



**European Committee  
of the Regions**

**RESOL-VII/024**  
**151st plenary session, 10-12 October 2022**

## **DRAFT RESOLUTION**

**on the State of Regions and Cities in the European Union**

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

**Deadline for tabling amendments: 11/10/2022 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 12 October 2022. It will be removed from the plenary session agenda if not approved by the Bureau on 10 October 2022.

Number of signatures required: 6

**Draft resolution of the European Committee of the Regions  
on the State of the Regions and Cities in the European Union**

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (CoR),

HAVING REGARD TO:

- its report *EU Annual Report on the State of Regions and Cities*, based on an inclusive, factual and evidence-driven approach, including the regional and local barometer echoing the views of local and regional representatives, involving multiple partners and institutions<sup>1</sup> and providing political decision-makers at European, national, regional and local level with evidence and key recommendations on the most pressing challenges for the year ahead;
- the outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) and the many proposals of direct relevance to local and regional authorities, who are key in delivering solutions to the citizens' concerns;
- the 2022 State of the Union address given by the President of the European Commission on 14 September 2022 and the letter of intent to the Presidents of the European Parliament and of the Council;

WHEREAS:

- the illegal and unjustified Russian war on Ukraine has caused and is causing death and destruction, forcing millions of people to leave their homes either for another settlement in Ukraine or for the European Union, and in particular its eastern Member States, with local and regional authorities being the first level for providing support;
  - adding to the impact of climate change, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and trade disruptions, the impact of the war in Ukraine is also putting under great strain many households, small and medium enterprises and local and regional governments across the EU, given the substantial additional pressure of energy and food prices and continuously rising inflation;
1. Stresses that the CoR *EU Annual Report on the State of Regions and Cities* worryingly shows a growing territorial divide across the EU as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine and accelerating climate change;
  2. Regrets that the President of the European Commission in her State of the Union address did neither recognise the active and central role of local and regional authorities in addressing these challenges nor the need for more multi-level governance in EU policy making and for making cohesion the overall objective of the EU, as foreseen already in the Maastricht Treaty, which introduced the principle of subsidiarity and also established the CoR;

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/State-of-Regions-and-Cities-2022.aspx?origin=spotlight>

3. Warns that inflation is impacting territories unequally and risks further exacerbating existing territorial, social and economic inequalities. Higher energy and transport costs are more severely impacting citizens in peripheral and rural regions. People in lower income regions suffer disproportionately from price increases for basic goods and commodities, with a risk of poverty looming;
4. Calls on the European Union to support cities and regions in the EU and in Ukraine to face the challenges deriving from the war. Rebuilding Ukraine is a necessity, a moral duty and an investment for the European Union. The process must follow the OECD's "build back better" principle and ensure sustainable, green and digital approaches for integrated territorial development. Rebuilding Ukraine will require an effort going beyond the ceilings of the current Multiannual Financial Framework. Rebuilding Ukraine also needs to go hand in hand with promoting local democracy based on strong partnerships with local and regional authorities in the European Union;
5. Considers that the support for Ukrainian refugees should be an incentive for achieving a reform of the EU migration and asylum system based on solidarity, incentives for fair burden-sharing and respect for fundamental rights as well as the protection of external borders. This is all the more urgent given that soaring food prices worldwide may provoke an influx of migrants to the EU's cities and regions;
6. Underlines that local and regional governments are also hit by skyrocketing energy bills for public services and the effects of inflation on public procurement and salaries. Local and regional authorities need to be considered active partners in energy saving campaigns, in new renewable energy generating projects, as well as in energy disruption contingency plans in order to consider local circumstances and cross-border solutions; Also points at the potential of local renewable energy production in order to diversify the EU's energy mix and reduce our dependence on third countries and demands that EU funding schemes, public procurement and state aid rules be adapted to also keep local investment plans operational in high inflation time;
7. Calls on the EU institutions and Member States to deploy extraordinary measures to support local and regional authorities in their efforts to alleviate the effect of the energy crunch on households, vulnerable communities and local small and medium-sized enterprises and keep public services operational, including by allocating to them a share of the tax revenues received from the windfall profits of energy companies;
8. Calls on the European Union to develop an integrated EU health policy in order to mainstream and harmonise protocols and define the outline of a new health architecture to achieve a more secure, better-prepared and more resilient EU that can truly protect the health of our citizens;
9. Understands that cities and regions must be given the opportunity to make the most of Next Generation EU and focus on long-term investments. To do so, economic governance rules need to be reassessed and the timeframe for the recovery measures should be extended until EU regions return to their pre-COVID-19 macro-economic situation;
10. Welcomes against this background the announcement by the President of the European Commission to effectively implement a midterm review of the Multiannual Financial

