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KEP 2.0 Workshop: Introduction and Keynote speech

*Building Synergies for Successful Green and Digital Transitions –  
The Way Ahead*

***Implementing Policy and Programme  
Synergies to Deliver on the EU Missions  
and Foster Breakthrough Innovation***



**We have excellent documents defining joint actions:**

- 1. The importance and the need for KEP.**
- 2. Why cities & regions? The Place is where people are, and knowledge is acted upon!**
- 3. How did we plan to tackle these challenges by KEP 2.0 (Work Plan 2020-2021)?**
- 4. Priority Intervention areas for KEP 2.0 actions are still valid!**
- 5. What next? Let's work together!**

# The Importance and the Need for KEP

1. KEP was co-created in 2015 by EU Commission (Commissioner Carlos Moedas) and the CoR to advance the use and development of innovation in the local and regional level policy-making: around 40 events in Brussels and locally have been arranged.
2. Much progress has been made based on the opening by Moedas. Enormous leap was the Joint Action Plan signed by and Commissioner Mariya Gabriel and the CoR in 2020.
  - That includes, in detail 26 action points among others on evidence-based policy-making, raising awareness and dissemination of funding opportunities, exchange of best practices, and implementation of ERA, EEA, DEAP, and the EU Missions.
3. Strong political messages by the Commission on the crucial role of cities & regions in achieving the EU targets (SDGs, Green & Digital, EU Missions).
  - Recent by **Frans Timmermans «if you fail, we all fail»**. A bottom-up approach & having regions & cities on board is vital to delivering climate goals (Eurocities in Espoo, 10 June 2022).
4. Problem / **BOTTOM-UP does not influence, local & regional levels are confused**: How can we together increase the impact of “European-wide value-added” in using the 60 billion EUR for Innovation via Cohesion Policy; 40 billion EUR via the RRF; 100 billion EUR from Horizon? **How can we overcome the fragmentation of tens/hundreds of EU programmes and initiatives?**

# The Place Is where People Are, and Knowledge Is Acted upon

Reviewing this from different perspectives means, among others that:

1. The CoR actions are needed: We, with the EU Commission, can mobilise one million locally and regionally elected councilors to serve the needs of citizens (short term & long term).
2. More PPP to co-**Breakthrough innovations are the key in inventing the desired future.** create new solutions: **Closing the innovation divide & Making the EU cities & regions (naturally with their academia & industry) the global innovation leaders.**
3. **Strengthen the Place-based Innovation Ecosystems:** They are systems where all policies come together. In recent years place approach has been strong in the EU cohesion policy but not yet in the EU RDI policy.
4. Synergy is needed: **Green Deal Going Local, EU Missions, EU Digital Decade, European Digital Hubs, Industry 5.0, ERA Hubs, and others can become icebreakers in co-creating more impact by breaking silos & barriers and increasing synergic use of financing.**

# How Did We Plan to Tackle These Challenges by KEP 2.0 (Work Plan 2020-2021)?

1. The Communication *A new ERA for research and innovation* states that "Strategic and coordinated support will also be offered to regions and cities building on successful initiatives such as the Knowledge Exchange Platform (together with the Committee of the Regions) and the Science meets regions initiative."
2. A link to the resilience and recovery package will be ensured, in addition to the Commission's strategic agenda (Green Deal, digital etc.).
3. Promote deeper and wider operational cooperation with the CoR, in close coordination with the EAC and JRC, but also with other DGs (REGIO, REFORM, EMPL, etc.).
4. **Valorise new knowledge** created through Horizon 2020 and its successor Horizon Europe by increasing the take-up of R&I results and their use **for evidence-based policy-making** at the local and regional levels, fully exploiting **foresight analysis**.
5. Promote the territorial dimension of the European Research Area (ERA), especially as regards transnational research infrastructures, the implementation of the R&I component of regional **Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3)**, and the linking of **regional ecosystems in sustainable partnerships**.

# Priority Intervention Areas for KEP 2.0 Actions (Work Plan 2020-2021)

The collaboration will be developed around the **four strategic objectives** of the new European Research Area, identifying for each one the specific aspects/topics that are more relevant to regions and local actors by responding to their needs and therefore engaging them more actively in the construction of the ERA.

- 1. Prioritising investments and reforms** (new targets have been set to raise national investment in R&I, support reforms and encourage higher participation in joint programmes, missions and partnerships, mobilising all type of funds).
- 2. Improving access to excellence** (promote excellent place-based disruptive innovation and regional development and create opportunities for workable synergies with the ESIF funds; continue support for the Smart Specialisation Strategies and all forms of synergies, including the Seal of Excellence).
- 3. Translating R&I results into economy** (the EIC and InvestEU are the ERA flagships, specifically important for subnational actors supporting **ERA Hubs** with a strong territorial dimension).
- 4. Deepening the ERA** (support R&I regional policy, including through Conference on the Future of Europe and the Network of European Capitals of Culture).

# What next? Let's work together!

Understandable that during the COVID period, these actions were hard to implement. Local & regional levels have made progress. So has the EU Commission. **In the light of the CoR opinions on the ERA, Smart Specialisation, and the EU Missions, we are now ready to re-invent the processes in implementing the KEP 2.0.** No need to re-write everything. The frame and commitments exist. Let us move to action. The presentations today form an excellent starting point for that. Let me paint the way with the following elements of the CoR opinion on the EU Missions:

1. The CoR acknowledges that **the EU Missions are a "NEW" and "VITAL" instrument** as stated by the European Commission.
2. The development requires all the actors to learn new competencies by **integrating technology and research with a human-centric approach**, committing to implement joint green and digital transformation processes.
3. The CoR urges that the EU Missions can and should integrate the existing number of EU initiatives and programmes to operate in synergy. **Systemic change requires co-creating transformational ecosystems based on learning and RDI** with interdisciplinary scientific and operational synergy across all five EU Missions.
4. Special attention is needed for **orchestrating and creating portfolios of actions both at the EU and regional/local levels** and disseminating these effectively in all phases of the planning and implementation.

The CoR has a member in around **70 out of 100 cities pioneering the EU Mission on Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030**. Around the same number of the CoR members represent **regions/cities piloting with the JRC Partnerships for Regional Innovation PRI**. I am sure we are ready for the next steps. More impact and European collaboration are needed. That can be co-created from bottom up.