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The Director

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE
OF THE REGIONS

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OFFICIAL MAIL

Brussels,
SG.G.1/BS

Mr Jiří Buriánek
Secretary-General
European Committee of the Regions
99 – 101 rue Belliard
B-1040 Brussels

Dear Secretary-General,

In conformity with the Protocol on Cooperation between the Commission and the European Committee of the Regions, I am pleased to send you the follow-up given by the Commission to the opinions adopted by the European Committee of the Regions during the plenary session of February 2019.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]
Enrico Forti
(Director)

Enclosure: Follow-up given by the Commission to the opinions adopted by the European Committee of the Regions during the plenary session of February 2019

**FOLLOW-UP PROVIDED BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
TO THE OPINIONS OF THE**

EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS¹

PLENARY SESSION OF FEBRUARY 2019

85th REPORT

¹ Including the follow-up to 1 opinion adopted during the December 2018 plenary session.

N°	TITLE	REFERENCES
SG		
1.	<u>Renewed European Agenda for Research and Innovation</u> Rapporteur: Birgitta SACRÉDEUS (SV/EPP)	COM(2018) 306 final COR-2018-03955-00-00-AC SEDEC-VI/047
DG EAC		
2.	<u>Creative Europe and a New European Agenda for Culture</u> Rapporteur: János Ádám KARACSONY (HU/EPP)	COM(2018) 267 final COM(2018) 366 final COR-2018-03890-00-01-AC SEDEC-VI/040
3.	<u>Erasmus programme for education, training, youth and sport</u> Rapporteur: Ulrike HILLER (DE/PES)	COM(2018) 367 final COR-2018-03950-00-01-AC SEDEC-VI/043
DG HOME		
4.	<u>Proposal for a Regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard</u> Rapporteur: Anna MAGYAR (HU/EPP)	COM(2018) 631 final COR-2018-06213-00-00-AC CIVEX-VI/039
DG CNECT		
5.	<u>Artificial Intelligence for Europe</u> Rapporteur: Jan TREI (EE/EPP)	Own-initiative COM(2018) 237 final COR-2018-03953-00-00-AC SEDEC-VI/046
6.	<u>Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach</u> Rapporteur: Olgierd GEBLEWICZ (PL/EPP)	Own-initiative COM(2018) 236 final COR-2018-03908-00-00-AC CIVEX-VI/037
7.	<u>Digitalisation in the Health Sector</u> Rapporteur: Fernando LÓPEZ MIRAS (ES/EPP)	Own-initiative COM(2018) 233 final COR-2018-02838-00-00-AC NAT-VI/033

DG MOVE		
8.	<u>Streamlining TEN-T implementation</u> Rapporteur: Michiel SCHEFFER (NL/ALDE)	COM(2018) 277 final COR-2018-03592-00-00-AC COTER-VI/044
9.	<u>Road Safety and automated mobility</u> Rapporteur: József RIBÁNYI (HU/EPP)	COM(2018) 274 final COM(2018) 283 final COM(2018) 293 final COR-2018-03591-00-00-AC COTER-VI/043
DG ENV		
10.	<u>Towards an 8th Environment Action Programme</u> Rapporteur: Cor LAMERS (NL/EPP)	Own-initiative COR-2018-01672-00-00-AC ENVE-VI/027
DG AGRI		
11. Opinion adopted during the plenary session of December 2018	<u>Reform of the CAP</u> Rapporteur-General: Mr Guillaume CROS (FR/PES)	COM(2018) 392 final COM(2018) 393 final COM(2018) 394 final SWD(2018) 301 final COR-2018-03637-00-01-AC NAT-VI/034

<p>N°1 Renewed European Agenda for Research and Innovation COM(2018) 306 final COR-2018-3955 – SEDEC-VI/047 133rd Plenary Session – February 2019 Rapporteur: Birgitta SACRÉDEUS (SV/EPP) SG – Vice-President KATAINEN</p>	
<p>Points of the Committee of the Regions opinion considered essential</p>	<p>European Commission position</p>
<p>The Committee of the Regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – stresses that local and regional authorities are key players in the creation of effective regional ecosystems and innovation hubs, for example in the development of regional smart specialisation strategies (RIS3s). It is important for the new agenda, as well as programmes supporting research and innovation, to highlight the public sector and its role not just as recipients of research and innovation but also as R&I stakeholders that themselves undertake such activities; 	<p>The Commission considers local and regional authorities as important actors in the functioning of innovation ecosystems. Its proposal for Horizon Europe aims at increasing synergies between relevant support under the European Structural and Investment Funds, namely under ‘Smart Specialisation’, with activities supported under the draft Regulation establishing Horizon Europe - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination (2021-2027). This includes the continuation of the ‘Seal of excellence’ label and connecting the different local and regional research and innovation ecosystems to foster innovation across European Union value chains.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – points out that there is a direct correlation between less developed regions and low rates of investment in innovation and research; 	<p>In February 2019, the Commission issued Country Reports in the context of the European Semester, which provide insights into investment gaps concerning research and innovation. The analysis considers regional disparities and will underpin targeted country-specific recommendations from</p>

	the Council, on the basis of a Commission proposal ¹ adopted on 5 June 2019.
– urges for the inclusion in the legislative texts that will finally be adopted of a precise definition of regional ecosystems and innovation hubs allowing these ecosystems to be effectively taken into account in the implementation of all strands of the future Framework Programme;	The co-legislators have agreed to insert a definition of innovation ecosystems into the draft regulation on Horizon Europe. Article 2(30) clarifies that such ecosystems ‘encompass relations between material resources (such as funds, equipment, and facilities), institutional entities (such as higher education institutions and support services, Research and Technology Organisations, companies, venture capitalists and financial intermediaries) and national, regional and local policy-making and funding entities’.
– believes that State aid rules need to be further simplified so as to make it easier to combine different EU programmes, which is essential in order to overcome regional disparities in participation and opportunities to undertake successful research and innovation work;	European Union State aid rules, particularly the General Block Exemption Regulation, set criteria that provide flexibility for Member States to support Research, Development and Innovation projects without requiring prior approval by the Commission. These rules enabled more than 7 billion euros of public support for Research, Development and Innovation projects in 2017 (an increase of 30% from 2016). Furthermore, the Commission intends to amend the General Block Exemption Regulation to further simplify and synergise the funding or co-funding by State resources (which includes funds from European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)) of Research, Development and Innovation projects

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Central Bank, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank: 2019 European Semester: country-specific recommendations, COM(2019) 500 final.

	<p>from EU programmes. These amendments are currently under public consultation.</p> <p>Under these upcoming amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member States will be able (if they wish) to fund small and medium-sized enterprises' projects in the field of Research, Development and Innovation, awarded with a Horizon 'Seal of Excellence', from own funds and/or European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) without requiring additional State aid evaluation and in line with Horizon rules for up to €2.5 million of aid per project per company. - Research, Development and Innovation projects evaluated and selected under the Horizon Europe 'co-fund programme', where at least 3 Member States participate and which receive at least 30% of funding from Horizon Europe, will be able to receive co-funding by Member States' own funds and/or European Structural and Investment funds (if they wish) up to the allowable funding under the Horizon Europe rules, without requiring additional State aid assessment at the level of the Member States. The proposed amendments also envisage synergies and simplifications in relation to teaming projects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - urges, in the light of the conclusions of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, for the full participation of local and regional authorities in the strategic planning exercise and in other governance bodies that will guide the implementation of Horizon Europe, and for regional smart specialisation strategies to be taken into 	<p>The draft regulation on Horizon Europe stipulates that the implementing acts for 'strategic Research and Innovation Plans' laying out a strategy for carrying out the work programme covering a maximum period of four years, shall be adopted following a mandatory broad consultation with various stakeholders .</p>

<p>account in this context;</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - takes the view that local and regional authorities must be involved in the European Innovation Council alongside representatives from academia and business; 	<p>The European Innovation Council (EIC) shall mainly focus on breakthrough and disruptive innovation, targeting especially market-creating innovation. The governance structure of the current enhanced pilot for an European Innovation Council establishes an Advisory Board expert group to tap into the leading innovation talent from across Europe. The cooperation with existing innovation ecosystems is an integral part of the European Innovation Council.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reminds the need to involve local and regional authorities in the definition and implementation of the missions; believes that the missions should be linked to the sustainable development goals set out in the UN's Agenda 2030 and stresses the essential role of cities and regions in implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); 	<p>The areas for possible missions have been agreed by the co-legislators in the context of the draft regulation for Horizon Europe, based on Article 182 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. In their implementation, the missions shall 'benefit from synergies in a transparent manner with other Union programmes as well as with national and, where relevant, regional innovation ecosystems' (Article 7 (3)(fa) of the draft Regulation on Horizon Europe).</p>

<p>N°2 Creative Europe and the New Agenda for Culture COM(2018) 366 final COR-2018-3890 – SEDEC-VI/040 133rd Plenary Session – February 2019 Rapporteur: János Ádám KARÁCSONY (HU/EPP) DG EAC and CNECT – Commissioners NAVRACSICS and GABRIEL</p>	
<p>Points of the European Committee of the Regions opinion considered essential</p>	<p>European Commission position</p>
<p>Amendment 3 proposing to suppress recital 22 explaining why the European Film Academy should be eligible for direct Union support</p>	<p>The Commission disagrees with this amendment and defends its initial proposal. Foreseeing direct Union support is the only way to ensure a sustainable and viable solution for the European Film Academy, which has a unique nature and a specific role to play in the world of culture and creativity.</p>
<p>Amendment 4, in connection with policy recommendation 11: <i>“Therefore, provided that all parties concerned fully comply with this Regulation, it [the European Union Youth Orchestra] should be eligible for direct Union support.”</i></p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the spirit of the amendment proposed by the Committee. It is in line with its own proposal to support the European Union Youth Orchestra for activities that fully comply with the new Creative Europe programme.</p>
<p>Amendments 6 and 8 (in connection with policy recommendations 22 and 23): <i>“In accordance with Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, the programme should take account of the specific - structural, social and economic - situation of outermost regions. Measures shall be provided in all strands of the programme to increase the participation of these regions and to facilitate cultural exchange between them and the rest of the EU and the world. Moreover, such measures shall be subject to follow-up and evaluation.”</i></p>	<p>The Commission recognises the importance of the cultures in outermost regions and their contribution to cultural diversity. However, the Commission does not reserve specific considerations to specific regions in the programme.</p>

<p><i>“taking into special consideration those regions with specific geographic difficulties such as the outermost regions”</i></p>	
<p>Amendment 10 (in connection with policy recommendations 22-23):</p> <p>“The financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2021 – 2027 shall be €2 000 000 000 in current prices [...]”</p> <p>“[...]– up to €759 000 000 for the objective referred to in Article 3 (2)(a) (strand CULTURE)”</p>	<p>The Commission proposed a budget for the new Creative Europe programme that is around 1/3 higher than the current programme at EU-27 level.</p> <p>Despite the current political context, characterised by the prospect of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union, as well as by existing and new competing priorities emerging in particular in the fields of security, defence and migration flows management, the Commission considers the proposed increase a positive signal towards the importance of culture and creativity in the Union.</p>
<p>Amendment 12 (in connection with policy recommendation 26): <i>“Committee procedure</i></p> <p><i>1. The Commission shall be assisted by a committee (the “Creative Europe Committee”). That committee shall be a committee within the meaning of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011.</i></p> <p><i>2. The Creative Europe Committee may meet in specific configurations to deal with concrete issues relating to the Sub-programmes and the Cross-sectoral Strand.</i></p> <p><i>3. Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 4 of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.</i></p> <p><i>4. Where reference is made to this paragraph, Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 shall apply.”</i></p>	<p>Even if the Commission proposal does not include an article on the Programme Committee, its proposal contains an article (article 12) specifying that work programmes shall be adopted by means of implementing acts. The final wording on this issue will depend on the outcome of the negotiations between the co-legislators.</p>
<p>Amendment 14:</p> <p><i>“[...] the mid-term evaluation report shall</i></p>	<p>For reasons of coherence across all funding programmes, the Commission</p>

<p><i>be communicated</i> no later than four years after the start of the programme implementation”.</p>	<p>has foreseen the same provisions regarding reporting obligations and timeframes in all programmes. It is the intention of the Commission to have the evaluation report available in time for the preparation of the next programming period.</p>
<p>Policy recommendation 13:</p> <p>“[...] expresses concern about the balance of horizontal and the new sectorial actions because a slightly increased budget does not automatically allow for a much greater number of priorities to be realised”.</p>	<p>The Commission highlights that most of the budget of the CULTURE strand will go to horizontal measures, covering all cultural and creative sectors with the exception of the audio-visual one, which is covered by the MEDIA strand. The proposed sectorial actions will benefit cultural and creative sectors equally but also allow supporting more targeted actions.</p>
<p>Policy recommendation 14:</p> <p>“in the case of the sectorial actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – points out that highlighting architecture with respect of cultural heritage could hinder the achievements of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, whose aim was to experience and explore European cultural heritage by broadening people’s horizons and moving beyond built heritage; in this regard, considers that a specific line should be established within the Creative Europe programme to support the dissemination of European cultural heritage beyond 2018; – draws attention to the fact that areas mentioned under point (d) – design, fashion and cultural tourism – have a cross-sectorial nature, hence their support requires a certain level of coordination with other policy fields – expresses concern about the balance between the arts in the horizontal 	<p>The Commission is aware that heritage goes beyond built heritage. This is reflected in the definition (Article 2), which includes intangible heritage. The new Creative Europe Programme and the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage are some examples of the many programmes and actions to ensure a follow-up to the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage.</p> <p>The Commission would like to highlight its overall ambition to reinforce synergies and complementarities between all the EU programmes and funds in the next Multiannual Financial Framework.</p> <p>The Commission is aware that there is a need to continue dedicating most of the budget of the CULTURE strand to horizontal measures thus covering all sectors.</p>

measures and the new sectoral action”	
<p>Policy recommendation 9 (in connection with amendment 5):</p> <p>“proposes further strengthening the reference to the key role of local and regional authorities in promoting and celebrating the artistic and cultural life of their communities and calls for enhancing the participation of regional and local authorities in the programme. In this context, underlines the need to ensure the right balance between the allocation of resources for major, large-scale projects and financing measures and activities focused at local and regional level, including by SMEs”</p> <p>Policy recommendation 24:</p> <p>“strongly emphasises that regional and local authorities should be systematically consulted in the conception, implementation and governance of the measures designed to provide financing for cultural and creative sectors across Europe with attention to a wide geographical coverage;”</p>	<p>The Commission fully recognises the essential role played by local and regional authorities in supporting the cultural and creative sectors and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity across Europe. It hopes that these authorities will also make use of the opportunities offered by the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund+.</p> <p>As far as the new Creative Europe programme is concerned, while recognising the importance to support both large-scale and smaller-scale projects, the Commission underlines the need for all projects to have a strong European added value. It reiterates that large-scale projects can equally benefit organisations operating at local or regional level.</p> <p>The Commission will continue its positive dialogue with representatives of cities and regions. It is looking into governance models that would allow all stakeholders – including local and regional authorities – to play a role in the implementation of the programme, within the regulatory limits.</p>
<p>Policy recommendation 15:</p> <p>“proposes that the sections of the programme’s culture strand dealing with European identity and values be more closely linked to Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) to ensure that the objective is met and that the programme is not misunderstood”.</p>	<p>The Commission has linked the whole programme to Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) by referring to it in the second recital of its proposal. This recital is to be read in conjunction with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which has the same legal value as the Treaties.</p>
<p>Policy recommendation 25:</p>	<p>The future relationship with the United</p>

<p>“concerning the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union, expresses hope that, building on the common achievements and cultural experiences to date, the EU and the United Kingdom will be able to continue and further develop mutually beneficial relations in the cultural field;”</p>	<p>Kingdom and its potential participation in European Union funding programmes and policies depends on the outcome of the withdrawal negotiations with the United Kingdom.</p>
<p>Policy recommendations 29 and 30:</p> <p>The Committee: “emphasises the importance of taking into account the crucial role of local and regional authorities in the practical execution of priorities” and “has already emphasised that local and regional authorities, through their proximity to citizens, are strategically better placed to respond to the specific needs and requests of different cultural groups within the European Union.”</p>	<p>The New European Agenda for Culture² explicitly recognises that cities and regions across the EU are at the forefront of culture-led developments. They are natural partners for experimentation, anticipating trends and exploring models of social and economic innovation. This approach is exemplified by a number of concrete actions described in the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage³, which can serve as an inspiration for regions and cities in Europe.</p>
<p>Policy recommendation 32:</p> <p>Concerning “the culture of indigenous national, ethnic and linguistic minorities”, the Committee states “the EU shall provide financial support this cause, including targeted resources that are earmarked for the tasks assigned to the regional level with regard to safeguarding the cultural background of minorities”.</p>	<p>Through its peer learning projects for local authorities and cultural operators (e.g. Culture for Cities and Regions, European Creative Hubs Network, Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities), the Commission helps to showcase successful local strategies aimed to increase mutual understanding and strengthen intercultural dialogue. Furthermore, the Creative Europe programme is accessible without discrimination to all eligible applicants, including minorities. The literary translation initiative of the Creative Europe programme specifically supports cultural and linguistic diversity</p>

² <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018DC0267>.

