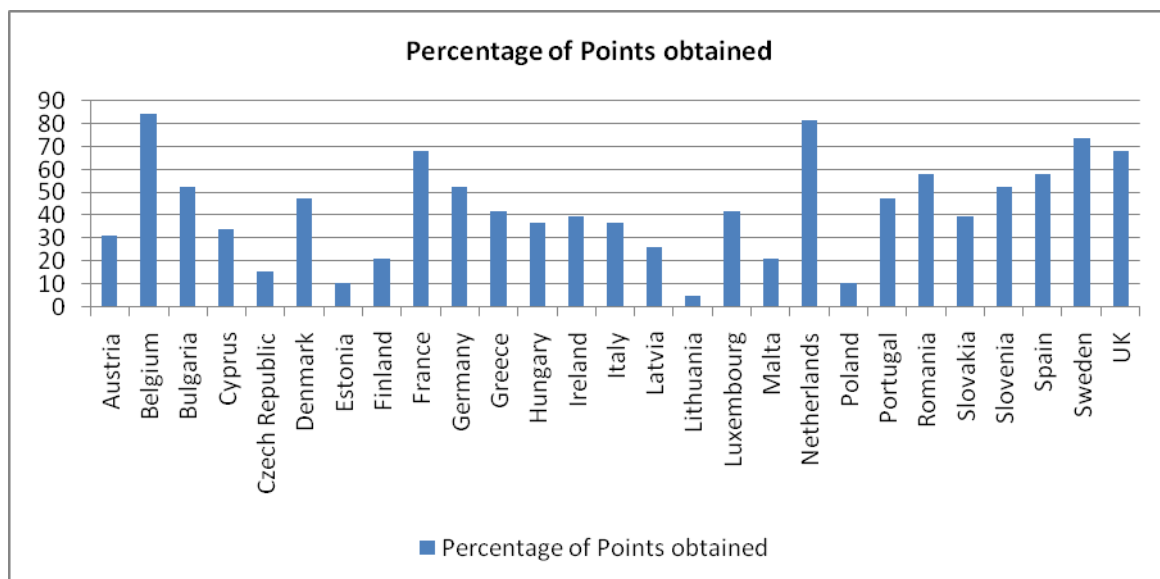
Wales. These two NRPs should therefore be viewed within the corresponding context and not necessarily as models or symbols for how regional and local authorities can be involved.

Overall, the assessment yielded a ranking of NRPs from highest to lowest level of quality to show the involvement of LRAs. The full assessment is shown in Table 3a/b and graphically in Figure 1a/b. The scores shown are simply the percentages of points given to each NRP relative to the maximum possible number of points that can be achieved. The maximum number of points is 19 and a score of 100 would mean the NRP has reflected the role of LRAs to the fullest extent requested by the assessment questions.

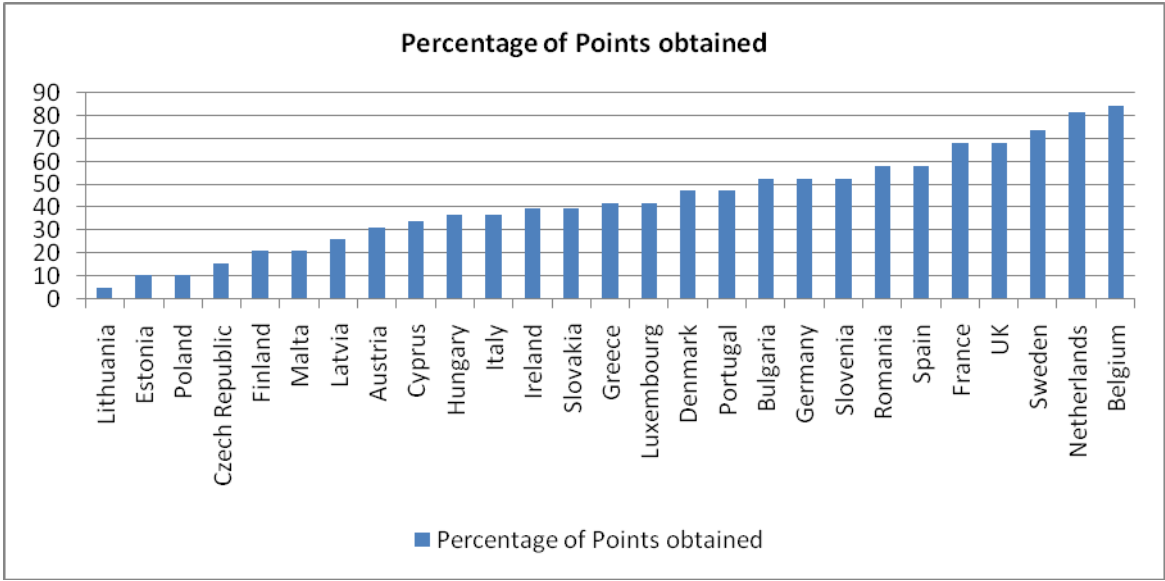
According to this procedure, Belgium (rank 1, 84%), The Netherlands (2, 81%), Sweden (3, 73%) and the UK and France (joint 4th at 68%) are deemed to have the most LRA-relevant NRPs. Characteristic of these countries' NRP is the systematic reference to how, when and who represented the LRAs throughout all stages of the NRP drafting, implementation and monitoring.

