

## The place of regions in the European Union architecture

1 The current pandemic has shown once more the importance of regional and local authorities in delivering protection  
2 for European citizens, be it through provision of healthcare and social services or by assisting businesses in the  
3 economic recovery. These responsibilities of the sub-national level remain however unmatched by reciprocal say in  
4 EU decision. The Conference on the Future of Europe provides an opportunity to reflect on the place of regions in  
5 the European Union architecture in order to reinforce its democratic legitimacy and rebuild trust with citizens.

6 The 27 EU member states differ in terms of their division of legislative and administrative powers at different  
7 governance levels. Many have unitary and centralised systems while in seven member states, regions hold strong  
8 legislative powers and a degree of autonomy. Overall, local and regional authorities implement 70% of all EU  
9 legislation and represent one-third of public spending and about half of public investment. Starting from the seven  
10 member states having regions with legislative powers that make up more than half of the EU's population, expanding  
11 further to other regions, an *Alliance of Regions for European Democracy* including both parliamentary and executive  
12 levels should be built. This Alliance should gradually include *all* European Union's regions and equivalent territorial  
13 units with the purpose to increase the regions' legitimate impact on the EU decision-making reflecting their  
14 competences and common interests.

15 With the legitimate objective of enhancing the role of regions in EU policy-making in mind, regional governments,  
16 parliaments and councils are committed to better use the European Committee of the Regions' remit foreseen by the  
17 Treaties in order to better answer people's needs in the places they are living in. Therefore, we, leaders of regions  
18 from all 27 European Union Member States, declare that:

- 19 1. We are convinced that the basic premise of democracy is the trust of the citizens as expressed by their vote  
20 in local, regional, national and European elections. Regions hold legal and political responsibility in shaping  
21 and implementing the European Union legislation and bring added value to the European Union. Regions  
22 are close to their people and help rebuilding citizens' trust in the European democracy. In line with the  
23 subsidiarity and proportionality principles, regions play a fundamental role within the European Union  
24 Member States. Therefore, existing evidence based initiatives such as the European Committee of the  
25 Regions' RegHub network on monitoring the implementation of European legislation and the European  
26 Commission's Fit for Future platform are welcome and must be further developed with support from the  
27 European Union's resources.
- 28 2. We are committed to use the Conference on the Future of Europe as the opportunity to start a long overdue  
29 reflection on the place of regions in the European Union democratic architecture and to rebuild the trust of  
30 European citizens. Our long-term political objective is to strengthen the regions' political impact at the  
31 European level on matters with direct relevance to the work of local and regional authorities.
- 32 3. We are determined to act via the European Committee of the Regions as our institutional and political  
33 representative and enabler. Within this framework, we are working together as a political *Alliance of Regions*  
34 *for European democracy*. We are committed to use our expertise and the democratic mandate to ensure that  
35 with our deeper involvement, the voices and needs of our citizens are better heard and followed up with  
36 actions at the European level.

37 Let's foster together the House of European Democracy, where the European Union is the protective roof, the Member  
38 States are the strong walls and the local and regional authorities its solid foundations.

39 Let's bring Europe closer to people and the places they are living in.

**Deadline for possible amendments: 21 June 2021 to be sent to [civex@cor.europa.eu](mailto:civex@cor.europa.eu)**

**Kindly confirm your attendance [via this registration link](#).**

**Open list of Signatories**

– the logos of the signatories will be reflected in the consolidated declaration –

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**José Manuel Bolieiro,**

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**Gustavo A. Matos Expósito,**

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