³ https://ec.europa.eu/culture/content/european-framework-action-cultural-heritage_en.

	<p>by promoting the transnational circulation and diversity of literary works. Projects funded have so far covered 38 languages, including minority languages.</p>
<p>Policy recommendation 33:</p> <p>The Committee “calls for EU and national level governance to recognise CCS (cultural and creative sector) innovation as a driver for holistic local and regional development;</p>	<p>The Commission certainly recognises cultural and creative sectors as innovators and drivers for holistic local and regional development and supports their innovation in a variety of policies, programmes and projects, such as: the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor; the European Regional Development Fund, the European Territorial Cooperation, Interreg, macro-regional strategies, the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (COSME), the European Incubation Network for creativity-driven innovation, or the European Creative Hubs.</p>
<p>Policy recommendation 35:</p> <p>The Committee “insists that the integration of Smart Specialisation Strategies (S3) into regional development strategies still poses a challenge and so regions would need the enhanced support of EU institutions in realising smart specialisation, considered as a regional policy framework for innovation-driven growth”.</p>	<p>The Commission will continue to work with EU regions and in synergy with other EU institutions to realise the full benefits of Smart Specialisation Strategies. Already over 70 Smart Specialisation Strategies directly refer to culture and many European regions have made the cultural and creative sectors a priority in their Research and Innovation strategies.</p>
<p>Policy recommendation 37:</p> <p>The Committee requests that the impact and positive legacy of the Year be further valorised, supported and built upon and the partnerships and networks born during the Year continue afterwards as part of EU cultural cooperation. The European Committee of the Regions therefore welcomes the European Framework for</p>	<p>In the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage, the Commission recognises the valuable contribution of the Committee of the Regions to the success of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage. The first cluster of actions proposed in the Framework aims at regenerating cities and regions through cultural heritage. A new</p>

<p>Action on Cultural Heritage presented in December 2018.</p>	<p>Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage within the framework of the Urban Agenda for the EU was also launched in February 2019, involving urban authorities, regions, city consortia as well as the Commission. The Commission counts on the Committee of the Regions' continued engagement in this important work.</p>
<p>Policy recommendation 39:</p> <p>The Committee "recommends that in the social dimension, the passage "protect and promote Europe's cultural heritage as a shared resource, to raise awareness of our common history and values and reinforce a sense of common European identity" supports the protection and respect of Europe's religious heritage and promotes core values laid down under Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.</p>	<p>The 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage highlighted the importance of cultural heritage in all its forms, including religious heritage. Different initiatives in the field of religious heritage have been implemented: from sharing good practice on the re-use of religious buildings, to awareness-raising activities highlighting the value of religious heritage. The Creative Europe programme also supports the network 'Future for Religious Heritage' and a pilot project has just started focusing on surveying abandoned Jewish cemeteries and identifying good practices for their preservation through the involvement of local communities.</p>
<p>Policy recommendation 40:</p> <p>regarding ...external relations, the Committee "emphatically points to the need for stronger and deeper cooperation at local, regional and national level in initiating and developing strategies in support of international cultural relations and activities"^[3] and believes that city diplomacy could be a way forward in promoting the European cultural identity throughout the world;</p>	<p>The New European Agenda for Culture includes a number of actions to promote cooperation on international cultural relations at all levels.</p>
<p>Policy recommendation 41:</p> <p>The Committee believes that mobility of</p>	<p>While the Commission agrees that mobility of cultural professionals is a</p>

^[3] COR-2016-05110-00-00-AC-TRA.

<p>cultural professionals would have been better placed among the cross-cutting actions given that it provides a substantial added value to all three dimensions;</p>	<p>cross-cutting issue, it wants to focus on its social dimension – harnessing the power of culture for social cohesion, and increasing participation in culture through greater circulation of European artworks and mobility of professionals.</p>
<p>Policy recommendation 42:</p> <p>The Committee reiterates the need for improvement in data collection and statistics on culture, which is a prerequisite to develop credible evidence-based policies in the future and calls for a strategic research approach facilitating knowledge transfer across currently dispersed initiatives, guaranteeing the coverage of all sectors in cooperation with cultural stakeholders.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that improved data collection and statistics on culture are needed and will continue to work with all stakeholders in this regard.</p>

<p>N°3</p>	<p>Erasmus programme for education, training, youth and sport COM (2018) 367 COR-2018-03950-00-01 – SEDEC-VI/043 133rd CoR Plenary Session – February 2019 Rapporteur: Ulrike HILLER (DE/PES) DG EAC – Commissioner NAVRACSICS</p>
<p>Points of the European Committee of the Regions opinion considered essential</p>	<p>European Commission position</p>
<p>The CoR regrets that the Programme will be called "Erasmus" rather than "Erasmus+" (...) and points out that appropriate measures must be taken to ensure the visibility of the various areas (...) to guarantee that the "Erasmus" brand becomes associated with all areas of education and training, youth and sport.</p>	<p>During the celebrations of 30 years of Erasmus, it became clear that the Erasmus constituency and the general public are very well aware of the sectors that the programme is covering. That is why the Commission decided to drop the "plus" in an attempt to unify the Erasmus brand. Furthermore, enhanced prominence will be given to the sectors other than higher education through exploiting the opportunities offered by a bigger budget and through continued targeted communication efforts.</p>
<p>The CoR welcomes the fact that the Commission proposes doubling the Programme's budget, but considers that the target of tripling the number of participants in the programme given the current conditions, and the aim of increased social inclusiveness, will be difficult to achieve.</p>	<p>With the proposed doubling of the budget to €30 billion, the Commission aims to triple the number of the current Erasmus+ beneficiaries to up to 12 million people through various measures: boosting traditional mobility actions for all sectors of the programme; offering additional more flexible mobility formats such as short-term mobility, group mobility, blended mobility and virtual mobility; and optimising the grant levels. Through this more diversified approach, it will be possible to (i) provide more opportunities to learn and train abroad for school pupils, learners in vocational education and training, apprentices, trainees, teachers, trainers, youth workers, adult learning staff and sports coaches, in addition to higher education students; (ii) to reach out</p>

	<p>to more people from all social backgrounds, notably those with fewer opportunities or from remote rural areas; and (iii) to make the programme more accessible for small grassroots organisations and newcomers through simpler cooperation formats.</p>
<p>The CoR calls for a transparent, equitable distribution of resources over the entire seven-year period so that – in particular, at the beginning of the programming period – funds can be increased and expectations of the Programme can be met.</p>	<p>Indeed, the Commission proposed a spending profile with a budget increase between the last year of Erasmus+ and the first year of the future Erasmus programme in 2021 so that expectations of the Programme can be met. However, the budget-related discussions on the future Erasmus programme fall under the remit of the overall negotiations regarding the next Multiannual Financial Framework.</p>
<p>In the future, it would also be desirable for the growing administrative burden of the Programme to be eliminated.</p> <p>The CoR strongly advocates that the application process, project management and documentation requirements be significantly simplified for all areas of the Programme.</p>	<p>Simplification measures have already been introduced in the current programme, including simplified forms, where possible, and online forms for a faster application processes. These measures are the stepping-stones for further simplification in the next programme. The Commission foresees simpler design of the actions, such as the small-scale partnerships with lighter administrative requirements; shorter application forms; simplified funding rules and greater use of simplified grants; simpler reporting obligations by beneficiaries; increased use of virtual cooperation platforms; more user-friendliness and better interoperability of IT systems; and increased digitalisation of procedures, such as the European Student Card. Reduced administrative workload is also foreseen for the National Agencies.</p>
<p>It is extremely important to involve municipal and regional authorities, and local and</p>	<p>The Commission has proposed to implement the programme through</p>

<p>regional administrations and decision-makers, in designing, implementing and steering [the programme].</p> <p>The CoR points out the importance of implementing rules and calls on the Commission to closely involve the Member States, the national agencies, the regional authorities and the stakeholders in drawing these up.</p>	<p>implementing acts in close cooperation with Member States. The Commission also wants to continue working closely together with regions to raise awareness of the opportunities offered by the new programme. Furthermore, under Key Action 3 (Support to policy development and cooperation), the programme supports policy dialogue and cooperation with relevant key stakeholders.</p>
<p>The CoR proposes to set up advisory councils and ombudsmen at the local or regional level to improve administrative procedures and help resolving any appeals and disputes between Erasmus National Agencies and users in a transparent, factual and neutral way.</p>	<p>The Commission does not see the need for an additional layer of reporting and control to the governance of the programme. Safeguards for programme participants already exist. National authorities (usually the responsible government ministries) are responsible for supervising and monitoring the management of the programme at the national level. Complaints, disputes and appeals can therefore be channelled through the usual bodies at the national level, and, if not resolved, through the national courts.</p>
<p>The CoR calls for the United Kingdom, after leaving the European Union, and subject to pre-defined conditions, to be permitted to continue to participate in the Programme and welcomes the fact that this possibility has been created through Article 16(1)(d) ("Third countries associated to the Programme").</p>	<p>The Commission proposal (art. 16) sets out the possibility of concluding participation agreements with any third country in accordance with conditions laid down in a specific agreement covering the participation of the third country to any Union programme.</p>
<p>The CoR recommends creating effective incentives for all types of learning mobility so that environmentally friendly modes of transport are used, with a view to meeting the target for 25% of EU spending to contribute to achieving climate goals.</p>	<p>The Commission is committed to mainstreaming climate action in the Union's policies and to achieving that, overall, 25% of the Union budget is spent in support of climate objectives. In the context of preparing for the implementation of the new programme, the Commission services, in cooperation with National Agencies, are examining relevant actions in this regard, including the use of environmentally</p>

	friendly modes of transport for mobility.
<p>The CoR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - regrets that the willingness of firms to send apprentices abroad to other programme countries remains low. Incentives should be created for this and it should be more widely advertised (...), particularly at local and regional level; - calls for the promotion of both short and longer stays abroad in the field of vocational training, in order to meet the operational needs of SMEs and do justice to participants' individual possibilities. - advocates the development, particularly in the area of vocational education, of "European Schools", in the spirit of "European Universities", which would foster lasting cooperation between institutions from several Member States in the area of youth and staff exchanges, coordination of curricula, and virtual collaboration 	<p>The future Erasmus programme will continue to provide apprentices and vocational education and training learners more opportunities for learning mobility abroad, both short and long-term, including in the private sector. In the future programme, more emphasis will be put on promoting mobility in the field of vocational education and training. For example, the Euroapprentice network created by Erasmus+ National Agencies promote the programme in their local and regional settings.</p> <p>The Commission has also proposed to set up Centres of Vocational Excellence, which aim to create world-class reference points for vocational training in specific sectors/trades or tackling specific societal challenges. The Centres will combine a sectoral focus on skills with a local/regional ecosystems dimension and cover a full range of activities to develop excellence in vocational education and training. These activities include high-quality work-based and workplace learning, the development and delivery of joint curricula and qualifications, international mobility of learners and staff, professional development of teachers and trainers, development of new digital content and new pedagogies, technology transfer and innovation hubs, business-education partnerships, etc.</p>
<p>The CoR points out that "adult education" may be promoted in the sense of a comprehensive form of education and not limited to "professional development". Freelance and voluntary employees should be taken into account in adult education.</p>	<p>While the Commission proposes to significantly increase the budget reserved for adult education, it is clear that the programme will not be able to cover the entire adult population. Therefore, the Commission puts its policy priority on Upskilling Pathways and low-skilled adults,</p>

	<p>considering the huge needs in terms of basic skills and literacy. Adults are also covered in other sectors of the programme, e.g. in continuous vocational education and training, where activities will typically target adults with good levels of basic skills who need re-skilling or upskilling.</p>
<p>The CoR welcomes that the new "DiscoverEU" programme will give young people aged 18 and over the chance to discover EU countries by train for a limited time period;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - points out, however, that, although the programme in question should have a strong learning component, this should not come at the expense of opportunities for learning mobility, which should remain the core business of the Erasmus programme; - stresses that it would be desirable for all young people in the EU to have this opportunity to encounter and discover its diversity, culture, nature and people, regardless of their parents' financial position; - suggests giving consideration to financing via public-private partnerships, particularly with partners from the mobility and tourism sector. 	<p>The design of the future DiscoverEU initiative will ensure its full consistency with the overall objectives of the Erasmus programme. It will include a learning dimension, quality and inclusiveness, and coherence with the other actions under the Youth strand of the programme. The addition of DiscoverEU to the future Erasmus programme as a new action will not come to the detriment of its traditional mobility opportunities.</p> <p>DiscoverEU is a low-threshold opportunity with a fast and user-friendly application process. The format is flexible (short mobility, group mobility), notably to support young people facing economic obstacles. Additional travel budget is available for people with diverse means, people coming from remote areas, or with special needs (e.g. the participation costs of an accompanying person can be covered). The Commission services are also exploring the possibility of organising an annual decentralised call for organisations working with disadvantaged youth.</p> <p>DiscoverEU will build on the preparatory action, which was launched in 2018, and which has been a success so far: after the first phase of its roll-out, participants reported having improved their language skills, become more independent, and better at dealing with unexpected situations. Two thirds of the participants</p>

	<p>(70%) indicated that they would not have been able to finance such a travel pass without the DiscoverEU initiative.</p> <p>The Commission services are exploring ways to set up partnership arrangements with interested stakeholders with a view to increasing the learning dimension of the initiative, to reaching out to as many participants as possible and to reducing travellers' costs.</p>
<p>The CoR pleas for additional efforts to reinforce mobility opportunities, notably for the people with fewer opportunities and disabilities.</p>	<p>Building on the positive experience in the youth field, the Commission indeed aims to make the programme more inclusive and accessible through a variety of measures: more flexible learning mobility formats (short-term and group mobility) which reach people with fewer opportunities best; increased investment in school pupils mobility, mobility of learners in vocational education and training and youth mobility; or increased grant levels to adjust to the needs of people with fewer opportunities. Enhanced outreach to learners with fewer opportunities will also be achieved through increased engagement of youth or adult organisations and sport clubs.</p>
<p>Virtual mobility activities should not replace physical mobility, but complement them.</p>	<p>The intention of the Commission is not to reduce the number of traditional physical mobility opportunities. On the contrary, virtual mobility would complement the physical formats, where they bring an added value. Virtual mobility can prepare the ground for physical mobility and provides those who cannot go on physical mobility the chance to exchange and learn from peers abroad. The Commission proposes to use more blended and virtual mobility, exploiting digital innovations. This will allow the Commission to reach</p>

	<p>larger target groups, in particular those with fewer opportunities and those for whom going abroad would be an obstacle.</p>
<p>The CoR pleads for a gradual opening-up of the possibilities for virtual cooperation to educational and training institutions in the Mediterranean countries and in Africa.</p>	<p>The Commission strongly supports virtual cooperation. Platforms like eTwinning support communities of people (such as school staff and young people) from Europe and partner countries, who can exchange experiences, create joint learning activities and start intercultural dialogue in a safe environment.</p> <p>A Virtual Exchange initiative with countries in the Southern Mediterranean has been running under the current Erasmus+ programme and the intention is to continue it under the future programme. Virtual Exchanges are people-to-people education programmes in which sustained communication and interaction takes place between individuals or groups with the support of facilitators and/or educators.</p>
<p>The CoR would like to see the Seal of Excellence also used to enhance synergies of Erasmus with other funding sources.</p>	<p>The Seal of Excellence facilitates applications for other sources of funding including from the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund Plus+. It is already explicitly part of other Commission proposals, and the entire approach to synergies should indeed be consistent across all the programmes.</p>

The CoR would like to see the specificities of the outermost regions taken into account.

Young people and students in the outermost regions of the EU (Article 349 TFEU) are disadvantaged due to the remoteness and isolation of their regions, particularly when it comes to educational mobility policies. It is therefore vital that the EU guarantees mobility for all of its citizens, regardless of where they live.

Under the current Erasmus+ programme, the EU outermost regions already benefit from preferential treatment to compensate for their remoteness. For example, participants travelling from and to the outermost regions receive a higher contribution to their travel costs. Since 2015, organisations located in outermost regions of all Erasmus+ programme countries can cooperate with partners in third countries, including countries neighbouring the outermost regions.