At the bottom are Lithuania (27, 5.6%), Poland and Estonia (tied for 25th at 10%) and the Czech Republic (24, 15%). These countries hardly mention any but the central governmental authorities in their NRPs, while the leading countries devote extensive sections and even separate documents to issues of multi-level governance, collaboration, financial flows between the different levels of government, and shared responsibilities in implementing and monitoring the measures included in their respective NRPs.

**Figure 1a: Assessment results, sorted alphabetically by country.**



**Figure 2b: Assessment results, sorted numerically by score.**



**Table 3a: Summary of Results, sorted alphabetically by country.**

| Question       | Q1  | Q2  | Q3  | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8  | Q9 | Q10 | Q11 | %    | rank |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|-----|------|------|
| Maximum Points | 1   | 1   | 3   | 2  | 4  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 1  | 1   | 1   | 19   | --   |
| Austria        | 0   | 0.5 | 0   | 1  | 0  | 1  | 3  | 0.5 | 0  | 0   | 0   | 31.6 | 20   |
| Belgium        | 1   | 1   | 3   | 2  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 1  | 1   | 1   | 84.2 | 1    |
| Bulgaria       | 1   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 1   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 52.6 | 8    |
| Cyprus         | 0   | 1   | 1.5 | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 34.1 | 19   |
| Czech Republic | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 2  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 15.8 | 24   |
| Denmark        | 1   | 1   | 1   | 0  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 47.4 | 11   |
| Estonia        | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 10.5 | 25   |
| Finland        | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 21.1 | 22   |
| France         | 1   | 1   | 2   | 2  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 68.4 | 4    |
| Germany        | 1   | 1   | 2   | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 52.6 | 8    |
| Greece         | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 0   | 1  | 1   | 0   | 42.1 | 13   |
| Hungary        | 1   | 1   | 0   | 0  | 3  | 1  | 0  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 36.8 | 17   |
| Ireland        | 1   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1   | 0  | 0   | 0.5 | 39.5 | 15   |
| Italy          | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 0   | 1  | 1   | 0   | 36.8 | 17   |
| Latvia         | 1   | 1   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0   | 0  | 0.5 | 0.5 | 26.3 | 21   |
| Lithuania      | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 5.3  | 27   |
| Luxembourg     | 1   | 1   | 1   | 0  | 3  | 1  | 1  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 42.1 | 13   |
| Malta          | 1   | 1   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 21.1 | 22   |
| Netherlands    | 1   | 1   | 2   | 2  | 3  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 1  | 0   | 0.5 | 81.6 | 2    |
| Poland         | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0   | 1  | 0   | 0   | 10.5 | 25   |
| Portugal       | 1   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 2  | 1   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 47.4 | 11   |
| Romania        | 0   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 57.9 | 6    |
| Slovakia       | 0.5 | 1   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 1  | 0   | 0   | 39.5 | 15   |
| Slovenia       | 1   | 1   | 1   | 0  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 0.5 | 1  | 1   | 0.5 | 52.6 | 8    |
| Spain          | 1   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 2  | 1  | 2  | 1   | 1  | 0   | 0   | 57.9 | 6    |
| Sweden         | 1   | 1   | 3   | 0  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 0   | 1  | 1   | 1   | 73.7 | 3    |
| UK             | 1   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 1  | 1   | 0   | 68.4 | 4    |