Framework. This mid-term review should consolidate cohesion policy despite its current implementation rate and the low financial execution, which mainly relates to the COVID-19 pandemic and competition with the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF). Also, this midterm review should be an occasion to set up a new European fund to tackle, following the shared-management methodology, unexpected crises. Indeed, continuous financial transfers from cohesion policy to emergency responses hamper the capacity of cohesion policy to fulfil its role enshrined in the European Treaties;

11. Calls for the reflections on the future of cohesion policy to be immediately initiated, with an inclusive approach involving all stakeholders and citizens. The Cohesion Alliance will act as the joint platform for discussion and exchange involving the EU institutions in a constructive dialogue with cities and regions. The CoR calls for the "do no harm to cohesion" principle to be applied in all relevant EU policies, including by implementing systematic territorial impact assessments and addressing development gaps in territories with specific demographic and geographic challenges, and calls on the European Commission to work closely with the CoR in defining this principle;
12. Highlights that 43% of European citizens put local and regional authorities at the core of climate action (a 10% increase from 2019 to 2021, across COVID-19 lockdown and recovery) and that 160 cities across 21 Member States have submitted action plans on adaptation within the framework of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy. The CoR calls on other municipalities and regions to follow these best-practice examples;
13. Considers that adaptation and the response to the climate crisis, as well as environmental preservation and restoration, are key elements in building more resilient and sustainable societies and economies and response measures need to be designed locally, according to the specific needs and characteristics of the territories. The CoR therefore reiterates its call for direct EU funds to local and regional authorities implementing Green Deal policies;
14. Calls for the common efforts to fight climate change to be reinforced at European Union and national level, with natural disasters affecting nearly 50 million people in the EU and causing on average an economic loss of €12 billion per year over the last forty years. At the same time, it is more and more important to couple climate, environmental and social policies, to ensure that, while speeding up the needed green transition, nobody and no place is left behind;
15. Notes the strong interest of cities to take part in the EU's Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission and calls for a more inclusive approach to the digital and mobility transitions, including by stepping up measures to promote decarbonisation and modal shift in urban areas, as well as urban-rural connectivity, to avoid further exacerbating existing regional inequalities;
16. Calls for the sub-national authorities to be fully included in the EU delegation to the UNFCCC COP 27 and the UN CBD COP15 via the members of the CoR. The CoR stresses that the COP 27 will be an opportunity to formally recognise the role for local and regional authorities for an increased level of ambition and accelerated action on climate mitigation, adaptation and finance and reiterates the call for the inclusion of local and regional contributions as a complement to Nationally Determined Contributions;