The future Erasmus budget increase will benefit the outermost regions proportionally. The Erasmus proposal substantially increases the opportunities for Europeans to have an international experience (i.e. in a third country). This implies that participants from the outermost regions will be able to benefit significantly more of mobility experiences in their neighbouring (third) countries.

The CoR calls for an increase in the number of Erasmus programme countries⁴, considering the broad cooperation in the field of sport.

In the field of sport, the Commission's proposal includes limited mobility to third countries associated to the programme, as a wider geographical scope could weaken the impact of this action due to its limited budget. Also, the financial implications of including international actions on the remaining actions under the Sport chapter would have to be considered. However, the proposal caters for broad cooperation opportunities under the Key Action 2 (cooperation among organisations and institutions), involving both third countries associated and non-associated to the programme.

⁴ Based on the new terminology used across all MFF programmes, the Erasmus+ programme countries become third countries associated to the programme, while the partner countries became third countries non-associated to the programme.

**N°4 Proposal for a Regulation on the European Border and Coast Guard
COM(2018) 631 final
COR-2018-06213-00-00 – CIVEX-VI/039
133rd Plenary Session – February 2019
Rapporteur: Anna MAGYAR (HU/EPP)
DG HOME – Commissioner AVRAMOPOULOS**

**Points of the European Committee of the
Regions opinion considered essential**

European Commission position

The follow-up given by the Commission to this opinion will be included in a subsequent report.

<p>N°5 Artificial Intelligence for Europe COM(2018)237 final COR-2018-3953 – SEDEC-VI/46 133rd Plenary Session – February 2019 Rapporteur: Jan TREI (EE/EPP) DG CNECT – Commissioner GABRIEL</p>	
<p>Points of the European Committee of the Regions opinion considered essential</p>	<p>European Commission position</p>
<p>5. agrees that political leaders must make sure an AI environment is put in place and ethical guidelines drafted for the AI ecosystem. Notes, however, that legislative proposals at European level are urgently needed;</p>	<p>The Commission is examining existing regulatory framework in the light of the progress of artificial intelligence to see if the legislation is fit for purpose and assesses the need for legislative measures on that basis. More specifically, the Commission will, inter alia, issue interpretative guidance on the Product Liability Directive (Council Directive 85/374/EEC of 25 July 1985⁵) and it published, on 8 April 2019, the Communication on Building Trust in Human-Centric Artificial Intelligence⁶.</p>
<p>8. takes the view that local and regional authorities should contribute to setting the conditions and a favourable environment for an increase in investment in AI in the years ahead and that these measures should be coordinated at national and European level in order to empower Europeans to become both producers and consumers of innovations;</p>	<p>The Commission calls for common action between Member States and stakeholders when it comes to artificial intelligence research and deployment. Local and regional authorities are invited to support artificial intelligence, for example by setting up AI-focused Digital Innovation Hubs. The Commission works closely with the Member States to coordinate artificial intelligence policies and measures, and</p>

⁵ Council Directive 85/374/EEC of 25 July 1985 on the approximation of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States concerning liability for defective products; OJ L 210, 7.8.1985, p. 29–33.

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Building Trust in Human-Centric Artificial Intelligence (COM(2019) 168 final).

	<p>the Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence⁷ is a manifestation of this. It will be updated regularly in the coming years.</p>
<p>13. recognises the efforts to boost investment in AI both during the current period and in the proposals for the next Multiannual Financial Framework, but voices concern that the amount proposed will not be enough to tackle the challenges ahead and to react to the policies of other countries in the world;</p>	<p>The Commission aims at stimulating investment into artificial intelligence by inviting the Member States and the private sector to match the EU-level increase in investment, as proposed in the new Digital Europe programme, as well as in Horizon Europe.</p> <p>Under Digital Europe, €2.5 billion of the total amount of €9.2 billion will be dedicated to artificial intelligence.</p> <p>Within the proposed Horizon Europe budget, the Commission intends to invest €15 billion in 'Digital and Industry', which also includes artificial intelligence.</p> <p>These efforts contribute to the ambitious investment proposal introduced in the Communication on Artificial Intelligence for Europe⁸.</p>
<p>14. regrets that the proposed strategy is not binding on the Member States, despite AI being very important for economic growth. If Europe is serious about getting to grips with artificial intelligence, there has to be a real political and financial commitment at various levels;</p>	<p>In the Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence, the Commission and the Member States have made a commitment to and laid out concrete steps to support and invest in artificial intelligence. At the EU level, this can be achieved through the Horizon Europe and Digital Europe programmes. At the national and regional level, other tools, such as European fund for strategic</p>

⁷ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence (COM(2018) 795 final), published on 7 December 2018.

⁸ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Artificial Intelligence for Europe (COM(2018) 237 final).

	investments (EFSI) or Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) could be used.
<p>15. stresses in particular that the EU's various policy measures and programmes (such as the EFSI, European Structural and Investment Funds, Horizon Europe, Digital Europe and Erasmus) must be better dovetailed in order to advance artificial intelligence, and calls for a clear vision to this effect;</p>	<p>The various programmes and instrument are designed to have different but complementary profiles. For example, the Horizon Europe programme is focused on research and innovation, whereas the Digital Europe programme deals with the testing, experimentation and deployment of technology, and the Erasmus+ programme contributes through capacity building.</p>
<p>16. insists that more flexible mechanisms for the deployment of artificial intelligence and for funding relevant innovations must be devised, since the sector is growing rapidly and drawn-out funding mechanisms are not flexible enough to keep pace with these changes;</p>	<p>A large set of mechanisms covering a wide spectrum of action is foreseen to enable the deployment of artificial intelligence and ensure relevant funding.</p> <p>Easy access to the latest algorithms and expertise will be ensured by the EU AI-on-demand platform; a network of AI-focused Digital Innovation Hubs will facilitate testing and experimentation; and industrial data platforms will offer high quality datasets.</p> <p>As provided for in the Plan, the Commission has also initiated the process of creating a new partnership for artificial intelligence, building notably on the existing public-private partnerships for robotics and big data.</p>
<p>19. points out that the stated measures do not cover the public sector at local and regional level and believes that these two levels of governance and administration should not be overlooked, since they have an important role in investing in AI and in the promotion of investment and the AI ecosystem in their areas;</p>	<p>The local and regional levels can play an important role in investing and promoting investment in artificial intelligence, for example by setting up Digital Innovation Hubs focused on artificial intelligence.</p> <p>The public sector plays an important role in the Coordinated Plan on</p>

	<p>Artificial Intelligence, comprising for example measures relating to peer learning or joint procurement of AI solutions.</p> <p>Of note, the general objective of the Digital Europe programme is to support the digital transformation of industry and to foster better exploitation of the industrial potential of policies of innovation, research and technological development, for the benefit of businesses and citizens all over the Union, including the outermost as well as economically disadvantaged regions.</p> <p>The programme is structured into Specific Objectives reflecting key policy areas, including artificial intelligence, advanced digital skills, and deployment, best use of digital capacities and interoperability.</p> <p>Interoperability of European public services concerns all levels of administration: EU, national, regional and local. Besides removing barriers to a functioning Single Market, interoperability facilitates successful implementation of policies and offers great potential to avoid cross-border electronic barriers, further securing the emergence of new, or the consolidation of developing, common public services at Union level.</p> <p>For all areas, the programme aims at better aligning EU, Member States and regional policies, and pooling of private and industrial resources in order to increase investment and develop stronger synergies.</p>
22. endorses the idea of setting up a broad	The online platform of the European

<p>multi-stakeholder platform – a European AI alliance – that addresses artificial intelligence in the round, and points out that regional and local stakeholders should be enlisted in this work;</p>	<p>AI Alliance is hosted by the Commission and is open for every interested stakeholder to join. Current discussions within the platform also cover topics related to public sector, and all local and regional stakeholders can join the platform.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Commission endeavoured in its Communication on Building trust in human-centric artificial intelligence to organise outreach activities at national and local level by giving representatives of the AI high-level expert group the opportunity to present the guidelines to relevant stakeholders in the Member States providing them with an additional opportunity to comment on and contribute to the AI guidelines.</p>
<p>27. notes that the Digitising European Industry initiative aims to ensure that every region has a digital innovation hub by 2020. However, many regions are still under-represented in the existing network;</p>	<p>Since 2016 the EU is investing €100 million per year from Horizon 2020 in Digital Innovation Hubs and their networking across the EU. As part of this effort, specific training and mentoring initiatives⁹ have been launched, dedicated to organisations that would like to become a Digital Innovation Hubs in currently underserved regions. These initiatives to broaden and widen the network of Digital Innovation Hubs have been partly financed by the European Parliament. Moreover, the Commission plans €16 million in the Horizon 2020 programme in 2019 and 2020 for widening the Digital Innovation Hubs Network to regions not well covered yet. These actions should lead to an increased coverage of the Digital</p>

⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/digital-innovation-hubs>

	Innovation Hubs.
<p>28. calls for swift action to effect a needs-based improvement in the public's digital skills and knowledge in both the public and private sectors in order to avoid inequality between people, regions and sectors in the EU;</p>	<p>The competence related to skills is mainly with the Member States. Nevertheless, the EU has launched a number of initiatives aimed at reskilling and upskilling of the workforce, including the New Skills Agenda for Europe (COM(2016) 381 final), the Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: new opportunities for adults, (2016/C 484/01) and the Digital Education Action Plan (COM(2018) 22 final). National upskilling schemes will benefit from support by the European Structural and Investment Funds. One of the ten actions of the Skills Agenda is the Blueprint on sectoral cooperation on skills, which can support skills intelligence, content or training schemes. The Commission encourages cooperation in training with the private sector, among others through the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, which is also one of the ten actions under the Skills Agenda.</p> <p>Advanced Digital Skills is one of the specific objective of the proposed Digital Europe programme. This pillar 'shall support the development of advanced digital skills in areas supported by this programme, thus contributing to increase Europe's talent pool, fostering greater professionalism, especially with regard to high performance computing, big data analytics, cybersecurity, distributed ledger technologies, robotics and artificial intelligence.'</p> <p>The Commission agrees that training opportunities in advanced digital skills</p>

	<p>needs to be scaled up, increased and made accessible throughout the EU. Actions supported by the Digital Europe programme will target the workforce, in the private as well as the public sector, in particular ICT professionals and other related professionals, as well as students. These categories include trainees and trainers. The workforce refers to the economically active population, and includes both employed (employees and self-employed) and unemployed people.</p> <p>The Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence gives a prominent role to 'Talent, skills and life-long learning'. It contains a number of measures to foster and retain talent in Europe, from the skills dimension in national AI strategies, to Master, doctoral and post-doctoral programmes.</p>
<p>31. stresses that local and regional authorities must be given retraining opportunities and financial resources so that retraining can be organised in relation to those jobs that will be transformed or cease to exist because of artificial intelligence;</p>	<p>Actions supported by the Digital Europe programme (see above) complements actions supported by Erasmus+, the European Social Fund (ESF), Horizon Europe (Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions and EIT Digital, part of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology Community (EIT Community) and the European Globalisation and Adjustment Fund designed to help workers made redundant find another job or set up their own business.</p>
<p>32. is adamant that substantial financial resources should be provided for the development of AI (including for the Digital Europe programme for the 2021-2027 period) in the EU's next Multiannual</p>	<p>The Commission has made an ambitious proposal for funding this technology in the next Multiannual Financial Framework and welcomes support for this proposal. Out of the</p>

Financial Framework (2021-2027);	€9.2 billion planned for the Digital Europe programme, €2.5 billion will be for artificial intelligence.
35. considers it vitally important that privacy and the rights of the individual be guaranteed as AI develops;	The Commission's Communication on Artificial Intelligence for Europe (COM(2018) 237 final) advocates a human-centric approach to artificial intelligence. The European Union High-Level Expert Group on artificial intelligence published ethics guidelines for trustworthy artificial intelligence on 8 April, 2019 and listed privacy and data governance including respect for privacy, quality and integrity of data, and access to data as requirements for a trustworthy artificial intelligence.
37. points out that developing capacity related to artificial intelligence is a driver for the digital transformation of industry and also of the public sector;	The Commission agrees that capacity building on artificial intelligence is central for the digital transformation. This is why, in its communication on Artificial Intelligence for Europe, it sets out different measures to nurture talent, among which: supporting digital opportunity traineeships (2018-20) in advanced digital skills for students and recent graduates; and the integration of artificial intelligence in the education courses supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology.

<p>N°6 Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach COM(2018) 236 final COR-2018-3908 – CIVEX-VI/037 133rd Plenary Session – February 2019 Rapporteur: Olgierd GEBLEWICZ (PL/EPP) DG CNECT – Commissioner GABRIEL</p>	
<p>Points of the European Committee of the Regions opinion considered essential</p>	<p>European Commission position</p>
<p>[The Committee of the Regions]</p> <p>12. is concerned by the state of preparedness of the European Union and its member states to counter the new wave of disinformation that artificial intelligence could unleash; disinformation is already considered one of the most threatening instruments in future warfare;</p>	<p>The Commission has recognised the urgent need to fund research and innovation within the next Multiannual Financial Framework in the field of artificial intelligence, also as a tool to combat social media and online disinformation.</p>
<p>20. points out that the risk of disinformation affects democratic societies and institutions at all levels; the targeted dissemination of online fake news can have just as damaging an effect on the local community (and political processes including European, national and local elections) as on countries as a whole; countering disinformation must therefore be a priority ahead of the European elections both for European institutions and social media networks to ensure free and fair elections;</p>	<p>The Commission acknowledges the recognition of the potential influence that disinformation can have at all levels from European to national, regional or local, and agrees that countering disinformation must be a key priority especially as regards the European elections.</p> <p>The Commission confirms that it is currently actively collaborating with the social media networks in order to ensure that Europeans have access to objective and trustworthy online information, in view of the European elections and various local elections.</p>
<p>27. identifies three main areas where the Committee of the Regions and local and regional authorities can show initiative and effectively support efforts to counteract current online disinformation: civic education, support for non-governmental organisations and civil society, and support</p>	<p>The areas identified by the Committee are indeed central and the Commission supports the proposal by the Committee to collaborate with the local and regional authorities to support efforts on media literacy, or civic education, to all ages, including</p>

<p>for ethical local media;</p>	<p>teachers, as well as encourage fact checking and initiate discussion on support to quality local media. This is taking into account the concern expressed regarding points 38, 39 and 40.</p>
<p>38. encourages local authorities and communities to create a framework to support third sector organisations engaged in combating disinformation (e.g. by means of fact checking or civic education);</p> <p>39. emphasises the fact that such support is necessary, since the cost of checking information is an order of magnitude greater than the cost of creating disinformation; independent fact-checking organisations, as well as those that aim to teach citizens how to recognise falsehoods, should be able to count on material assistance;</p> <p>40. points out that it is precisely local and regional authorities that have the capacity to provide such support in various forms: competitions for grants, preferential lets of premises and other forms of aid;</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that combatting disinformation at the local level is key to be able to verify local information in native languages. Objectivity in fact checking is of paramount importance. Therefore, fact-checking organisations must be perceived as impartial and independent which include their forms of financing.</p>
<p>43. points out, due to its diversity, the local media guarantees protection for the plurality of political views and information in any territory or region and that the protection of this plurality should be a priority objective. The local media are, currently, in a difficult situation in many EU Member States; the entry of social media into the market, together with their technical possibilities (ability to reach individuals and to precisely target content to specific people), has undercut the financial basis for local media's operations, i.e. classified advertisements, together, in some cases, by conscious attempts at the</p>	<p>The Commission agrees with the Committee's concern about the current situation of the local media. There is a growing need to modernise the business models and find new solutions, and whilst public support to local media is competence of the Member States, pan-European debate on means for survival for local media are indeed timely.</p>

political level to weaken media pluralism. Materially weakened local media are, of course, less able to actively counteract lies that are circulated online;

<p>N°7 Digitalisation in the Health Sector COM(2018) 233 final - COR-2018-2838 – NAT-VI/033 133rd Plenary Session – February 2019 Rapporteur: Fernando LÓPEZ MIRAS (ES/EPP) DG CNECT– Commissioner GABRIEL</p>	
<p>Points of the European Committee of the Regions opinion considered essential</p>	<p>European Commission position</p>
<p>11. points out that it is necessary to improve capacity for self-care and the health literacy of citizens both because of the impact on health and in order to improve the sustainability of healthcare systems. ICTs are a key support in this regard. Also takes the view that health authorities must provide proper guidance to counteract the overload of scientifically-unsubstantiated information on the internet regarding health issues;</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that it is important to enable citizens to improve their health and digital literacy in order to empower them to assume greater responsibility for their health and to engage in self-care.</p> <p>The Commission adopted a Digital Education Action Plan¹⁰ to support technology use and digital competence development in education.</p> <p>Moreover, improving the digital skills of all European citizens is a priority of the Skills Agenda for Europe¹¹ including through the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, which is one of its 10 concrete actions. In addition, the European Social Fund+ supports investment in skills, including digital ones, and can be used by the Member States to supplement their national activities.</p>
<p>13. regrets, therefore, that the Commission’s proposals lack concrete measures to raise public awareness and to ensure that citizens and patients fully</p>	<p>The Commission launched public awareness campaigns on data protection in January 2018, as well as guidance on the reform of European</p>

¹⁰ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Digital Education Action Plan (COM(2018) 22 final).

