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**EN**

Brussels, 31 August 2020

**198th MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS BUREAU**

**- 11 SEPTEMBER 2020 -**

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| **ITEM 5**  **ALLOCATION OF OWN-INITIATIVE OPINIONS**  *Submitted by the secretary-general* |

**FOR DECISION**

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| **SUMMARY** | | | | |
| **Bureau meeting:** | **198** | | **Date:** | **11/09/2020** |
| **Item 5)**  **Allocation of own-initiative opinions** | | | | |
| **Type:** | | | | |
|  | | **Document for information / debate** | | |
|  | | **Document for decision** | | |
|  | | **Recommendation to the Assembly** | | |
| **Short description:**  The allocation of own-initiative opinions includes two proposals made by the ECON and SEDEC commissions | | | | |
| **The Bureau is invited to approve:**   * ECON * Trade Policy Review * SEDEC * Restart of Cultural and Creative Sectors | | | | |
| **Remarks:**  **N/A** | | | | |

**Proposal for an own-initiative opinion on the Trade Policy Review**

| **Opinion** | **Commission** | **Rapp*.*** | **Politicalobjective** | **Relevancetopoliticalpriorities** | **Specificlocalorregionaldimension** | **Strategicrelevance** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Trade Policy Review** | ECON | **Willy Borsus** (BE/Renew Europe) | The review of the EU's trade policy was launched on 16 June. The aim of this review is to help steer the direction of EU trade policy for the medium-term in an ever more challenging global environment and build on lessons learned from the crisis. The objectives of the review are also to assess how trade policy can contribute to a swift and sustainable recovery and to see how it can help build a stronger EU based on a model of "Open Strategic Autonomy". The CoR opinion would provide the often missing regional aspects of trade policy. It could also identify the types of support that will be needed in order to overcome difficulties encountered at regional and local level. | Trade Policy has implications for most aspects of the EU economy. Trade policy is linked to the priority of creating jobs and sustainable growth in cities and regions to provide a better quality of life for citizens. It also seeks to adopt a bottom-up approach, something which will mean including regional and local authorities in decision-making. | The relevance of trade policy for regional and local authorities, and hence for the CoR, does not pertain only to the fact that when a trade agreement is "mixed" it has to be ratified by some regional parliaments in the EU. It is also evident that trade is beneficial to some Member States, regions or sectors but detrimental to others, despite the overall effect being positive. It is therefore important for the EU to have both the will and the instruments to deal with the negative impact of globalisation/trade openness through appropriate public policies. | The Trade Policy Review consultation covers all relevant topics to EU trade policy, with a special focus on the following, all of which have an LRA dimension:  building a resilient and sustainable EU economy after the coronavirus;  reforming the World Trade Organization;  creating global trade opportunities for businesses and in particular small and medium-sized enterprises;  maximising the contribution of trade policy to addressing key global challenges such as climate change, sustainable development and the digital transition;  improving the level playing field and protecting EU businesses and citizens.  The results of this Trade Policy Review will feed into a Communication to be issued towards the end of the year.  The appointment of a rapporteur at the June ECON meeting means that ECON members will be able to follow the whole process of the Trade Policy Review. The adoption of the opinion in the first plenary session of 2021 will also allow CoR members to assess and react to the final text of the Communication on the Trade Policy Review, scheduled to be adopted by the end of 2020. |

**Proposal for an own-initiative opinion on the Restart of Cultural and Creative Sectors**

| **Opinion** | **Commission** | **Rapporteur** | **Politicalobjective** | ***Link* withpoliticalpriorities** | **Specificlocalorregionaldimension** | **Strategicrelevance** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The Restart of Cultural and Creative Sectors** | SEDEC | **Giuseppe Varacalli** (IT/Renew Europe) | Speak with a strong voice in support of the cultural and creative sectors (CCSs), seriously affected by the COVID-19 crisis, and call for a culture of solidarity in the recovery phase.  Ensure that cities and regions are aware of measures and initiatives put in place for CCSs in the EU, and make practical suggestions on how CCSs can better participate in the latest proposals for Creative Europe, REACT EU, SURE, CRII+, the European Guarantee Fund, etc.  Argue for special attention to be paid to culture and cultural heritage in the next programming period to ensure that CCSs are considered a priority at national level and allow for synergies with other policies and structural funding.  Propose a continuous dialogue with CCS organisations in the development of easy-to-use support schemes for CCSs and mobilise innovation and education within a dynamic territorial ecosystem.  Promote culture as a key driver for strengthening the European identity and argue for it to have a more prominent place in the discussion on the Future of Europe. | In its Resolution on the priorities for 2020-2025[[1]](#footnote-1), the CoR underlines that CCSs have been severely hit by the pandemic and need support. The CoR aims to contribute to a New European Agenda for Culture, including the mainstreaming of investment in culture in the different EU funds and synergies with other policies.  In its revised MFF proposal, the European Commission considers culture, together with tourism, to be the worst hit by the crisis, but it proposes to increase the budget of Creative Europe only to a level of EUR 1.52 billion (while the CoR has asked for over EUR 2 billion). | Local and regional authorities (LRAs) play a key role in developing and fostering culture and promoting artistic innovation. Culture and cultural heritage strongly contribute to local and regional development by making European regions more attractive, developing sustainable tourism and creating new employment opportunities.  The COVID-19 crisis has put this territorial development at risk (the European Commission estimates that tourism, the social economy and CCS ecosystems could see a drop in turnover of more than 70% in 2020[[2]](#footnote-2)).  The Exchange Platform launched by the CoR includes several examples of local and regional actions in support of CCSs. The SEDEC commission has published several issues of a dedicated bulletin containing examples of best practice as to how cities and regions have organised themselves in the crisis. There is a need to continue to develop ideas on how to better monitor the progress of CCSs at local and regional level during the post COVID-19 recovery. | Culture and cultural heritage promote European values and consolidate the Union's democratic foundations by reinforcing multiple and complementary identities: local, regional, national and European.  CCSs proved their strength during the previous financial crises and they are currently contributing to building social resilience.  Reacting to the revised MFF proposals, the European Parliament underlined that "the COVID-19 pandemic has also ravaged the cultural and creative and media sectors across Europe, but the proposal – a decrease compared to the 2018 proposal – ignores this impact completely".  It is important to ensure the necessary support to restart CCSs through Creative Europe and other EU programmes, but also to look into alternative funding for these sectors. |

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1. RESOL-VII/004, The European Committee of the Regions' priorities for 2020-2025. Europe closer to the people through its villages, cities and regions. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. COM(2020) 456 final [↑](#footnote-ref-2)