



**European Committee  
of the Regions**

**RESOL-VII/019**

**148th plenary session, 26-27 January 2022**

## **DRAFT RESOLUTION**

**on the contribution of the local and regional authorities  
to the Conference on the Future of Europe**

**Submitted by the EPP, PES, Renew Europe, EA and The Greens Groups**

**Deadline for tabling amendments: 26 January 2022, no later than 4 p.m. (Brussels time)**

**Amendments to the resolution must be submitted, preferably in English, French or German, through the online tool for tabling amendments (available on the Members' Portal: <https://memportal.cor.europa.eu/>).**

The Helpdesk (+32 (0)2 546 96 97, email: [helpdesk@cor.europa.eu](mailto:helpdesk@cor.europa.eu)) is at your disposal to provide you with any assistance you may need. In addition, a user guide is available at <https://memportal.cor.europa.eu/>.

Urgent resolution submitted in accordance with Rule 45(3)(b) of the Rules of Procedure, to be discussed on the second day of the plenary session on 27 January 2022. It will be removed from the plenary session agenda if not approved by the Bureau on 25 January 2022.

**Number of signatures required: 6**

**Draft Resolution of the European Committee of the Regions on the  
contribution of local and regional authorities to the Conference on the Future of Europe**

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (CoR),

Having regard to:

- the Resolution on the European Committee of the Regions' priorities for 2020-2025<sup>1</sup>,
- the Resolutions of the European Committee of the Regions on the Conference on the Future of Europe of 12 February 2020<sup>2</sup> and of 7 May 2021<sup>3</sup>,
- the Resolution of the European Committee of the Regions on the 2022 Work Programme of the European Commission of 2 December 2021<sup>4</sup>,
- the report of the European Committee of the Regions' High Level Group on European Democracy;

Whereas:

- a. The EU consists of 27 Member States, 280 regions and almost 90 000 municipalities, the principle of united in diversity must be a guiding one in the functioning of the EU;
- b. citizens and their regional and local delegates to the Conference on the Future of Europe expect tangible outcomes that improve the functioning of the EU institutions and lead to reformed EU governance focusing on proximity and participation, in order to increase people's trust in the EU and its democratic legitimacy;
- c. the inclusion of a strong delegation of regional and local political representatives in the Conference Plenary helped to bring the debates close to the concerns of citizens, with the aim of providing a territorial dimension to the future outcomes of the Conference;
- d. the key proposals raised by the local and regional delegates to the Conference have met general consent in the Conference Plenary, Working Groups, the caucuses of the political families, and the Multilingual Digital Platform;

*European democracy*

1. believes that democracy is a fundamental value of the EU underpinned by the rule of law and expressed by citizens' trust in European, national, regional and local elections; considers that European, national, local and regional democracies are fully complementary and mutually reinforcing and that democracy should be respected as a universal value across the EU;
2. considers that in order to address citizens' increasing demand for tackling democratic deficit, the EU needs to promote a model of "House of European Democracy " constructed on a three-

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<sup>1</sup> COR-2020-01392-00-00-RES-TRA

<sup>2</sup> COR-2020-00192-00-00-RES-TRA

<sup>3</sup> COR-2021-01674-00-00-RES-TRA

<sup>4</sup> COR-2021-05507-00-00-RES-TRA

dimensional legitimacy - European, national, regional and local corresponding to the vote cast by citizens at each level;

3. is convinced that representative and participative European democracy should work in a complementary manner to ensure that democracy delivers results to citizens in the places they live in;
4. stresses the need for greater participation and engagement of citizens in EU policies through stronger electoral representation at all levels of governance, and considers that this will contribute to the Europeanisation of the public space; calls on the European Parliament, the Commission and the Council to boost representative democracy by increasing the funding available to political parties, groups and foundations present at EU level, including those representing the national, regional and local level;
5. believes that there is scope for better use of the existing Treaty framework via better synergies between the various levels of governance; however, Treaty changes should not be excluded if duly justified;
6. calls for building on the experience of the Conference to develop permanent and place-based dialogue with citizens as a participatory mechanism that would better link the EU with the realities at local, regional and national levels; believes that this permanent dialogue with citizens would prove its added value in the context of European, national and regional / local elections;
7. highlights that EU regions and cities have tangible know-how related to citizens' participation and recalls that they have organised the majority of the nearly 5000 citizens' dialogues and events held in the context of the Conference; reiterates its readiness to continue to organise local dialogues aimed at narrowing the gap between European institutions and citizens through engagement at local and regional level;

*Active subsidiarity and proportionality in the European decision making process*