¹¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a new skills agenda for Europe - Working together to strengthen human capital, employability and competitiveness (COM(2016) 381 final).

<p>understand the legislative framework protecting the privacy of health data and recommends that the Commission support communication campaigns across the EU to explain how the privacy of health data will be protected under the new legal framework;</p>	<p>Union data protection rules for citizens, businesses and organisations. The Commission also provided grants in 2016 and 2017 to support awareness raising actions and training on the General Data Protection Regulation¹², in particular by data protection authorities in the Member States. These actions are currently ongoing.</p>
<p>14. urges the Commission to continue to promote initiatives for eliminating obstacles to the interoperability of eHealth systems, resulting in more efficient systems, as the lack of interoperability has real and measurable costs;</p>	<p>In February 2019, the Commission adopted a Recommendation on a European Electronic Health Record Exchange format (C(2019) 800) that will facilitate interoperability and cross-border access to Electronic Health Records, while ensuring the highest levels of security and data protection.</p> <p>The Recommendation sets out principles for the access and exchange of electronic health records across borders, and lays down a baseline set of technical specifications for health information domains to be considered for exchange.</p> <p>It also recommends that the Commission and the Member States set up a joint coordination process to take this work forward, also involving relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>This builds on the work already undertaken by Member States, supported by the Commission, to exchange patient summaries and ePrescriptions. In January 2019, the exchange of ePrescriptions became possible between Estonia and Finland,</p>

¹² Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) (Text with EEA relevance); OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1–88.

	<p>using the eHealth Digital Service Infrastructure. Further 20 Member States are expected to be able to exchange such information by the end of 2021. This work has been supported by the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Telecom Programme.</p>
<p>17. insists that patients' data should be protected and properly secured so that their information is not misused. Similarly, stresses that the opportunities stemming from the increased access to patient data must in no way contribute to a development that is detrimental to the rights of patients, but rather of benefit to them. In this respect, urges the Commission to look at measures to protect patients from the potential imbalances of power - between them and health professionals - that may be created through this increased access to health data;</p>	<p>The General Data Protection Regulation provides a strong framework to ensure appropriate protection and security of personal data and recognises the processing of genetic data and data concerning health as special categories to which stricter data protection rules apply.</p> <p>The Commission Recommendation on a European electronic health record exchange (C(2019) 800), adopted on 6 February 2019, encourages Member States to develop digital health systems that give citizens the ability to choose with whom they share their health data, and what parts of their health record they wish to share.</p> <p>It also recommends that the systems to share and exchange electronic health data are data protected and secure <i>by design</i>.</p> <p>It recommends that Member States set up National Digital Health Networks that include the national members of the eHealth Network as well as national members of networks established under the General Data Protection Regulation, and the Directive on security of Network and Information Systems with responsibilities for cybersecurity.</p>
<p>20. suggests that the Commission should go further than developing a European</p>	<p>The Commission Recommendation on a European Electronic Health Record</p>

<p>format for the exchange of electronic medical records and promote, together with this form, a fully-fledged European electronic health record. While secure access to medical records would be provided, the patient would be the owner of the data, authorising access to it and subsequently auditing this access;</p>	<p>Exchange format (C(2019) 800) goes beyond proposing an exchange format and more generally encourages interoperability in the European health care systems.</p> <p>It recommends principles that should govern the development of electronic health record exchange, and these include that the systems should be designed in a way that citizens are central. This means that such systems are to be designed to implement the principles of data protection by design and by default to meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation. The ambition is to be able to exchange an individual's comprehensive set of health data.</p> <p>Another principle is for 'auditability', namely that the developed systems should allow for an accurate record of who has accessed, exchanged or processed an individual's electronic health record in any way.</p>
<p>24. urges the Commission to assess the possibility of assigning a unique identification to genetic studies carried out on European citizens for clinical reasons, which would allow the information to be used for preventative, diagnostic or therapeutic measures that the individual may need throughout the course of their life. This would always require their consent as the patient remains at all times the owner of the data. "Blockchain" is currently a secure protocol that ensures the availability of data, keeping them confidential and under the individual's control;</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of the suggestion to assign a unique identification to genetic studies, and affirms that all processing of health data must be based on the explicit consent of the citizen concerned or on any other lawful basis (Article 9 General Data Protection Regulation).</p> <p>The protection of personal data is a fundamental right of an individual. (Article 8 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union).</p> <p>The Commission Recommendation on a European Electronic Health Record Exchange format (C(2019) 800)</p>

	<p>recommends that the process going forward with regard to health data interoperability should include a way to review the utility of new technologies, such as distributed ledger technologies, to the development of the secure, protected exchange of health data.</p> <p>In April 2018, twenty Member States signed a Declaration 'Towards Access to One Million Genomes by 2022', which aims to support the development of genetic data in the EU for various use cases, including prevention and in clinical practice. The Commission is supporting the Member States to explore, in relation to genetic data, a range of issues such as interoperability, deployment of common standards, and appropriate data access governance.</p>
<p>25. calls on the Commission to take secure measures that guarantee anonymity in order to drive forward the implementation of technology relating to the use of health data, taking into account the potential of key technologies such as artificial intelligence or high-performance computing, by promoting better coordination between different stakeholders in the system, which includes regions, the public and private sectors (including eHealth SMEs), research bodies and other players involved;</p>	<p>The Commission appreciates the importance of anonymised health data to support the testing phase of new technologies based on big data and the use of High Performance Computing, artificial intelligence, robotics and machine learning.</p> <p>Under the instruments of the next Multi-Annual Financial Framework, such as the Digital Europe Programme and Horizon Europe, the Commission intends to support the creation of testing and experimentation centres for Artificial Intelligence, including for health purposes, for that purpose use anonymised health data.</p>
<p>29. asks the Commission to take on board the possibilities offered by the European Reference Networks within the framework of the Directive on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, in order to help facilitate</p>	<p>The Commission is fully aware of the potential that the European Reference Networks have in order to help facilitate the implementation of translational cross-sectoral research</p>

<p>the implementation of translational cross-sectoral research, including, where appropriate, into personalised medicine for patients suffering from rare, low-prevalence or complex diseases;</p>	<p>and other types of research. The Commission is promoting and supporting the on-going reflection and efforts of the Member States and of the European Reference Network Coordinators and members in this field, for example via the European Reference Networks Research Working Group. Activities implemented include the support to registries for European Reference Networks, the smooth integration of all 24 approved European Reference Networks in the European Joint Programme Co-Fund for Rare Diseases (with €55 million of Union funding and totally €101 million) and in other EU-funded research projects and schemes.</p> <p>The European Joint Programme on Rare Diseases brings together resources at national and European level for an integrated research and innovation programme to optimise the translation of research results into clinical applications used in healthcare. It aims to establish a virtual platform for coordinating access to rare disease information, research data and services to optimise the flow of information and knowledge from research to clinical practice.</p>
<p>30. encourages the Commission to initiate a European level discussion on the ethical, legal and social implications of the use of genomic and health data in public health and research; believes that the implications of the use of genomic and health information in these fields should be included in the regulatory approach taken by the Commission and Member States, an already that should also take into account</p>	<p>The Commission recalls that the communication that is the subject of the Committee's opinion recognised the important ethical, legal and social implications of use of genomic and health data and committed the Commission to ensuring full compliance with data protection legislation and ethical principles in all of the actions it undertakes in the</p>

the role of ethics and expert committees, not to mention the autonomy of health service users;

context of the communication.

In this respect, the Commission wishes to underline that it is actively supporting and encouraging discussions on these subjects at European Union level, including in the context of cooperation launched by the '1 Million Genomes' Declaration.

The Commission notes in addition that the processing of genetic data has been recognised in the new General Data Protection Regulation as a special category of data to which stricter data protection rules apply.

A strict ethics framework already applies to research supported under the European Union's Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation. It includes the need for participants to seek, where appropriate, the approval of the relevant national or local ethics committees prior to the start of the research. Furthermore, the role of ethics committees is already embedded in Union law, for instance through the ethics review for prior authorisation of clinical trials.

To ensure that human dignity and other global values are and will be respected in the digitally driven world, nearly €10 million from Horizon 2020 were allocated to fund three long-term projects (SIENNA¹³, SHERPA¹⁴ and PANELFIT¹⁵). The projects should identify the future challenges stemming from the use of new technologies, including genomics, and address these with policy proposals for reshaping the

¹³ <http://www.sienna-project.eu/>

¹⁴ <https://www.project-sherpa.eu/>

¹⁵ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/218355/factsheet/en>

existing ethical framework.

In the Communication on the Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence (COM(2018) 795 final) the Commission expressed its aim to embed the 'ethics by design' principle for artificial intelligence made in Europe. The Commission will therefore explore how to introduce the 'ethics by design' principle in relevant calls for proposals under its research programmes thus ensuring an appropriate and predictable, ethical and regulatory framework that relies on effective safeguards for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals.

A European high level expert group representing academia, business and civil society has been established and has worked on ethical guidelines for the development and use of Artificial intelligence. The guidelines were published on 8 April 2019¹⁶. These guidelines include a specific use case on health care. The Commission has outlined the further process regarding these guidelines in its Communication 'Building Trust in Human-Centric Artificial Intelligence' of 8 April 2019¹⁷.

The European group on ethics in science and new technologies has published a statement on artificial intelligence, robotics and 'autonomous' systems¹⁸ that also refers to healthcare aspects.

¹⁶ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/ethics-guidelines-trustworthy-ai>.

¹⁷ COM (2019)168.

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/research/ege/pdf/ege_ai_statement_2018.pdf.

34. notes that education is a key element in enabling citizens to participate actively in the digital transformation and therefore calls on the Commission and Member States to place greater emphasis on improving the digital literacy of citizens and patients by developing appropriate education programmes; recalls equally that there are still groups of European citizens who do not have internet access or sufficient digital skills to use digital services, and that proactive efforts need to be made to improve digital inclusion;

The proposals for the new Multiannual Financial Framework are set to provide for an overall increase in the funding available to boost education and training, including to support acquisition of key competences including digital skills at all levels.

Supporting and boosting the development of advanced digital skills is one of the five main pillars of the Digital Europe Programme and its main targets. Increased funding for digital training is also likely to be made available via the regional development and cohesion policy instruments (such as European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund+).

The Commission also adopted a digital education action plan to support technology-use and digital competence development in education. The European Institute of Innovation and Technology is in the process of integrating artificial intelligence across curricula in the education courses it supports, at Master and doctoral level. The Blueprint on sectoral cooperation on skills supports the development of sectoral strategies to address the skills gaps, and improve multidisciplinary approaches by integrating elements of artificial intelligence into other disciplines.

As regards access to the internet, the Commission continues to support initiatives under the Connecting Europe Facility that aim to reduce the digital divide. For example, as part of its Work Programme 2019 the Connecting Europe Facility will support the WiFi4EU initiative that

	<p>reinforces local wireless Internet connectivity free of charge and without discriminatory conditions and aims to improve access to high-speed broadband, promote take-up of broadband and facilitate access to digital services.</p>
<p>37. underlines that it is important to ensure that the digitalisation of health reduces social inequalities and promotes accessibility for persons with disabilities and the elderly;</p>	<p>The Commission underlines that, as all Member States and the European Union are party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities, it is essential that the digitalisation in the health sector happens in a disability inclusive way respecting rights of persons with disabilities. In that context, it is important to refer in particular to article 25 of the Convention. In order to achieve this, accessibility is a precondition and should be ensured and not only promoted, for example in relation to medical records, on line services and medical devices. In that context, Web Accessibility Directive¹⁹ and the recently adopted European Accessibility Act²⁰ can inspire accessible solutions in relation to websites, mobile apps, ecommerce, and access on line.</p>
<p>41. calls on the Commission to provide new instruments to promote the public procurement of innovation (PPI) in addition to current pre-commercial procurements (PCPs) and PPIs, which are complex to implement and depend heavily on ad hoc funding, by combining, for</p>	<p>The Commission has recently established a European network of national competence centres on innovation procurement aiming at mainstreaming the use of innovation procurement (including pre-commercial procurements and public procurement of</p>

¹⁹ Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 2016 on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies (Text with EEA relevance); OJ L 327, 2.12.2016, p. 1–15.

²⁰ Final text, adopted on 17 April 2019, awaits publication in Official Journal. Procedure reference: 2015/0278 (COD), original Commission's proposal: COM(2015) 615 final.

<p>example, European funding programmes and the Structural Funds;</p>	<p>innovation) at national, regional and local levels. One of the tasks of this network of competence centres is to reinforce the knowledge of, and the synergies between, financial programmes and instruments at EU level.</p>
<p>44. stresses that as new applications and devices for patients and health professionals (applications, external measuring devices or on mobile phones, etc.) emerge, this should lead to a process of accreditation, certification or marking valid at European level, to determine those that are really considered useful or that may even be subject to prescription by a health professional. This would reduce red tape so that solutions approved in one Member State could easily be marketed in another, and therefore urges the Commission to act in this regard;</p>	<p>The Commission is supporting an assessment framework for mobile health tools with regard to their integration into health systems under the Horizon2020 instrument (mHealth hub Project.)</p>
<p>45. insists that devices and applications for patients and health professionals should be simple and easy to use and should complement rather than adding to those already in place in Member States;</p>	<p>The Commission supports the 'Mobile Age' project that aims to improve accessibility of digitally-provided public services. It addresses the risk of older people being excluded from public services due to lower familiarity with new technologies. The project is working in collaboration with senior citizens who are helping to develop new accessible, mobile and open government services.</p> <p>The Commission takes note of the Committee's comment on the accessibility of devices and applications for health professionals.</p>
<p>46. notes the difficulties of rolling out and adopting on a large scale technological solutions that have been tested and validated by pilot studies, and therefore</p>	<p>The Commission is supporting several projects that aim to support the roll out of technological solutions.</p>

requests that the Commission support the regions and promote cooperation between them in order to complete the roll-out of these technological solutions;

For example, the objective of the Scale Active and Healthy Ageing ('Scale AHA') study was to accelerate the scaling-up of innovative approaches and practices by fostering active knowledge exchange among regions through dedicated mentoring activities. This resulted in the 'Twinings' scheme which is a mechanism facilitating the transfer and implementation of digitally-enabled innovative practices from one region to another.

The approach has been successfully tested in a number of EU projects and studies, including the Scale Active and Healthy Ageing study and is further supported in the Digital Health Europe project and European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing Reference Site Collaborative Network.

Moreover, large infrastructure projects are supported by the Connecting Europe Facility, and the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) that aims to mobilise private investment in projects that are strategically important for the European Union.

Beyond this, the proposed Digital Europe programme is designed to support the digital transformation and to underpin the Union's digital policies.