**Table 3b: Summary of Results, sorted numerically by score.**

| Question              | Q1  | Q2  | Q3  | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8  | Q9 | Q10 | Q11 | %    | Rank |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|-----|-----|------|------|
| <b>Maximum Points</b> | 1   | 1   | 3   | 2  | 4  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 1  | 1   | 1   | 19   | --   |
| Lithuania             | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 5.3  | 27   |
| Estonia               | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 10.5 | 25   |
| Poland                | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0   | 1  | 0   | 0   | 10.5 | 25   |
| Czech Republic        | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 2  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 15.8 | 24   |
| Finland               | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 21.1 | 22   |
| Malta                 | 1   | 1   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 21.1 | 22   |
| Latvia                | 1   | 1   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 0   | 0  | 0.5 | 0.5 | 26.3 | 21   |
| Austria               | 0   | 0.5 | 0   | 1  | 0  | 1  | 3  | 0.5 | 0  | 0   | 0   | 31.6 | 20   |
| Cyprus                | 0   | 1   | 1.5 | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 34.2 | 19   |
| Hungary               | 1   | 1   | 0   | 0  | 3  | 1  | 0  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 36.8 | 17   |
| Italy                 | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 0   | 1  | 1   | 0   | 36.8 | 17   |
| Ireland               | 1   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 1  | 1   | 0  | 0   | 0.5 | 39.5 | 15   |
| Slovakia              | 0.5 | 1   | 0   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 1  | 0   | 0   | 39.5 | 15   |
| Greece                | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 0   | 1  | 1   | 0   | 42.1 | 13   |
| Luxembourg            | 1   | 1   | 1   | 0  | 3  | 1  | 1  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 42.1 | 13   |
| Denmark               | 1   | 1   | 1   | 0  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 0  | 0   | 0   | 47.4 | 11   |
| Portugal              | 1   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 0  | 1  | 2  | 1   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 47.4 | 11   |
| Bulgaria              | 1   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 1   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 52.6 | 8    |
| Germany               | 1   | 1   | 2   | 1  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 52.6 | 8    |
| Slovenia              | 1   | 1   | 1   | 0  | 1  | 1  | 2  | 0.5 | 1  | 1   | 0.5 | 52.6 | 8    |
| Romania               | 0   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 57.9 | 6    |
| Spain                 | 1   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 2  | 1  | 2  | 1   | 1  | 0   | 0   | 57.9 | 6    |
| France                | 1   | 1   | 2   | 2  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 0   | 0  | 0   | 1   | 68.4 | 4    |
| UK                    | 1   | 1   | 2   | 0  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 1  | 1   | 0   | 68.4 | 4    |
| Sweden                | 1   | 1   | 3   | 0  | 2  | 1  | 3  | 0   | 1  | 1   | 1   | 73.7 | 3    |
| Netherlands           | 1   | 1   | 2   | 2  | 3  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 1  | 0   | 0.5 | 81.6 | 2    |
| Belgium               | 1   | 1   | 3   | 2  | 1  | 1  | 3  | 1   | 1  | 1   | 1   | 84.2 | 1    |

## 4.1 Conclusions

The first five countries – Belgium, The Netherlands, Sweden, UK and France – have submitted fairly highly-developed National Reform Programmes which comprehensively report on LRAs and their involvement in Europe 2020-related activities. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic and Finland submitted NRPs that fall short of the expectations of the European Commission and the CoR vis-à-vis the involvement of local and regional government and public bodies.

The NRPs of the remaining countries can be considered to be fairly developed but all still have room for improvement in individual as well as general aspects. The general gaps in the NRPs, defined as the questions for which more than 50% of NRPs received zero points, are:

Question 4: Is any written contribution from LRAs annexed to the NRP?

Question 8: Is any mention made of the role of local and regional authorities in monitoring the NRP?

Question 9: Is there any mention or clarification of the role of LRAs in mitigating the economic and financial crisis?

Question 10: Is a clear description provided of the financial aspects of activities concerning local and regional authorities?

Question 11: 11. Is any information provided on strengthening the administrative capacity of local and regional authorities?

Even the NRPs found to be the most detailed in describing the role and influence of the LRAs are not perfect. The aspects where further gains can be made are:

Question 3: Does the NRP state to what extent LRA input has been taken into account?

Question 4: Is any written contribution from LRAs annexed to the NRP?

Question 5: Is any mention made of Territorial Pacts, equivalent approaches (even if given another name, such as regional pacts, territorial contracts, etc.) or multi-level cooperation agreements other than Territorial pacts?

Question 8: Is any mention made of the role of local and regional authorities in monitoring the NRP?



Question 9: Is there any mention or clarification of the role of LRAs in mitigating the economic and financial crises?

Question 10: Is a clear description provided of the financial aspects of activities concerning local and regional authorities?

Question 11: 11. Is any information provided on strengthening the administrative capacity of local and regional authorities?

On the other hand, nearly all NRPs state that LRAs were in some form or another involved during the initial drafting stage and LRAs are mentioned frequently as implementing the actions outlined in the NRP. What appears to be more heterogeneous is the level of influence and/or control that LRAs have in this process. In some cases, LRAs are merely given consultative roles, while in the cases of the highest-scoring countries LRAs contribute to the decision-making throughout the process at an institutional level.

## **4.2 Limitations**

A few comments on the limitations of the assessment: first of all, the assessment is meant to be indicative and is no way grounded in theory or based on empirical experience. However, the CoR has already conducted similar analyses in previous years and the present report uses and builds on the experiences and results of these undertakings, which provides a certain level of consistency and allows for some comparisons across studies.

Second, no anchoring vignettes or other methods were used in the assessment to identify where the cut-off points between the different answer categories are drawn (e.g., where to draw the line between ‘partially’ and ‘to a limited extent’). This means there is a potential for systematic reviewer bias, as different individuals would draw the cut-off at different points and the same reviewer might adjust his or her judgement in the course of assessing multiple NRPs. While this risk could be eliminated in this study, the potential bias between reviewers is probably relatively small since all but six NRPs were reviewed by the same person. However, the six programmes assessed by others were those not available in English and therefore reviewer bias is compounded with the potential for systematic differences between English-language and non-English-language NRPs.

Finally, the structure of the 27 NRPs is not standardised and different phrases and styles are used. This may affect the reviewer’s assessment and, since all NRPs were assessed by only one reviewer, it is unknown if and to what extent

the reviewer was influenced by the style and formatting of individual NRPs. However, most of the questions assessed ask about the presence or absence of specific aspects, which should not be unduly influenced by the heterogeneous styles of the NRPs.