17. Asks for a thorough revision of the Governance of the Energy Union Regulation to set the basis for a systematic engagement of cities and regions in the planning and implementation of national energy and climate plans. This revision should also be the opportunity to set up a comprehensive EU framework to fight against energy and mobility poverty;
18. Stresses the importance of National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs) under the RRF in supporting the green and digital transition and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. With cities responsible for nearly 75% of global energy consumption, 70% of global CO2 emissions, 70% of climate mitigation measures and 90% of climate adaptation measures, and with a quickly increasing number of local and regional authorities committed to act, they must become full-fledged partners in the development and implementation of Green Deal initiatives, especially in policy areas such as housing, the renovation of buildings, sustainable mobility or urban greening and in initiatives such as the New European Bauhaus;
19. Reaffirms the need to involve local and regional authorities in the evaluation and implementation of the RRF and NRRPs in order to also ensure the consistent use of the recovery funds with European Structural and Investment Funds. Despite the instrument's legal basis in cohesion policy, this involvement has proven far too limited in many Member States, creating pitfalls for effective implementation and the risk that nationally-defined plans lack synergies with regional and local priorities and development strategies;
20. Highlights the persisting and significant innovation divide. Of the 20 regions with the greatest research and development (R&D) spending, 19 are more developed, whereas two-thirds of the 50 regions with the lowest spending are less developed. The CoR underlines the great potential of the pilot action for Partnerships for Regional Innovation to support the development of place-based solutions and the creation of bottom-up "territorial missions" as part of the New EU Innovation Agenda while reiterating the importance of the European Research Area (ERA) Hubs;
21. Emphasises the role of digital transformation as a cross-cutting element in overcoming the divide in Europe and the need for digital cohesion. With the new "mission approach" to policy making, cohesion policy needs to continue to support long-term goals (EU objectives) into the future. Bridging digital divides through comprehensive and inclusive strategies involving all levels of government is necessary for a sustainable recovery and resilient societies;
22. Stresses that, in 2021, the average unemployment rate for young people aged 15-29 in the EU was 13%, a 0.9 percentage points decrease over 2020 with important regional differences, with youth unemployment rates higher in Spanish, Greek and Italian regions. Against this background, the CoR urges the European Commission to come forward with proposals to address long-term unemployment and youth unemployment, both exacerbated as a result of the crisis. Emphasises, by the same token, the urgency to address gender gaps in employment. Further warns against growing risks of poverty, including child poverty;
23. Welcomes the call by the President of the European Commission for more inter-generational solidarity and stresses the leading role of the CoR in engaging with young people and youth

organisations to shape the future of Europe, notably by developing an EU charter on youth and democracy;

24. Takes note that in the period 2011-2020, the share of women elected to all political levels increased, from local to national level, but regrets that they still account for only a third of the total across all levels. In 2021, only 16 out of 285 regional assemblies in the EU achieved parity in the candidates elected. The CoR acknowledges that its membership is also far from being gender-balanced and expects the Member States to address this issue. The CoR therefore calls on the Member States to organise initiatives aimed at empowering women in local and regional politics to overcome the discrimination in the political world and fighting the obstacles women encounter through their path, including stereotypes;
25. Calls on regional and local actors to play a central role in the implementation of the Action Plan on the European Pillar of Social Rights, in view of the social situation on the ground, and calls for a reform of the European Semester in order to add a strong territorial dimension and to include the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals' implementation;
26. Supports the call of the European Parliament and of the President of the European Commission in the State of the Union for a Convention to revise the Treaties. The CoR should be fully involved in the Convention, to represent local and regional European elected representatives, and is fully committed to promoting the concept of active subsidiarity and engaging more with regional parliaments and associations of local and regional authorities. The CoR welcomes in this context the European Commission's announcement to mainstream citizens' assemblies and other practices of participatory democracy in EU policy making stressing, however, the role of democratically elected representatives that are accountable towards their electorates, and commits to playing an active role in these processes;
27. Intends to propose concrete measures to address the territorial dimension of European policies in the achievement of the EU's overall cohesion objective, also having regard to the CoFoE proposals;
28. Instructs its President to transmit the *EU Annual Report on the State of Regions and Cities* and the present resolution to the Presidents of the European Parliament, the European Commission and the European Council, as well as to the Heads of State of the 27 EU Member States, and encourages regional and local elected representatives in Europe to disseminate the report to citizens and local media.

Brussels, ....

The President  
of the European Committee of the Regions

---