All of the programme's five pillars are relevant to health care. It will support the large-scale deployment of eHealth services. Among the objectives are the scale-up of digital solutions for integrated care and patient empowerment through better access to

	<p>their health data.</p> <p>The Digital Europe Programme will support Member States' capacity building in the fields of computing, data handling and development of supercomputing facilities, ensuring their use for health and health care-related purposes. This will foster modelling and analytics to predict disease onset and progression, improve patient care and personalise treatments.</p> <p>The programme will also co-fund initiatives that ensure interoperability of eHealth infrastructure and support digital health system architecture that uses safety- and privacy-by-design. These two factors will facilitate the development of the Digital Service Infrastructure in line with the Recommendation to establish a European Electronic Health Record Exchange format.</p>
<p>47. suggests, moreover, examining whether it is appropriate to include in project proposals for European funding a commitment to implement the project if it is successful, ensuring that it is mainstreamed throughout the population in the interest of equity, and providing consistency at the end of the innovation process by scaling up;</p>	<p>The Commission has formulated user-centric design as a pre-requisite for research and innovation actions, such as in the projects Smart4health and InteropEHRate. Health literacy is addressed in addition, for example in project IC-Health, which the European Economic and Social Committee positively mentioned in its opinion 'Digital Health literacy', adopted on 21 March 2019.</p>
<p>49. calls on the Commission to promote the necessary alignment between European, national and regional digital plans and strategies, along with, for the next programming period 2021-2027, sufficient complementarity between the different European funding programmes and public</p>	<p>The Commission is supporting the development of guidelines for targeted investment by Member States in eHealth, taken forward by the eHealth Network.</p> <p>The overall objective of the guidelines is to foster interoperability in the field</p>

<p>and private funding, in order to complete the large-scale roll out of integrated, digital and people-centred care services;</p>	<p>of eHealth across and within Member States, by encouraging the use of common standards, formats and frameworks, and pointing to funding sources at EU level that may support this.</p> <p>The Commission also notes that the proposals for the new Multiannual Financial Framework include increased funding for digital, including for areas likely to have direct impact for eHealth.</p> <p>For example, the Commission proposal for Horizon Europe includes strategic planning processes that will lay out the long-term strategy for achieving objectives. The process will promote synergies with other Union programmes and complement policy approaches in the Member States.</p>
<p>50. notes that often the technology exists and is operational, but red tape prevents or delays the adoption of solutions; therefore calls on the Commission to promote new reimbursement models for adopting digital innovation, geared, for example, to delivering payment in accordance with health outcomes, so as to support the business models of eHealth and mHealth companies offering high-quality services supported by digital technology;</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of the Committee's opinion on this point, but acknowledges the Member States' competence in the area of pricing and reimbursement.</p> <p>The Commission can disseminate information about examples where innovative reimbursement models, such as pay-for-performance and outcome-based payments, have shown to work well.</p>
<p>52. urges the European Commission when implementing the action plan, to take into account not only the Member States, but also the local and regional authorities that play a key role in communicating with and informing patients, in education and training for, professionals, and in the development of eHealth.</p>	<p>The European Union's cohesion policy invests in health, which is a key asset for regional development and competitiveness, to reduce economic and social disparities. The investments through the European Regional Development Fund address a number of different areas, among many others the areas of healthcare infrastructure</p>

and sustainable systems, e-health, health coverage, and health promotion programmes.

There are also investment commitments in large scale implementation in digital health and social care programmes from national and regional authorities grouped under the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing.

<p>N°8 Streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the trans-European transport network COM(2018) 277 final COR-2018-03592 – COTER VI/044 133rd Plenary Session – February 2019 Rapporteur: Michiel SCHEFFER (NL/ALDE) DG MOVE – Commissioner BULC</p>	
<p>Points of the European Committee of the Regions opinion considered essential</p>	<p>European Commission position</p>
<p>CoR welcomes the proposal of the Commission, in the context of speeding up the implementation of the TEN-T network and achieving the Paris agreement objectives. It is also very important for harmonising procedure and technical standards and increasing interoperability.</p>	<p>The Commission appreciates that the aim of this proposal, which is to support the efficient and on-time implementation of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) core network, is welcomed by the Committee. The quick delivery of high-quality and state-of-the-art transport infrastructure of EU is the pre-requisite for the timely achievement of the overall goals of the EU transport network policy, such as cohesion, functioning internal market or decarbonisation.</p>
<p>CoR suggests that instead of applying the proposed procedure to all TEN-T projects, the regulation should specify which projects fall under its application. Member States should, for example, be allowed to decide what projects fall under the regulation.</p>	<p>The trans-European transport network includes national or regional transport networks and Member States' action significantly contributes to the delivery of the network. Nevertheless, permit granting procedures greatly differ across Member States; this leads to coordination challenges and affects the pace of the network's implementation.</p> <p>The development of an EU network requires a concerted approach. Therefore the Commission promotes an EU-wide approach to synchronise the delivery of the elements of the whole network. Only by completing the whole trans-European transport network can the European Union – its citizens and companies – draw all the benefits of the network.</p>

	<p>The core network identified in the TEN-T Regulation has the highest priority for all Member States as it should be completed by 2030. Therefore, it needs stronger coordination in its implementation. This is why the Commission proposed to apply this Regulation to all projects of common interest on the core network.</p>
<p>CoR recalls that administrative burden must not be simplified and reduced at the expense of subsidiarity and proportionality. Permits are granted in the integrated framework of national administrations, respecting European and national legal frameworks in the areas of spatial planning, environmental protection and civil rights. Tailor-made approaches should be possible if a Member State already has streamlined procedures in place.</p>	<p>The Commission would like to assure the Committee that its proposal does not initiate substantial changes of the permit granting procedures in Member States where they work efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>The planning and implementation of Union projects of common interest in the areas of energy, transport and telecommunication infrastructure should be coordinated at the Union level to generate synergies. This concerns also the procedures necessary for the implementation of the projects of common interest. The Commission notes that, according to the principle of subsidiarity, any action at the EU level shall be taken only if the objectives of the proposed action can be better achieved at Union level by reason of the scale or effects of the proposed action. In this respect, the measures proposed by the Commission target the core trans-European transport network of which the transnational and EU-wide importance is clear. Only by completing the whole trans-European transport network can the European Union draw all the benefits of the network, which means that all parts of the network have to be treated with appropriate attention.</p> <p>In some Member States, streamlined procedures are already applied as regards</p>

	<p>important transport infrastructure projects, and these procedures provide important benefits. The Commission sees value in promoting and extending these good practices and concepts across the European Union. This proposal aims at incentivising changes and reforms in those Member States that face more problems and delays in this field and at ensuring a more coherent approach across Member States. The initiative is expected to benefit the whole European Union as the network effect will also positively contribute to the neighbouring Member States.</p> <p>The Commission would also like to draw the attention of the Committee to the streamlined permit granting procedures, which are already applicable for the Projects of Common Interest in the energy sector, as provided for by Chapter III of the relevant Regulation²¹. This legislative act, in force since 2013, contains similar permit granting procedures for the project of common interest in the energy sector, similar to those proposed in the transport sector.</p>
<p>CoR welcomes the intention of the proposal to facilitate cross-border cooperation for the development of transport links, to remove missing links. Nevertheless, cross-border projects and purely national projects have different preconditions and a top-down approach might not be suitable for their specific features.</p>	<p>The Commission's proposal aims at reducing delays in all TEN-T projects of common interest located on the core network.</p> <p>The analysis carried out in the Impact Assessment showed that the complexity of permit granting procedures affects all types of projects (national or cross-border, even if more prevalent for cross-border projects). At the same time, the issue with public procurement procedures</p>

²¹ Regulation (EU) No 347/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2013 on guidelines for trans-European energy infrastructure and repealing Decision No 1364/2006/EC and amending Regulations (EC) No 713/2009, (EC) No 714/2009 and (EC) No 715/2009.

	particularly affects cross-border projects and therefore the measures envisaged regarding public procurements are specifically designed for those.
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<p>N°9 Road safety and automated mobility COM (2018) 274 final COM(2018) 283 final COM(2018) 293 final COR-2018-03591 – COTER VI/043 133rd Plenary Session – February 2019 Rapporteur: Jozsef RIBANYI (HU/EPP) DG MOVE – Commissioner BULC</p>	
<p>Points of the European Committee of the Regions opinion considered essential</p>	<p>European Commission position</p>
<p>Recital 5: [...] It is essential to get local and regional stakeholders involved in the implementation of the extended scope of the directive, especially with regard to determining which roads are covered by its provisions. Such an approach would enable the Commission's proposal to be considered compliant with the subsidiarity and proportionality principles.</p>	<p>The text agreed by the co-legislators provides for the possibility for Member States to exempt from the scope of the Directive primary roads that have a low risk for safety; in the same way, Member States may include additional roads within the scope. This leaves a degree of flexibility to Member States, in line with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.</p>
<p>New Recital 5a: In order to ensure that such extension of scope has the intended effect, it is logical that other primary roads should include at least those roads that connect major cities or regions belonging to the highest category of road below the category 'motorway' in the national classification.</p>	<p>The text agreed by the co-legislators contains a new recital 5a with nearly identical wording.</p>
<p>Recital 6: [...] Similarly, attention should also be paid to the situation of existing unsafe roads. In this area regional transport development programmes have four times as much funding as the Connecting Europe Facility; in both cases financial envelopes are open for planning and establishing new road sections. Therefore, adequate funds should be allocated to upgrading of</p>	<p>The provisions on the network-wide road safety assessment, and the resulting 'safety rating' of roads that classifies parts of the existing road network into categories according to their in-built safety, duly address the situation of existing unsafe roads.</p> <p>However, the Directive cannot lay down rules and conditions for the allocation of funding resources, as these can only be</p>

<p>existing roads. When delivering this, measures should be considered to enable smaller regions and towns to afford the investments required for RISM.</p>	<p>determined by decisions on the respective funding programmes.</p> <p>In this context, it is however important to realise that road safety has been put high on the agenda in many new funding programmes and initiatives.</p>
<p>Recital 7:</p> <p>[...] As safe road transport should be accessible in all European settlements and regions, the methodology of risk-based network-wide road assessment should take due account of multi-level governance. Higher level territorial units should be given RISM coordinating functions, while the functions that are held by the state and the municipalities should be synchronised.</p>	<p>Aspects relating to organisational and operational implementation of the provisions of the Road Infrastructure Safety Management Directive, notably concerning the roles of local and national authorities in the network-wide road safety assessments, fall within the remit of the Member States. It would not be appropriate to regulate this at the European level with a degree of detail as proposed.</p>
<p>Recital 10:</p> <p>[...] When doing so, the physical and digital infrastructure of public roads targeted by the Directive should be developed in parallel. In this regard, automated vehicles equipped with adaptive cruise control and transport support systems should contribute to enabling safe and effective operation of road traffic. Care must be taken that also smaller, demographically challenged and outermost regions are enabled to ensure universal availability of digital infrastructure.</p>	<p>In order to prepare for the rollout of advanced connected and automated mobility systems, which would contribute to enhancing safe and effective operation of road traffic, the text agreed by the co-legislators contains a provision which mandates the Commission to establish common specifications on road markings and road signs. In this way, the infrastructure of public roads in the EU will be improved for both human drivers and automated driver assistance systems.</p>
<p>Recital 12:</p> <p>[...] The objective of avoiding or managing traffic emergencies involving pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists should be addressed by education and training tools, as well as by developing quality requirements for an infrastructure that supports pedestrians' and cyclists' mobility</p>	<p>The text agreed by the co-legislators contains a requirement to develop and apply particular infrastructure quality requirements concerning vulnerable road users.</p>

<p>and safety, i.e. establishing road markings, road signs and sufficient pedestrian crossings, especially adjacent to public transport stops and public buildings in parallel, as well as constructing elevated, separate bike zones and pavements along all road stretches.</p>	
<p>Recital 13:</p> <p>[...] Similarly, smart roads with smart road markings and road signs support road safety in European regions and cities. Attention should also be paid to the climate conditions in these regions and cities, as, for example, installing pavement sensors and signals is subject to the local climate. Care must further be taken that these sensors also perceive vulnerable road users and non-connected road users.</p>	<p>The text agreed by the co-legislators does not contain any provisions on smart roads with smart road markings and road signs.</p>
<p>New Recital 18a:</p> <p>[...] Carrying out network-wide road assessment and road safety inspections should have realistic implementation deadlines set, taking into consideration the administrative and financial capacities of national, regional and local actors involved in RISM planning and delivery, especially in rural, mountainous, remote and lagging European regions.</p>	<p>The text agreed by the co-legislators requires the first network-wide road safety assessment to be carried out by 2024 at the latest, and subsequent assessments at least once every five years.</p>
<p>Art 1, (1) para 2:</p> <p>This Directive shall apply to roads which are part of the trans-European network, to motorways and to other primary roads, whether they are at the design stage, under construction or in operation.</p>	<p>This is covered by the text agreed by the co-legislators.</p>
<p>Art 1, (1) para 2, new para:</p> <p>Each Member State shall designate primary roads within its territory according to its</p>	<p>The text agreed by the co-legislators provides for the possibility for Member States to exempt from the scope of the Directive primary roads that have a low</p>

<p>existing road classification and after duly consulting the competent local and regional authorities. Each Member State shall notify the Commission of the primary roads within its territory at the latest 24 months following the entry into force of this Directive. Member States shall notify any subsequent change thereto.</p>	<p>risk for safety; in the same way, Member States may include additional roads in the scope.</p> <p>Member States shall notify to the Commission the list of motorways and primary roads on its territory covered by the Directive, as well as any roads exempted from or added to the scope. The Commission shall publish all notified roads.</p>
<p>Art 1, new(2a): in Article 4 the following paragraph 6 is added:</p> <p>The Commission shall set up guidelines with precise technical characteristics for the provision and maintenance of "forgiving roadsides" (roads laid out in an intelligent way to ensure that driving errors do not immediately have serious consequences) building on the experience of all national, regional and local transport authorities and promote them amongst auditors and transport planners. The Commission shall provide technical and financial assistance to support the competent authority in the implementation of the guidelines.</p>	<p>The text agreed by the co-legislators contains a provision that mandates the Commission to provide guidance for the design of 'forgiving roadsides' and 'self-explaining and self-enforcing roads' in the initial audit of the design phase, to be developed in close cooperation with the Member States.</p>

N°10 Towards an 8th Environment Action Programme
COR-2018-01672 – ENVE-VI/027
133rd Plenary Session – February 2019
Rapporteur: Cor LAMERS (NL/EPP)
DG ENV – Commissioner VELLA

Points of the European Committee of the Regions opinion considered essential	European Commission position
<p>1. Points out that the EU must show a higher ambition in all relevant policy domains, especially on climate, biodiversity and environment, to achieve the aims of the Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);</p>	<p>In its communication ‘A Clean Planet for all’²², the Commission presented its vision towards a climate-neutral Europe by 2050, in line with the Paris Agreement.</p> <p>The Commission’s reflection paper on the implementation of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals²³ recognises our ecological debt as Europe’s main sustainability deficit:</p> <p><i>‘The most serious sustainability deficit and our greatest challenge is the ecological debt, which we are running up, by overusing and depleting our natural capital and threatening our ability to meet the needs of future generations within the limits of our planet. Worldwide the strains on key resources, from fresh water to fertile land, put human existence in peril.’</i></p> <p>The Commission acknowledges that continuous and ambitious efforts are needed in order to halt these negative trends. In line with the Committee’s opinion, the Commission agrees that implementation of existing legislation</p>

²² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank: A Clean Planet for all - A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy (COM(2018) 773 final).

²³ Reflection paper: Towards a sustainable Europe by 2030 (COM(2019) 22 final), https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/rp_sustainable_europe_30-01_en_web.pdf

	remains a key priority.
7. Calls on the European Commission, the Council and the Parliament to develop an 8th EAP;	The Commission adopted, on 15 May 2019, the evaluation of the 7 th Environment Action Programme. The Commission takes note of the Committee's opinion and welcomes the good cooperation within the context of this evaluation. The decision on whether to have an 8 th Environment Action Programme (EAP) and the process, scope and content will lie with the next College.
20. Points out that although the 7th EAP has identified better implementation as a key priority, insufficient implementation remains a significant problem. Supports effective implementation of the acquis. Argues that local and regional authorities (LRAs) are not given the necessary instruments in practice. In most cases the European and national levels have the appropriate resources and should therefore bear the responsibility for paying fines for non-compliance;	<p>The Commission welcomes the feedback relating to the 7th Environment Action Programme. The current programme placed a focus on engaging a broad basis of governmental levels including regions, and one of the aims of the evaluation was to find out how well this worked, and what could have worked better. In this light, the Committee's opinion provides valuable input.</p> <p>Implementation remains key and the Commission appreciates that this aspect is highlighted prominently in the Committee's opinion. Failing to implement environmental legislation costs the EU economy around €55 billion per year in health costs and direct costs to the environment²⁴. Under the current programme, the Commission has taken additional measures to improve implementation – through funding, through the Environment Implementation Review, and its peer-to-peer tool that facilitates learning between environmental authorities, as well as the Technical Platform of DG Environment and of the Committee of the Regions that</p>

²⁴ COM(2019) 149 Communication on Environmental Implementation Review 2019: A Europe that protects its citizens and enhances their quality of life.