8. recommends that the principles of multi-level governance and partnership be expanded and incorporated into the legislative and regulatory provisions of all EU policies that have a regional or local impact; reiterates its call for the codification of the principles of multi-level governance and partnership beyond the ESIF in an inter-institutional Code of Conduct, and for their inclusion in the Inter-Institutional Agreement on Better Law-Making;
9. calls for strengthening the principle of active subsidiarity through amendments to Protocol 2 of the Lisbon Treaty on the application of the subsidiarity and proportionality principles; demands that such amendments extend the deadline for scrutinising subsidiarity under the "Early Warning Mechanism" to twelve weeks, introduce a systematic use of the subsidiarity "grid" developed by the CoR and introduce a "green card procedure", allowing for a significant number of national or regional parliaments to propose EU legislation;
10. proposes that impact assessments include a territorial dimension, and that the principle of proportionality gets the same legal consideration as the principle of subsidiarity;

11. calls to for the CoR to be gradually upgraded from an advisory body to a co-deciding body of the European Union on key policies areas with territorial impact;
12. considers it essential that the CoR should focus its work on policies with territorial impact, and therefore predominantly on matters in which local and regional authorities are either involved at implementing level or are significantly affected;
13. calls for a mandate for the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council of the EU to discuss CoR opinions adopted after a mandatory consultation, and to give substantiated reasons if those opinions are not taken into account;
14. requests that the CoR should be granted access to trilogues and related documents, provided that it has delivered an opinion on the proposal in question under Article 307 TFEU; demands that the CoR is given the ability to propose compromises to the co-legislators, which will enable them to receive valuable input regarding the implementation realities on the ground;
15. calls for better inter-institutional synergies, for instance by involving the CoR in the work of the structures of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (e.g. commissions, committees and working groups) and the comitology procedure;
16. recalls that 70 % of legislation is implemented at regional and local level, asks to be consulted in the EU's annual and multi-annual planning, agenda and priority-setting processes, such as those foreseen under the Inter-Institutional Agreement on Better Law-Making;
17. stresses that any evolution of the European electoral law, including the possible introduction of transnational lists, must respect the principle of territorial representation and ensure the connection to the local and regional dimensions of EU policies, and the proximity of the Members of the European Parliament to citizens;

*European values and the rule of law*

18. points out that local and regional authorities have an important role to play in strengthening the rule of law, and can be involved in monitoring and assessing it based on the criteria developed by the Venice Commission;
19. reiterates its call for steps to be taken to strengthen the EU's and Members States' authority, the credibility of public rule of law institutions, and regional authorities as incubators of democracy;
20. considers that breaches of the rule of law principle should result in suspension of payments or financial corrections, and that in the event of such measures, the beneficiaries of EU funding including local and regional authorities should continue to receive financial support from the Member State concerned;

21. recognises that the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated existing disparities in the European regions; calls therefore on the Conference's components to reinforce European solidarity and recognise cohesion as a fundamental European value;
22. proposes the establishment of an Erasmus programme for local and regional politicians to help develop their knowledge of the EU, increase fund delivery and improve the quality of policy implementation;

*Youth, education and culture*

23. points out that the Conference on the Future of Europe should be used to spearhead efforts to achieve the Union of Equality, effectively addressing all forms of discrimination;
24. underlines the need to address the threats of disinformation in Europe and calls for the introduction of a Europe-wide curriculum for civic education, the promotion of European democratic values, critical thinking, digital skills and media literacy, to be developed and deployed in partnership with local and regional authorities;
25. calls for strong action at EU level to reduce regional disparities in education, particularly in remote, cross-border, rural and poor urban areas; demands that the EU support national and regional efforts to future-proof education through the development of new teaching tools such as Pan-European multilingual digital platforms for the broad dissemination of educational content;
26. considers that tackling youth unemployment and youth and child poverty should become a priority in all European regions, cities and rural areas;
27. considers that universal access to culture and sport activities is the key to enabling economic and social development and increasing the overall number of people, especially young people, involved in such activities, thereby facilitating the promotion of common European values;

*Climate, Environment and Resilience*

28. recalls that regions and cities implement 70 % of climate mitigation measures and 90 % of climate adaptation policies, and are responsible for 65 % of climate and environment related public investment; demands, therefore, the clear institutional involvement of local and regional authorities in the design and implementation of climate, energy and environmental policies, for direct access to EU funding, and for coordinated programmes across all levels of governance and, in particular, the investment plans in support of the European Green Deal and the Recovery and Resilience Plans;
29. highlights the territorial dimension of the European Green Deal and the interaction with the digital transformation and social policies; demands that the monitoring of the climate measures in the recovery and resilience plans takes into account the Local Green Deals; proposes a European Regional Scoreboard with clear, targeted, user-friendly indicators to measure and monitor the impacts of the European Green Deal at the level of NUTS 2 regions;