	<p>has proved to be a good forum for dialogue.</p> <p>Despite progress, the Commission agrees that more work is needed to ensure that existing laws are implemented to protect the health of citizens and to offset environmental pressures that are costly for society and the economy. The Commission received useful comments on these issues during the Green Week 2019 (13-17 May 2019), dedicated to the topic of implementing EU environment legislation, and will use them for its further work.</p>
<p>25. Strongly believes that the 8th EAP should ensure policy integration;</p>	<p>As part of the enabling framework, the 7th Environment Action Programme highlighted the need to improve the integration of environmental and climate matters into other policy areas. Despite progress, the Commission believes that more work is needed, as integration with other legitimate policy goals is often weak and this has a negative impact on implementation.</p>
<p>32. Supports more synergies between funding sources and stronger links between public and private financing. Welcomes the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) proposal with its focus on sustainable development and integrating environment policy into all budget headings, however calls for over 30% of the budget reserved for climate policy mainstreaming;</p>	<p>The Commission agrees that sustainable financing is essential for good environment policy-making. To this extent, we should build on the work that has started under the 7th Environment Action Programme, which identified boosting investment for environment policy as one of four crucial factors needed in order to achieve the EU's environment policy goals. The Commission maintains its position to dedicate 25% of the next Multiannual Financial Framework for climate policy mainstreaming. It is an ambitious, yet realistic, target.</p>
<p>40. Calls for a multi-level governance</p>	<p>The Commission strongly believes in the</p>

<p>framework. Believes in incentives for over-performing;</p>	<p>importance of involving stakeholders and citizens at all levels of governance, especially in the area of environment where competences are often spread over several governance levels. In this light, the Commission welcomes the Committee's proposals for a closer cooperation with institutions and associations representing the local and regional level.</p>
<p>57. Proposes a lean clean 8th EAP, with five main chapters: implementation, the transitions, innovation, wider global challenges and communication;</p>	<p>The Commission takes note of the Committee's input relating to the future direction of EU environment policy. The five items listed by the Committee are in line with the preliminary findings of the 7th Environment Action Programme evaluation, where stakeholders have pointed out that the 7th programme could have been improved by simplifying the strategic framework further, perhaps by having fewer priorities and actions, combined with more clarity on who does what.</p>

<p>N°11 Reform of the CAP COM (2018)392-393-394 CoR –2018-03637 – NAT-VI/034 132nd Plenary Session – December 2018 Rapporteur: Guillaume CROS (FR/PES) DG AGRI – Commissioner HOGAN</p>	
<p>Points of the European Committee of the Regions opinion considered essential</p>	<p>European Commission position</p>
<p>Amendment 1 Recital 5 <i>(...) as long as they are incorporated in plots of arable crops (...)</i></p>	<p>Change motivates amendment 20; see reply to this amendment.</p>
<p>Amendment 2 Recital 9 In view of further improving the performance of the CAP, income support should be targeted to genuine farmers. In order to ensure a common approach at Union level for such a targeting of support, a framework definition for 'genuine farmer' displaying the essential elements should be set out. On the basis of this framework, Member States should define in their CAP Strategic Plans which farmers are not considered genuine farmers based on conditions such as <i>the share of agricultural income, (...)</i></p>	<p>Within the common EU framework for genuine farmer set in the Proposal, Member States maintain the flexibility to define their own criteria. The criteria mentioned in the proposals are only examples; Member States may decide not to use them and/or to use other criteria. The criteria should meet the common agricultural policy's objectives, be objective, non-discriminatory and compliant with the Union law and principles and respect the provisions of paragraph 1 of Annex 2 to the World Trade Organisation Agreement on Agriculture.</p> <p>In the view of the above, 'income' provides the appropriate reference for the Member States in defining 'genuine farmers'.</p>
<p>Amendment 3 Recital 11 <i>(...)The CAP must explicitly take into consideration the European Union's equality policy, paying particular attention to the need to promote women's participation in the development of the socio-economic fabric of rural areas. This Regulation should help make the work of women more visible, meaning that this</i></p>	<p>The Commission considers that women play an indispensable role in rural areas and the agricultural sector. In certain cases, they also face special challenges. A general reference to the European Union's equality policy in the recital is acceptable.</p> <p>Change motivates amendment 23; see reply to this amendment.</p>

<p><i>work should be taken into account in the specific objectives (...)</i></p>	
<p>Amendment 4</p> <p>Recital 12 (...), <i>digitalisation and agro-ecological practices</i>, as well as improving the access to impartial, sound, relevant and new knowledge, <i>by taking account of farmers' knowledge and exchanges between farmers.</i></p>	<p>With the flexibility provided by the new common agricultural policy, Member States will be better equipped to encourage the development of agro-ecologic practices.</p>
<p>Amendment 5</p> <p>New recital after recital 12</p> <p><i>Narrowing the digital divide in rural areas is essential for maintaining population numbers and economic development, especially for the provision of services.</i></p> <p><i>Agricultural digitalisation offers significant potential in the areas of production, marketing and consumer protection, as well as in the protection of natural and cultural heritage in rural areas. However, steps should be taken to ensure that small farms, whose access to new technologies may be limited, can benefit from this, and that technological development does not diminish farmers' autonomy; they must retain control over the data collected on their farms.</i></p>	<p>The Commission fully agrees with the importance of narrowing the digital divide for the development of agriculture and rural areas.</p> <p>The proposal on the common agricultural policy explicitly requires the Member States to address this issue under the cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas. Article 102 further requests a strategy for the development of digital technologies in agriculture and rural areas and for the use of these technologies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the interventions. Such a proposal is therefore already covered in the Commission legal proposal.</p>
<p>Amendment 6</p> <p>Recital 14</p> <p>In order to foster a smart, <i>sustainable</i> and resilient agricultural sector <i>in all regions</i>, direct payments keep on constituting an essential part to guarantee a fair income support to farmers. Likewise, investments into modernisation, innovation, diversification and uptake of new technologies are necessary to improve <i>the resilience of farms and remuneration</i></p>	<p>Direct Payments play a key role in the sustainable agricultural sector by contributing to the EU's food security and to the common environmental and climate objectives (currently through cross-compliance and greening), and in the future through the proposed enhanced conditionality and the eco-schemes. The direct payments are available, by their nature, to all regions.</p> <p>The objectives of the common agricultural policy are of economic, social and</p>

<p><i>through the market.</i></p>	<p>climate/environmental nature. This coincides with the 3 dimensions of sustainable development. The inclusion of 'sustainable' is therefore acceptable.</p>
<p>Amendment 10</p> <p>Recital 20</p> <p><i>In order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN, in particular goals 1 and 2, and in keeping with the Union's policy coherence for development (PCD), the CAP should promote the development of sustainable and prosperous family farming in developing countries, which helps maintain rural populations and ensures the security of their food supplies. To this end, EU agricultural and food products should not be exported at a price lower than European production costs.</i></p>	<p>As outlined in the explanatory memorandum, the Commission consulted widely on the simplification and the modernisation of the common agricultural policy to maximise its contribution to the Commission's ten priorities and to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It should also be noted that, rather than addressing specific goals only, this is done by looking at the whole set of goals in a comprehensive and integrated manner which - beyond economic aspects - also embraces the other dimensions of the sustainability concept, notably environment/climate-related and social/societal aspects.</p>
<p>Amendment 12</p> <p>Recital 24</p> <p>Member States should set farm advisory services for the purpose of improving factor productivity, the sustainable management (...) on the sustainable use of plant protection products, as well as the initiatives to combat antimicrobial...</p>	<p>The idea of improving productivity is already expressed in the improvement of the 'overall performance of agricultural holdings and rural businesses, covering economic, environmental and social dimensions...'. Reference is made in the Recital to Directive 2009/128/EC, which is formulated as 'Community action to achieve the sustainable use of <u>pesticides</u>'.</p>
<p>Amendment 13</p> <p>Recital 27</p> <p>When providing decoupled direct support based on the system of payment entitlements, Member States should continue to manage a national reserve or reserves per group of territories. Such reserves should be used, as a matter of priority, for young farmers and farmers commencing their agricultural activity.</p>	<p>Entitlements are part of the assets available to farmers who are granted direct payments in Member States providing the basic support based on payment entitlements. Moreover, in order to fully respect the decoupled nature of the entitlements based system; the entitlements are not linked to a particular area. Therefore, genuine farmers may receive payment entitlements via transfer with or without land. Deviating from these principles would put at risk the entitlements based</p>

<p>Rules on the use and transfers of payment entitlements are also necessary in order to guarantee a smooth functioning of the system, <i>excluding a market for payment entitlements.</i></p>	<p>system and its decoupled nature.</p>
<p>Amendment 14</p> <p>Recital 28</p> <p>Small farms remain a cornerstone of Union agriculture as they play a vital role in supporting rural employment and contribute to territorial development. In order to promote a more balanced distribution of support and to reduce administrative burden for beneficiaries of small amounts <i>which support jobs</i>, (...)</p>	<p>It is for Member States to define small farmers in the context of the common agricultural policy post-2020. This specification would reduce their flexibility to fully take into account the actual needs identified thanks to the needs assessment and could unnecessarily complicate the management of the tool. In addition, the payment should remain fully decoupled from factors of production not to endanger the World Trade Organization green-box compatibility.</p>
<p>Amendment 17</p> <p>Recital 41</p> <p>(...) agro-forestry practices, the supply and saving of energy and water <i>and conservation of agricultural genetic resources</i>. In order to better ensure the consistency of the CAP Strategic Plans with Union objectives, <i>Such investment shall be capped per farm. The envelope earmarked for this mechanism shall be limited to 10% of the EAFRD funds allocated to the Member State concerned.</i></p>	<p>Biodiversity is covered through Art 6(f): <i>'contribute to the protection of biodiversity...'</i> The reference to the conservation of agricultural genetic resources is acceptable for the Commission.</p>
<p>Amendment 18</p> <p>Recital 44</p> <p>In the light of the need to ensure appropriate risk management tools, insurance premia and mutual funds should be maintained. The category of mutual funds encompasses both those linked to production losses, and the general and sector-specific income</p>	<p>The Commission proposed to make European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development funding of risk management measures mandatory for Member States with a view to encourage their deployment and thereby enhancing the tools at disposals for farmers to reply to income and production related risks. While being mandatory, this requirement provides for flexibility in terms of covered</p>

stabilisation tools, linked to income losses.

Reason: Financing through the EAFRD would require a corresponding increase in EAFRD resources.

risks and tools and does not specify any minimum budgetary expenditure. Member States will thus benefit from a large margin of manoeuvre to come up with instruments, which e.g. complement already existing tools or have innovative features.

It has also to be taken into account that Member States will be able to transfer up to 15% from direct payments to interventions funded in the framework of rural development (without the requirement of national co-financing).

The proposed switch from a compliance to a performance-centred policy implies that in future interventions and according financial allocations need to be in line with needs identified on the grounds of an evidence-based assessment. This applies independently of the amounts of budgetary envelopes at disposal which are subject to debate in the framework of the ongoing discussions on the multi-annual financial framework.

Amendment 19

Recital 56

In the process of development of their CAP Strategic Plans, Member States, *providing for their rural development plans to be drawn up at the most appropriate geographical level*, should analyse their specific situation and needs, set targets linked to the achievement of the objectives of the CAP and design the interventions which will allow reaching these targets, while being adapted to the national and specific regional contexts, including the outermost regions pursuant to Article 349 TFEU *and the most disadvantaged regions referred to in the third subparagraph of Article 174 TFEU.* (...)

The provisions of the Commission's proposal provide for the possibility to design and implement certain elements of the plans, such as rural development interventions, at regional level or at a more local level, when part of local development strategies. However, the possibility to have rural development plans in separation from the national common agricultural policy Strategic Plan would be contrary to the rational and contrary to simplification. As far as the most disadvantaged regions are concerned, Member States will have to include in their common agricultural policy plans an analysis of the specific needs of vulnerable geographical areas. This requirement addresses the proposed amendment.

<p>Amendment 20</p> <p>Article 4(1)(a) and (b)</p> <p><i>Definitions to be formulated in the CAP Strategic Plans</i></p> <p>1.(...) 'agricultural activity' shall be defined in a way that it includes both the production of agricultural products listed in Annex I to the TFEU, including cotton and agroforestry, and (...);</p> <p>... (ii) 'permanent crops' shall be non-rotational crops other than permanent grassland and permanent pasture that occupy the land for five years or more, which yield repeated harvests, including nurseries and short rotation coppice incorporated into the crops grown;</p>	<p>The issue of agroforestry is rather to be tackled with regard to the definition of agricultural area than agricultural activity. Member States have sufficient leeway to decide which non-productive features may be included in the eligible area. Land converted to agroforestry, including silvopastoral systems, may remain fully eligible if Member States so decide, provided that land complies with the definitions set by Member States in accordance with the EU requirements of agricultural area and eligible hectare.</p> <p>Such a restriction of the definition of the short rotation coppice is contrary to the policy intention. It will be for the Member States to set the definition of short rotation coppice. Therefore, the addition in the text to 'include/approve only those short rotation coppice which are 'incorporated into the crops grown' reduces the flexibility for Member States to define short rotation coppice according to the local specificities.</p>
<p>(iii) 'permanent grassland (...) can be grazed or produce animal feed provided that the grasses and other herbaceous forage are predominant; it may also be land which can be grazed and which forms part of established local practices where grasses and other herbaceous forage are traditionally not predominant in grazing areas or land which can be grazed where grasses and other herbaceous forage are not predominant or are absent in grazing areas.</p> <p><i>This status shall also apply to silvopastoral systems where herbaceous forage is not predominant but exploited by livestock, as is the case with dehesa systems and/or shrub and wooded pastures in mountain areas;</i></p>	<p>The policy intention is to provide Member States with flexibility in the definition of permanent grassland, including the flexibility provided by the 'Omnibus' regulation.</p> <p>Therefore, the definition of permanent grassland does not need to be further elaborated, as Member States can further define it according to the local specificities.</p>

<p>Amendment 21</p> <p>Article 4(1)(d)</p> <p>'genuine farmers' shall be defined in a way to ensure that no support is granted to those whose agricultural activity forms only an insignificant part of their overall economic activities or whose principal business activity is not agricultural, while not precluding from support pluri-active farmers. The definition shall allow to determine which farmers are not considered genuine farmers, based on conditions such as <i>share of income from agricultural production</i>, company object and/or inclusion in registers. <i>The definition must, in any event, preserve the family farming model of the European Union of an individual or group nature, in which the farmer works in agriculture and lives off it directly, and may take into account, if necessary, the special features of the regions defined in Article 349 TFEU.</i></p>	<p>For 'share of income' please see answer to amendment 2.</p> <p>Given the degree of subsidiarity in defining genuine farmers, a specific reference to the family farming model is unnecessary and, for some Member States, may even be inappropriate.</p>
<p>Amendment 22</p> <p>Article 5</p> <p>Support (...):</p> <p>(a) to foster a smart, resilient and diversified agricultural sector ensuring food security;</p> <p>(b) to bolster environmental care and climate action and to contribute to the environmental- and climate-related objectives of the Union;</p> <p>(c) to strengthen the socio-economic fabric of rural areas <i>with particular emphasis on pursuing a fair standard of living for agricultural communities, in accordance with Article 39(b) TFEU, paying particular consideration to rural areas affected by serious</i></p>	<p>As indicated in the Explanatory Memorandum, the Commission proposals are fully consistent with the Treaty objectives on common agricultural policy. Both the three <i>general</i> common agricultural policy objectives and the nine <i>specific</i> common agricultural policy objectives are in line with Article 39 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, thereby forming an integrated and coherent intervention logic. The Commission therefore sees no value added to recall Article 39 (or only parts thereof) separately.</p> <p>To 'improve the farmers' position in the value chain' is already mentioned as <i>specific</i> common agricultural policy objective (matched by according performance indicators); the <i>specific</i> common agricultural</p>

<p>depopulation problems.</p> <p>Those objectives shall be complemented by the cross-cutting objective of modernising the sector by fostering and sharing of knowledge, innovation and digitalisation in agriculture and rural areas, and encouraging their uptake. <i>It is also a question of fostering relations between the various actors in the food value chain, at the same time strengthening contractual relations and transparency in contractual relations, incorporating tools such as standardised observatories of prices and production costs.</i></p>	<p>policy objective aiming to ‘[...] facilitate business development in rural areas’ can also play a role in this context, as can Directive (EU) 2019/633 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on unfair trading practices in business-to-business relationships in the agricultural and food supply chain.</p>
<p>Amendment 23</p> <p>Article 6(1)</p> <p>Specific objectives</p> <p>1. The achievement of the general objectives shall be pursued through the following specific objectives:</p> <p>(a) support viable farm income, <i>comparable with those obtained across the whole of the economy</i>, and resilience across the Union to enhance food security;</p> <p>(b) enhance market orientation and increase <i>economic, social, environmental and territorial</i> competitiveness, including greater focus on research, technology and digitalisation <i>as well as agro-ecology and disseminating sustainable forms of production</i>;</p> <p>(c) <i>improve the productivity of production factors, including with a view to reducing the costs of the goods and services produced by the agricultural sector</i>;</p> <p>(d) improve farmers' position in the value chain;</p>	<p>The <i>specific</i> objectives list the nine main areas that need to be addressed by the Member States in their Strategic Plans, three <i>specific</i> objectives on economic aspects, three on environmental and climate aspects, and three on social aspects.</p> <p>The amendments in point 1.b and 1.c essentially blur the meaning of the <i>specific</i> objectives, making it difficult for the Member States to have a meaningful operationalisation in the Strategic Plans.</p> <p>The <i>specific</i> objectives remain at a general level to allow the Member States to design interventions that are appropriate for the local circumstances and needs.</p> <p>The amendments in points 1.a, 1.f, 1.h, and 1.i introduce obligations to address or at least consider specific sub-objectives or issues at EU level. This would go against the thrust of the proposal to give the Member States more subsidiarity. The text of the specific objectives proposed already covers some of the specific groups identified.</p> <p>At point (k): See comment to amendment 10. Moreover, Article 3 defines farmers and holdings covered by this draft regulation as</p>

<p>(e) contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as sustainable energy;</p> <p>(f) foster sustainable and efficient management of natural resources, <i>including agricultural genetic resources</i>, such as water, soil and air;</p> <p>(g) contribute to the protection of biodiversity, enhance ecosystem services and preserve habitats and landscapes;</p> <p>(h) attract young <i>and new</i> farmers, <i>especially in the most depopulated regions</i>, and facilitate business development in rural areas;</p> <p>(i) promote employment, growth, social inclusion, the participation of women in the rural economy and local development in rural areas, including bio-economy and sustainable forestry;</p> <p>(j) improve the response of EU agriculture to societal demands on food and health, including safe, nutritious and sustainable food, food waste, as well as animal welfare;</p> <p>(k) <i>encourage the development of sustainable family farming in developing countries in line with Goals 1 and 2 of the United Nations'</i></p>	<p>situated 'within the territorial scope of the Treaty'.</p>
<p>Amendment 24</p> <p>Article 8</p> <p><i>(...) and the regions when they are Managing Authorities, (...)</i></p>	<p>Change is not necessary.</p>
<p>Amendment 25</p> <p>Article 9</p> <p><i>Taking into account that the common agricultural policy is the basis for the agri-food sector economy and the economic and</i></p>	<p>The principle of subsidiarity as provided for under Article 5 Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union concerns the conferral on competences on the EU. As such, it has to be respected by the Union legislators. The text proposed refers, however, to the Member</p>

<p><i>social fabric of the rural environment of the EU, Member States, and the regions when they are Managing Authorities, shall design the interventions of their CAP Strategic Plans in accordance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the general principles of Union law, including the subsidiarity principle.(...)</i></p>	<p>States role within the common agricultural policy regulation and therefore imposes on Member States the responsibility to respect the principle of subsidiarity.</p>
<p>Amendment 26</p> <p>Article 11</p> <p>Member States ...</p> <p>public health, animal health and plant health;</p> <p>1. animal welfare;</p> <p>4. social: respect for the rights of agricultural employees.</p>	<p>See reply to Amendment 85.</p>
<p>Amendment 31</p> <p>Article 24(1)</p> <p>Except in the case of transfer by actual or anticipated inheritance, payment entitlements shall be transferred only to a genuine farmer and shall remain tied to the land.</p>	<p>Payment entitlements are, by definition, not tied to a specific land parcel. The amount of the payment is related to the value of the entitlements, thus 'de-linking' the payment per farmer from a specific area. This is the basis of the entitlements based system, which is decoupled from the production (see also reply to amendment 13).</p>
<p>Amendment 32</p> <p>Article 25</p> <p>Member States shall grant payments to small farmers as defined by Member States by way of a round sum, replacing direct payments under this Section and Section 3 of this Chapter. The amount of this round sum payment shall be set at a level sufficient to ensure the long-term viability of these farms. Member States shall establish criteria for identifying small farmers and design the corresponding intervention in the CAP Strategic Plan as</p>	<p>In line with the logic of the new delivery model, and further subsidiarity granted to the Member States, it is important that the Member States may choose whether to opt for granting direct payments to small farmers using a round sum payment, or via the 'standard' system of direct payments. Equally, when opting to implement the round sum payment, the Member States need to define the eligibility criteria in the Strategic Plan and this is to be done taking into account the needs assessment in view of the specific objectives listed in Article 6 of the strategic</p>

optional for the farmers.	plans Regulation.
<p>Amendment 33</p> <p>Article 28(6)</p> <p>Support for eco-schemes shall take the form of an annual payment per eligible hectare and it shall be granted as either:</p> <p>a) payments additional to the basic income support as set out in Subsection 2 of this Section; or</p> <p>payments <i>remunerating</i> beneficiaries <i>beyond</i> the additional costs incurred and income foregone as a result of the commitments as set pursuant to Article 65.</p>	<p>As Recital 31 states, the type of payments set in paragraph b) of Article 28(6) aims at compensating for the cost incurred and income foregone of the introduction of beneficial practices. For this type of payments going beyond the cost incurred and income foregone would not be compatible with the World Trade Organization's so-called 'green box' and would contradict the classification of direct payments in Article 14 of the proposal. The payments remunerating the public goods provided by beneficial practices, and not calculated on the basis of the cost incurred and income foregone are set in paragraph a).</p>
<p>Amendment 34</p> <p>Article 29</p> <p>1. Member States may grant coupled income support to genuine farmers under the conditions set out in this Subsection and as further specified in their CAP Strategic Plans.</p> <p>2. The Member States' interventions shall help the supported sectors and productions or specific types of farming therein listed in Article 30, with the following aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>preventing the cessation of farming in rural areas and boosting the EU's self-sufficiency in food, or</i> - addressing the difficulty or difficulties they undergo by improving their competitiveness, their sustainability or their quality. <p>Coupled income support shall take the form of an annual <i>capped</i> payment per hectare or animal.</p>	<p><u>AM to Art.29(2)</u>: Unnecessary.</p> <p>Coupled income support will aim at supporting sectors/types of farming that are important and undergo difficulties.</p> <p>Furthermore, the enhanced flexibility of coupled income support in comparison to the current coupled support regime will enable Member States to better tailor-make their interventions according to their local and specific needs.</p> <p>This will therefore contribute to help rural areas that are in need (e.g. due to high structural unemployment).</p> <p><u>AM to 29(3)</u>: Unnecessary. There are already several mechanisms and requirements that aim at limiting amounts to be paid under coupled income support:</p> <p>1/ a reduction of the amount of direct payments to be granted to a farmer (Article 15 of the common agricultural policy plan regulation proposal);</p> <p>2/ a strict budgetary limit, with a maximum 10 + 2% of the direct payments envelope that</p>

	<p>may be allocated to coupled income support (Article 86(5) of the proposal);</p> <p>3/ Member States will set the amount of support depending on the needs as part of their intervention strategy. They should also set a maximum amount of support per unit or a percentage of variation for each intervention (or each unit rate within an intervention where relevant), thus limiting the amount to be paid per hectare or animal under each coupled income support intervention (Article 89 of the proposal).</p>
<p>Amendment 35</p> <p>Article 30</p> <p>Coupled income support may only be granted to the following sectors and productions or specific types of farming therein where these are important for economic, social or environmental reasons: cereals, oilseeds <i>with the exception of agricultural biofuel crops</i>, protein crops, grain legumes, <i>forage legumes either alone or as a grass-legume mixture, grasslands</i>, flax, hemp, rice, nuts, milk and milk products, seeds, sheepmeat and goatmeat, beef and veal, <i>pork, poultry</i>, olive oil, silkworms, dried fodder, hops, sugar beet, cane and chicory, fruit and vegetables, <i>and short rotation coppice that is part of crop plots</i>.</p>	<p>In view of the limited resources available for granting coupled support and the need to ensure it is effective in helping the targeted sectors overcoming the identified difficulties, an extension of coupled income support to other sectors or productions was not deemed appropriate.</p> <p>The only exception concerns non-food crops (other than short-rotation coppice), that are used for the production of products that have the potential to substitute fossil materials (excluding trees). Such extension is justified by Europe 2020 Strategy, which calls for bio-economy as a key element for smart and green growth in Europe. It is also in line with the communication on the Future of food and farming²⁵ which highlights the importance of the bio-economy as a main source of income diversification for farmers. However, it has to be underlined that efforts have been made to allow Member States to better target and tailor-make the support to their local needs, so that it contributes to increase the competitiveness, the quality or the sustainability of the sectors. They will also benefit from an enhanced flexibility and subsidiarity when designing their</p>

²⁵ COM(2017) 713.

	interventions.
<p>Amendment 36</p> <p>Article 40</p> <p><i>...6. Member States may include interventions on crisis prevention and risk management in any sector in their strategic plans, for the purposes of preventing and dealing with crises in the sector. These objectives are linked to the specific objectives set out in Article 6(1)(a)(b) and (c). These measures shall facilitate the participation of producer, interbranch and cooperative organisations in the system.</i></p> <p><i>7. On the basis of a common guideline applicable to the whole of the European Union, Member States shall include in their strategic plans tools, such as standardised observatories of prices and production costs, which allow information on the development of the markets to be obtained.</i></p>	<p>The policy choice is to structure sectoral interventions around recognised producer organisations in their role of supply concentration. Member States can recognise different forms of farmers' cooperation as far as the recognition criteria set by the Regulation on common organisation of the markets in agricultural products²⁶ are met. Sectoral interventions in 'other sectors' are optional for Member States to decide, on the basis of their particular needs.</p> <p>Member States do not need Strategic Plans to set up market observatories. Such bodies already exist in a number of Member States.</p> <p>Crisis prevention and management measures are explicitly mentioned already in Articles 42 (fruit and vegetables), 56 (olives and olive oil) and 59 (other sectors). There is no need to single out specific measures in the general Article 40.</p> <p>The notion of 'cooperative organisation' is unclear.</p> <p>Measures to increase market transparency will be proposed by the Commission under its forthcoming market transparency initiative, there is no need to regulate this in Article 40.</p>
<p>Amendment 40</p> <p>Article 64</p> <p><i>d) investments to improve quality of life and public services in rural areas;</i></p>	<p>According the proposal, investments targeting the improvement of quality of life and public services can already be supported under article 68 (e.g. public infrastructures, public care, roads, IT facilities, etc.).</p>
<p>Amendment 41</p> <p>Article 65(6)</p>	<p>The support under Article 65 is granted for carrying out management commitments and is calculated based on the principle of</p>

²⁶ Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 671–854.

<p>Member States shall compensate beneficiaries <i>beyond</i> costs incurred and income foregone resulting from the commitments made. Where necessary, they may also cover transaction costs. In duly justified cases, Member States may grant support as a flat-rate or as a one-off payment per unit. Payments shall be granted annually.</p>	<p>compensating cost incurred and income foregone resulting from those commitments. This principle allows classifying the support for management commitments as compatible with World Trade Organization rules. The rules on the possibility to grant transaction costs and on the fact that the principle of cost incurred and income foregone allows taking account of the targets to be achieved and provides some flexibility.</p>
<p>Amendment 42 Article 68(2)</p> <p>6. Support to the forestry sector shall be based on a forest management plan or equivalent instrument. <i>The grant of support shall be conditional on the predicted (ex-ante) environmental effects derived from an environmental impact assessment.</i></p>	<p>Forestry Management Plans provide significant safeguards as regards the environmentally sustainable management of forests. Any other additional administrative layer for granting European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development support the sector (and not already foreseen under national or European environmental legislation) would add considerable red-tape for beneficiaries.</p>
<p>Amendment 43 Article 68(3)</p> <p>(g) investments in large infrastructures not being part of <i>regional and</i> local development strategies;</p>	<p>The proposed amendment would risk introducing overlaps and financial competition between different Funds of the Union.</p>
<p>Amendment 44 Article 71 LEADER</p> <p><i>1. Member States shall grant support for the LEADER initiative, referred to as community-led local development in Article 25 of Regulation (EU) [CPR]. Member States, through the EAFRD, may grant support for measures contributing to one or more of the objectives laid down in Article 6, including outside the scope of the options set down in Chapter IV, Section 1. The decision to approve a local development strategy also implies approval</i></p>	<p>The obligatory allocation to LEADER has been already addressed in Article 86(1) of the proposed common agricultural policy Strategic Plan regulation. Support to rural development has been defined broadly to ensure minimum common conditions for support, whilst leaving the necessary leeway to the Member States to design tools that contribute best to the objectives of their Strategic Plans. Giving a full discretion to the Member States as to the scope of support would water down the common aspect of the common agricultural policy.</p> <p>The roles of the local action groups and managing authorities, including selecting</p>

<p><i>of the measures comprising that strategy.</i></p>	<p>operations, are spelled out in the legislative proposals (Article 27(1)(3) of Common Provision Regulation and 73(2) common agricultural policy Plan regulation). The clarification proposed is thus redundant.</p>
<p>Amendment 45 Article 71(1) and (5)</p> <p>1. Member States may grant support for cooperation under the conditions set out in this Article and as further specified in their CAP Strategic Plans to prepare and to implement Operational Group projects of the European Innovation Partnership for agricultural productivity and sustainability as referred to in Article 114 and local development <i>in the framework of LEADER</i>, and to promote quality schemes, producer organisations or producer groups or other forms of cooperation. [...]</p>	<p>The legislative proposal refers already to LEADER and community-led local development.</p>
<p>Amendment 46 Article 74(5)</p> <p>a) payments to, or for the benefit of, final recipients, in the case of loans, equity and quasi-equity investments. <i>Moreover, payments to final recipients may only be taken into account as working capital in the case of farmers who are affected by extreme adverse weather and/or market price crises;</i></p>	<p>Linking eligibility of working capital to specific crisis situations will increase administrative red tape for the implementation of financial instruments. It may exceed the competence of financial institutions to assess these cases and may increase the errors and consequently the risk of and recoveries under the FIs. Furthermore, this provision would be in contradiction with Article 74(3) where working capital is added as eligible expenditure with limitations in the amount.</p>
<p>Amendment 47 Article 85(2)</p> <p><i>e) the above rates shall be increased by at least ten percentage points in regions with serious depopulation problems.</i></p>	<p>The aim of the proposal is to reduce the number of different co-financing rates in order to make the policy implementation simpler. Specific rates are proposed for example for environmental and climate related measures where the EU co-financing is increased to 80%.</p>

<p>Amendment 48</p> <p>Article 86(2)</p> <p>At least 30% of the total EAFRD contribution to the CAP Strategic Plan as set out in Annex IX shall be reserved for interventions addressing the specific environmental- and climate-related objectives set out in points (d), (e) and (f) of Article 6(1) of this Regulation, excluding interventions based on Article 66, <i>and risk management tools (Article 70) and support for investments (Article 68)</i>.</p>	<p>Member States in the Common Agricultural Policy Plans decide about the choice and nature of interventions which they will subsequently consider as contributing to achieving given objectives and targets. By their very nature, only certain interventions will qualify as contributing to the specific objectives (d), (e) and (f) while the other will help achieve other objectives. With the exception of the interventions referred to in Art.66, Member States will have flexibility to decide which other interventions are of relevance to count towards 30%. For example, non-productive investments supporting agri-environmental management commitments could well qualify for such expenditure.</p>
<p>Amendment 49</p> <p>Article 86(5)</p> <p>.....By way of derogation from the first subparagraph, Member States that in accordance with Article 53(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 used for the purpose of voluntary coupled support more than 13% of their annual national ceiling set out in Annex II to that Regulation, may decide to use for the purpose of coupled support more than 13% of the amount set out in Annex VII. The resulting percentage shall not exceed the percentage approved by the Commission for voluntary coupled support in respect of claim year 2018.</p> <p>The percentage referred to in the first subparagraph, may be increased by a maximum of 2%, provided that the amount corresponding to the percentage exceeding the 13% is allocated to the support for protein crops, <i>including legumes</i>, under Subsection 1 of Section 2 of Chapter II of Title III.</p>	<p>Coupled support plays an important role and is a useful tool to prevent abandonment of sectors or productions in difficulties. It has therefore legitimate grounds to exist in the future Common Agricultural Policy, in the form of coupled income support. However, due to a potential risk of market distortion, the application of the tool should remain limited, well targeted and complement the basic income support only where justified and as long as necessary. This is the reason why a budgetary share higher than 10+2% was not deemed appropriate. Such limit also appeared a fair and balanced compromise between the current baseline ceiling (i.e. 8(+2%)) and the increased possibilities under certain condition (i.e. 13(+2%)). It also roughly corresponds to the current average use of VCS (i.e. 9(+1)).</p> <p>Legumes, such as soybean may benefit from the additional (up to 2%) financing in accordance with Art. 86(5). But it is worth also clarifying that soybean is one of the three oilseed crops covered by the Blair House agreement. Therefore, those soybean area that</p>