30. reiterates its demands for a systematic organisation of multilevel platforms and dialogues to deliver structured and inclusive participation of local and regional authorities in planning and implementing Green Deal initiatives, that will also contribute to resilient local communities;
31. underlines the growing role of local and regional authorities at global and European level for ensuring a just climate transition; notes that the Paris Agreement and the Edinburgh Declaration on the post 2020 global biodiversity framework recognise the relevance of multilevel governance to deliver climate neutrality, biodiversity and sustainable development; reiterates its support for a system of Regionally and Locally Determined Contributions (RLDCs) to formally acknowledge, monitor and encourage the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions;
32. recommends paying attention to the sustainable transformation of the transport sector that must be a just and fair one, making sure that no region is left behind and that sustainable and alternatively fuelled mobility is affordable and accessible for all citizens in all regions; proposes a Just Transition Mechanism for regions depending on the automotive industry in order to manage the changes in the sector, considering that the automotive sector (which provides direct and indirect jobs to 13.8 million Europeans, representing 6.1% of total EU employment) is undergoing a fundamental transformation process on the way towards zero emission vehicles, with huge impacts on regional growth and jobs;

#### *Health Union*

33. reiterates its commitment to work towards the creation of a fully-fledged European Health Union that respects the principle of subsidiarity and the legal competences in health; calls for a clearer role for the regional and local authorities in the future EU Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority, alongside national authorities and EU institutions;
34. supports access to eHealth for all EU citizens; calls for a deepening of EU competences in the field of health, including through Treaty changes, particularly to enable the Commission to formally recognise a public health emergency at Union level; supports the call for strengthening health prevention, EU manufacturing capabilities and increasing cooperation in the field of medicines;
35. encourages the development of cross-border healthcare cooperation, including long term EU funding and allowing the free passage across borders of personnel and vehicles working in the emergency services and healthcare;

#### *Economy, social justice and jobs*

36. is convinced that the Conference on the Future of Europe provides genuine momentum for the European pillar of social rights to become the new social rulebook, facilitating the transition to a sustainable economy and access to jobs, while enhancing social cohesion;
37. calls for a rethink of European economic governance, which must better support quality, public, long-term and sustainable investment at all levels of government through reviewed budgetary

rules, and improve democratic accountability and efficiency through the better involvement of local and regional authorities in the European Semester via a partnership Code of Conduct;

38. calls for the use of funding available for recovery, and for the green and digital transitions to facilitate labour market transition, reskilling and upskilling, while ensuring adequate protection for people employed in digital platforms or the gig economy;
39. underlines the role of innovation in developing a stronger economy and ensuring both competitive and sustainable growth; is of the opinion that European innovation requires investment in the necessary capabilities (research infrastructures, broadband networks, supercomputing, Artificial Intelligence and open data sets) and needs to attract scholars and specialists in all European territories;

#### *Digital transformation*

40. considers that digital transformation will need to ensure the full exploitation of technology, to the benefit of all sectors of society, while closing the digital divide and making sure digital literacy and connectivity become a reality in all parts of Europe;
41. emphasises the need for data security, interoperability and storage and looks forward to the European Commission's proposal for a European cyber security resilience Act; believes that in order to ensure access to digital services and information, including the efficient provision of public services, it is necessary to invest in secure, high-capacity infrastructure to provide Internet access to both individuals and organisations;
42. points out that digital transformation is dependent on a long-term vision for education, research and exchange in digital issues, where the EU must be an innovator and leader in discovering new digital technologies, services and must set appropriate and coherent digital standards;
43. considers therefore that the discussion on the future of Europe needs to include "digital cohesion" as an important additional dimension of the traditional concept of economic, social and territorial cohesion defined in the EU Treaty;
44. calls for immediate action to address the digital divides among the EU Member States and between urban and rural areas when it comes to connectivity and digital infrastructure, digital skills, access and use of e-government services; calls therefore for the introduction of a "Digital EU Cross-border Service Card" to simplify access to public and emergency services for citizens and businesses in cross-border regions;

#### *Migration*

45. calls for a European approach when addressing the root causes of migration as a phenomenon driven by global instability and conflicts, state fragility and climate migration; urges effective capacity building to enhance preparedness at all levels of governance;

46. notes the recognition by citizens and delegates of the pivotal role local and regional authorities play in the integration and inclusion of migrants and refugees in particularly affected areas; calls therefore for the inclusion of local and regional authorities in the design of integration policies; requests the elaboration of a more flexible policy toolbox allowing subnational authorities to steer integration and to measure the success of integration and inclusion policies at regional and local level;

*Conference on the Future of Europe's outputs and follow up*

47. sees the Conference on the Future of Europe as a starting point for a fully empowering democratic process at European, national, regional and local level; reiterates the need for a continuous, genuinely inclusive, transparent, decentralised, geographically and politically balanced debate on the future of the European Union; considers that the Conference should follow an open-ended approach, including with regard to reforming policies and institutions, and that it should pave the way for lasting reforms, going beyond the duration of the Conference;
48. reaffirms its full commitment to contributing to the Conference's follow-up, by turning political initiatives and proposals into actions which meet citizens' expectations;
49. instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Conference on the Future of Europe chairmanship, as well as the European Parliament, the French, Czech and Swedish Presidencies of the Council of the EU and the President of the European Council and the European Commission.

Brussels,

The President  
of the European Committee of the Regions

Apostolos Tzitzikostas