<p>The amount included in the approved CAP Strategic Plan resulting from the application ...</p>	<p>benefit from Couple Income Support shall always be considered as a 'Blair House oilseed crop', regardless of the financing of their Couple Income Support (e.g. from the additional up to 2%) or the actual final use of the product (i.e. as protein crop or as oilseed). The Blair House agreement is part of the EU World Trade Organization schedule for domestic support.</p>
<p>Amendment 50 Article 86 [...]</p>	<p>The new delivery model leaves a wide margin of subsidiarity to Member States on how to set out their intervention strategy in order to achieve their Common Agricultural Policy objectives. Member States will be best placed to design the most balanced intervention strategy, according to their specific situation, needs and constraints.</p> <p>No specific percentages are laid down for the different types of interventions as the funds allocated to each intervention shall depend on the needs assessment based on the SWOT (strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats) analysis.</p>
<p>Amendment 51 Article 90(1) <i>(b) up to 15% of the Member State's allocation for EAFRD in financial years 2022 – 2027 to the Member State's allocation for direct payments set out in Annex IV for calendar years 2021 to 2026.</i></p>	<p>One of the core elements of the Common Agricultural Policy proposal for the period post 2020 is the increased flexibility for Member States to design their policy tailored to the local conditions via the so-called new delivery model. Reducing the flexibility by not allowing shifting of funds from Rural development to Direct payments would contradict the proposed flexibility and represents, moreover, a step back compared to the current situation.</p>
<p>Amendment 52 Article 91 (...)To reach these targets Member States shall <i>draw up rural development programmes established at the most appropriate geographical level, at least in</i></p>	<p>See reply to amendment 19 and amendment 54 on Article 93.</p>

<p><i>the outermost regions, ...</i></p>	
<p>Amendment 53 Article 102 Modernisation The description of the elements that ensure modernisation of the CAP referred to in point (g) of Article 95(1), <i>as well as the agro-ecological transition, (...) to fostering and sharing of knowledge, agricultural knowhow, technical and social (...)</i></p>	<p>There is no need to mention specifically agricultural knowhow or technical and social innovation either. These concepts are already covered in the current drafting of Article 53.</p>
<p>Amendment 54 Article 93 Each Member State shall establish a single CAP Strategic Plan for its entire territory. Where elements of the CAP Strategic Plan are established at regional level <i>or implemented through regional rural development programmes, (...)</i></p>	<p>See reply to amendment 19 The Commission proposal does not foresee as such the establishment of regional rural development programs but it allows Member States to delegate the design and implementation of elements of the Plan at regional level, as long as the coherence and consistency with the elements established at national level is ensured.</p>
<p>Amendment 55 Article 95(1) <i>... where appropriate, the list of regional rural development programmes.</i></p>	<p>See reply to amendment 19. In line with Article 97, where applicable, Member States will have to describe the interplay between national and regional interventions, including the distribution of financial allocations per intervention and fund.</p>
<p>Amendment 56 Article 106 Approval of the CAP Strategic Plan, <i>including, where appropriate, the regional rural development programmes...</i> Amendment 57 Article 107 Approval of the CAP Strategic Plan – <i>including, where appropriate, the regional rural development programmes (...)</i></p>	<p>See replies to the amendment 54 on Article 93 and to amendments 19 and 55.</p>

<p>Amendment 58</p> <p>Article 110</p> <p>Member States shall designate <i>one or more</i> Managing <i>Authorities</i> for <i>the implementation of the</i> CAP Strategic Plans – <i>including, where appropriate, the regional rural development programmes.</i></p> <p>Member States shall ensure that (...)</p> <p>Amendment 59</p> <p>Article 111</p> <p>The Member State <i>and the regional Managing Authorities</i> shall set up a committee to monitor implementation of the CAP Strategic Plan ('Monitoring Committee') before the submission of the CAP Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>In line with the new delivery model and for reasons of simplification, a single Managing Authority is proposed. However, the Managing Authority may designate one or more intermediate bodies, including regional authorities to implement regional aspects of Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plans.</p>
<p>Amendment 60</p> <p>Article 114</p> <p><i>Monitoring performance</i></p> <p><i>1. Member States may establish intermediary two-yearly performance targets under the CAP Strategic Plan by way of derogation from Article 115(1)(b) of this Regulation and monitor them with the same frequency in the performance reports for the years in which the targets must be met.</i></p>	<p>The setting of milestones will permit to capture how Member States are progressing with their implementation of plans towards their targets. In the context of the new performance-based policy, it is essential to be able to timely detect deviations from the agreed results in order to handle implementation weaknesses at the earliest stage possible. This is the reason why annual milestones are indispensable: an appropriate and efficient follow-up on the performance of the Common Agricultural Policy strategic plan is only possible with annual milestones.</p>
<p>Amendment 61</p> <p><i>1.1.1 Climate change: 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture in the Member State</i></p>	<p>Effort Sharing Regulation stipulates individual targets for Member States but not for the individual sectors.</p>
<p>Amendment 62</p> <p><i>Environment, food: Doubling compared with 2017 of the land area used for organic farming in the Member State, or at least</i></p>	<p>The growth of the organic sector in Europe is sustained by the market, with specific conditions in each Member State. A single target for all Member States may not be</p>

<p>30% of the utilised agricultural area of the Member State.</p>	<p>appropriate.</p> <p>Following the new delivery model of the Common Agricultural Policy, the one-size-fits-all approach is replaced by a more flexible system that gives greater flexibility to Member States about how to meet their targets.</p> <p>It is to the Member States to fix their own targets on the basis of a SWOT analysis and a needs assessment when establishing their Common Agricultural Policy strategic plan.</p>
<p>Amendment 63</p> <p><i>Biodiversity, health: minimum 30% reduction compared with 2017 in the use of chemical pesticides in the Member State</i></p>	<p>It is to the Member States to fix their own targets on the basis of a SWOT analysis and a needs assessment when establishing their Common Agricultural Policy strategic plan.</p> <p>The reduction in the use of chemical pesticides is a strong societal expectation and a necessity for the environment, especially for preserving biodiversity.</p>
<p>Amendment 64</p> <p><i>Water: 100% of surface water and groundwater to respect the Nitrates Directive, without exemptions, in the Member State</i></p>	<p>The Nitrates Directive applies at farm level and not at region level, so this requirement is not feasible.</p> <p>The Commission follows closely the implementation of the Nitrates Directive to ensure that its objectives are met. The Common Agricultural Policy supports the implementation of the Nitrates Directive through different ways. The Nitrates Directive is part of the conditionality; voluntary measures linked to the Nitrates Directive (code of good agricultural practices outside nitrate the vulnerable zones) are supported by the Common Agricultural Policy.</p>
<p>Amendment 71</p> <p>Annex I – Impact indicators R.13a</p> <p><i>R.13a: reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of crops: share of farms having reduced their synthetic nitrogenous fertiliser use by at least 50%.</i></p>	<p>It is to the Member States to fix their own targets on the basis of a SWOT analysis and a needs assessment when establishing their Common Agricultural Policy strategic plan.</p>

<p>Amendment 73</p> <p>Annex I - EU Specific objectives</p> <p>Foster sustainable management of natural resources such as water, soil and air;</p> <p>Amendment 86</p> <p>Annex XII – Objectives O.13 and R.4</p> <p>Foster sustainable <i>development and efficient</i> (...) management of natural resources such as water, soil and air;</p>	<p>The term 'efficient' has to be kept, as the sustainable management of resources should be done in the most cost-effective way.</p> <p>On 'development': the deletion would not make much of a difference and could therefore be acceptable.</p>
<p>Amendment 74</p> <p>Annex I – Impact indicators I.16</p> <p>Reducing nutrient leakage: Nitrate in <i>surface and</i> ground water</p> <p>Percentage of <i>surface and</i> ground water stations with N concentration over 50 mg/l as per the Nitrate directive</p> <p><i>Percentage of surface and ground water respecting the Nitrates Directive</i></p>	<p>The Commission report on the implementation of the Nitrate Directive 2012-2015 shows that for nearly all Member States there were issues with data availability, quality and completeness and consistency. Moreover, 'I.15 Improving water quality: Gross nutrient balance on agricultural land' provides already an overall information of nutrient surplus affecting surface water.</p>
<p>Amendment 75</p> <p>Annex I – Impact indicators I.16a</p> <p>Reducing the use of mineral and synthetic fertilisers: sale of mineral and synthetic fertilisers</p>	<p>No obligation on targets is stemming from the new legislation. It is to the Member States to establish their targets after a SWOT analysis.</p> <p>Furthermore, fertilizers have different compositions in N, P, K. The absolute amounts (kg) of fertilizers sold are therefore not meaningful.</p> <p>The nutrients are covered with I.15.</p>
<p>Amendment 76</p> <p>Annex I – Result indicators R.18</p> <p>Improving soils: Share of agricultural land under management commitments beneficial for soil <i>improvement</i></p>	<p>'Soil management' should be kept, as it goes beyond 'soil improvement'.</p>
<p>Amendment 77</p>	<p>Even if Member States will then be asked to define what 'sustainable' nutrient management</p>

<p>Annex I – Result indicators R.21</p> <p>Share of agricultural land under commitments related to <i>sustainable</i> nutrient management</p>	<p>is.</p>
<p>Amendment 78</p> <p>Annex I – Result indicators R.21a</p> <p><i>R.21a Reducing the use of organic, mineral and synthetic fertilisers: Share of agricultural land covered by specific measures resulting in reduced use of fertilisers</i></p>	<p>Although not an indicator, the new Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC) 5 will further help optimizing the use of nutrients.</p>
<p>Amendment 79</p> <p>Annex I – Result indicators R.25</p> <p>R.25 Supporting sustainable forest management: Share of forest land under management commitments to support <i>sustainable</i> forest protection and management.</p>	<p>The title of R.25, '<i>Supporting sustainable forest management</i>' already provides a frame for the indicator, no need for repeating the word '<i>sustainable</i>'.</p>
<p>Amendment 82</p> <p>Annex III – Requirements and standards – GAEC 1</p> <p>Maintenance of permanent grassland <i>by each farm, with a maximum conversion rate of 5 to 10% per farm, with the exception of "sensitive" grassland with high biodiversity</i></p>	<p>As compared to the Commission proposal, the amendment would considerably limit the flexibility left to adapt the rule to the various situations by imposing a requirement at farm level.</p>
<p>Amendment 85</p> <p>Annex III – Requirements and standards – GAEC (new)</p> <p><i>Compliance by the farmer with national social legislation relating to the rights of agricultural employees</i></p> <p>Amendment 89</p> <p>Recital 55</p> <p>Conditionality is an important element of the</p>	<p>As regards the national legislation, only the legislation stemming in the EU legislation can be taken into account in the context of conditionality, for the sake of a common level-playing field. Against this background any requirement can only take the form of a Statutory Management Requirement (SMR), not a new Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition standard, and the proposal does not make reference to any</p>

CAP, (...)	relevant EU legislation.
<p>Amendment 88</p> <p>Recital 30</p> <p>As regards the multi-annual performance monitoring the Commission should also have the power to suspend payments. Accordingly in cases of delayed or insufficient progress towards <i>common European objectives and</i> targets, set out in the national CAP Strategic Plan, (...)</p>	<p>The targets will be set by the Member States on the basis of results indicators in relation to Common Agricultural Policy common specific objectives. For that reason there is no need to mention common European objectives under Recital 30.</p>
<p>Amendment 92</p> <p>New recital after recital 38</p> <p><i>In view of the increasingly weak position of producers in the food supply chain, there is a need for a framework that reconciles the CAP and competition policy, in accordance with Article 42 of the Treaty concerning the primacy of CAP objectives.</i></p>	<p>The Common Market Organisation (CMO) has chosen its approach to the application of the competition rules in Article 206 of the CMO Regulation, which strikes a balance for applying the competition rules to the agricultural sector while at the same time allowing for certain derogations from the competition rules. These derogations e.g. take into account the need for cooperation in the agricultural sector with a view to strengthen the bargaining position of agricultural producers. There is no need for a new framework.</p>
<p>Amendment 94</p> <p>New recital after recital 38</p> <p><i>Given the increasing fluctuations in agricultural markets and the imbalances between producers, processors and distributors in the division of added value, (...)</i></p>	<p>Measures to increase market transparency will be proposed by the Commission under its forthcoming market transparency initiative.</p> <p>The current rules provide for sufficient flexibility for the Commission to react to market disturbance in an adequate manner for each situation. The amendment ('will implement') ties the Commission without any such flexibility. It is also not clear whether instead of 'production regulation', market regulation is meant, as probably the products have been produced already.</p>
<p>Amendment 97</p> <p>Article 152(1)a</p>	<p>Derogation from competition rules is the very purpose of Article 152(1)a. Taking out the introductory words would make this article</p>

<p>Producer organisations</p> <p><i>By way of derogation from Article 101(1) TFEU, a producer organisation recognised under paragraph 1 of this Article may plan production, optimise the production costs, place on the market and negotiate contracts for the supply of agricultural products, on behalf of its members for all or part of their total production.</i></p> <p>Amendment 98</p> <p>Article 209(1)</p> <p>Article 101(1) TFEU shall not apply to agreements, (...)</p> <p><i>This paragraph shall not apply to agreements, decisions and concerted practices which entail an obligation to charge an identical price or by which competition is excluded.</i></p>	<p>simple declaratory in terms of what a recognised producer organisation can do but it would no longer provide a safe harbour for the listed activities.</p> <p>The deleted passage provides clarity for producers that working together under the conditions of Article 152 of the common market organisation Regulation shields them from the application of Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.</p> <p>When derogating from competition rules to achieve the Common Agricultural Policy's objectives, a safeguard is maintained to avoid hard-core anti-competitive behaviour, in particular charging an identical price and excluding competition.</p>
<p>Amendment 100</p> <p>Insert a new paragraph after Article 219(4)</p> <p>(...)</p>	<p>The proposal is to enshrine in the Regulation on the common market organisation (CMO) the milk production reduction scheme that was operated in 2016 and provide for such a scheme for all agricultural sectors. As that particular example has shown, the common market organisation allows such a scheme to be designed with its current wording. This was done for the milk sector in the milk crisis and can be done for any other agricultural sector covered by the common market organisation, where deemed appropriate.</p> <p>The legislation in force provides the necessary flexibility for the Commission to act adequately to the market situations.</p>
<p>Amendment 102</p> <p>Article 226</p> <p>Crisis Management Plan (...)</p>	<p>The proposal is to mirror the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan approach for the Commission to exercise its powers with regard to crisis management. Crises are by definition unexpected. If they were foreseeable, measures would be taken to</p>

	<p>prevent them from happening. Crises do not fit the concept of programming over a 7-year period. The Commission manages crises as they emerge and reports to the other institutions whenever needed.</p> <p>Current practice working under the necessary flexibility. It is not adequate to define – as would be necessary under the proposed amendment – to define and categorise crisis situations. Experience shows that when crisis occur, they often do not fit at all or not to a sufficient degree the crisis models drawn up by legislation.</p>
<p>Amendment 103</p> <p>Article 4</p> <p>(...)</p> <p>in the French overseas departments: EUR 278 410 000</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Azores and Madeira: EUR 106 210 000 – Canary Islands: EUR 268 420 000 <p>3. The sums for each financial year to finance the measures provided for in Chapter III</p> <p>may not exceed the following amounts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – in the French overseas departments: EUR 26 900 000 – Azores and Madeira: EUR 21 200 000 – Canary Islands: EUR 72 700 000 (...) 	<p>The proposal on multi-annual financial framework for 2021-2027 allocates EUR 365 billion to the Common Agricultural Policy. In the absence of an increase of this amount, an increase in one policy area, like European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) financed support for the outermost regions, automatically implies a reduction for other agricultural policy domains.</p> <p>The Commission is open to working constructively with the co-legislators to resolve the concerns of our Programme of Options Specifically Relating to Remoteness and Insularity (POSEI) partners and to respond to these concerns in the context of the 2021-2027 discussions on the multi-annual financial framework for 2021-2027.</p>

Martinez de Antonana Lourdes

From: Partoune Andrea on behalf of Burianek Jiri
Sent: mardi, 30 juillet, 2019 09:28
To: adonis
Cc: Dunare Christina-Melania
Subject: FW: Ares(2019)4948739 - Suivi des avis du Comité européen des Régions - session plénière de février 2019
Attachments: Cover note follow up CoR February 2019 draft.pdf; Follow-up report CoR_February 2019.pdf

Dear colleagues,
Could you please register

Thank you and kind regards,
Andrea

-----Original Message-----

From: KRECISZ Katarzyna(SG) <katarzyna.krecisz@ec.europa.eu>
Sent: lundi 29 juillet 2019 14:23
To: Burianek Jiri <Jiri.Burianek@cor.europa.eu>
Subject: Ares(2019)4948739 - Suivi des avis du Comité européen des Régions - session plénière de février 2019

Please find attached document Ares(2019)4948739 from FORTI Enrico (SG.DSG3.G) dated 29/07/2019.

Veuillez trouver ci-joint le document Ares(2019)4948739 de FORTI Enrico (SG.DSG3.G) daté du 29/07/2019.