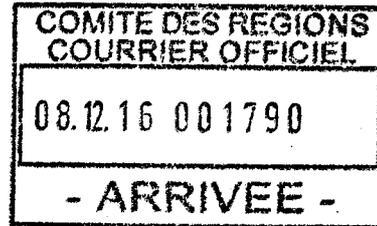


**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**  
SECRETARIAT-GENERAL

**Direction F – Relations with other Institutions**  
**SG.F.3 - National Parliaments, Consultative Committees, Ombudsman**

Brussels, 1 June 2016  
SG F3/ESZ/



Dear Secretary General,

In conformity with the Protocol on Cooperation between the Commission and the Committee of the Regions, I am pleased to send you the follow-up given by the Commission to the opinions adopted by the Committee of the Regions during the plenary session of December 2015.

Yours faithfully,

*[signed]*  
Pascal LEARDINI  
Director

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

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

**COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**PLENARY SESSION OF DECEMBER 2015**

**67<sup>th</sup> REPORT**

N°	TITLE	REFERENCES
<b>REGIO</b>		
1.	<b>Territorial Vision 2050: What future?</b>  Rapporteur: Mr Oldřich Vlasák (Councillor of the City of Hradec Králové, CZ/ECR)	COR-2015-04285-00-00-PAC-TRA  COTER-VI/008  Luxembourg Presidency referral
<b>TAXUD</b>		
2.	<b>A fair and efficient corporate tax system in the European Union</b>  Rapporteur: Mr Jean-Luc Vanraes (Member of Uccle Municipal Council and President of the Public Welfare Centre, OCMW/CPAS, BE/ALDE)	COM(2015) 302 final  COR-2015-03865-00-00-PAC-TRA  ECON-VI/006  Own-initiative opinion
<b>ENER</b>		
3.  co lead CLIMA	<b>The future of the Covenant of Mayors</b>  Rapporteur: Ms Kata Tüttö (Representative of Local Government of District 12 of Budapest, HU/PES)	COR-2015-02592-00-00-PAC-TRA  ENVE-VI/006  Own-initiative opinion
<b>HOME</b>		
4.	<b>European Agenda on Migration</b>  Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions  Rapporteur: Mr François Decoster (Member of Nord-Pas-de-Calais Regional Council, FR/ALDE)	COM (2015) 240 final  COR-2015-02607-00-00-PAC-TRA  CIVEX-VI/006  Own-initiative opinion

<b>EMPL</b>		
<b>5.</b>	<b>Standards of remuneration in employment in the EU</b>  Rapporteur: Mr Mick Antoniw (Assembly Member for Pontypridd, UK/PES)	COR-2015-01689-00-01-PAC-TRA  SEDEC-VI/002  Own-initiative opinion
<b>GROW</b>		
<b>6.</b>  <b>co-lead EMPL</b>	<b>The role of the social economy in restoring economic growth and combating unemployment</b>  Rapporteur: Mr Luís Gomes (Leader of Vila Real de Santo António Municipal Council, PT/EPP)	COR-2015-01691-00-01-PAC-TRA  SEDEC-VI/004  Own-initiative opinion
<b>7.</b>	<b>The local and regional dimension of the sharing economy</b>  Rapporteur: Ms Benedetta Brighenti (Vice-Mayor of Castelnuovo Rangone, Province of Modena, IT/PES)	COR-2015-02698-00-00-PAC-TRA  ECON-VI/005  Own-initiative opinion
<b>TRADE</b>		
<b>8.</b>	<b>The local and regional dimension of the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA)</b>  Rapporteur: Mr Helmuth Markov (Member of the Brandenburg Regional Government, Minister for Justice, Europe and Consumer Protection, DE/PES)	COR-2015-02700-00-00-PAC-TRA  ECON-VI/003  Own-initiative opinion
<b>ENV</b>		
<b>9.</b>	<b>Contribution to the fitness check on the EU Birds and Habitats Directives</b>  Rapporteur: <b>Mr Roby Biwer</b> (Member of Bettembourg Municipal Council, LU/PES)	COR-2015-02624-00-00-PAC-TRA  ENVE-VI/005  Own-initiative opinion

<p><b>N°1 Territorial Vision 2050: What future? (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>COR 2015/4285 – COTER-VI/008</b>  <b>115<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - December 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Oldřich VLASÁK (ECR/ CZ)</b>  <b>DG REGIO - Commissioner CREȚU</b></p>	
Points of the CoR opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>4. The Committee of the Regions calls for a broad Europe-wide consultation on the future territorial vision of the European Union, building on the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (COM(2008) 616 final) and reiterates its call for a White Paper on Territorial Cohesion, which could be used as a building block for other EU policies with a stronger territorial dimension already in the next post-2020 programming period.</p>	<p>The Fifth Cohesion Report responded to the consultation launched through the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion. Therefore, no White Paper is foreseen.</p>
<p>7. The CoR believes that a clear European territorial vision is necessary in order to respond effectively to current and future trends and challenges and that it should strengthen the territorial dimension in policy-making, inter alia by applying the place-based approach.</p>	<p>The Commission's Better Regulation included territorial impact assessments in its toolbox as part of the impact assessments. This ensures that the territorial dimension is taken into account in policy making whenever significant.</p>
<p>12. The CoR notes that while the place-based approach is often discussed in the EU institutions, it is not yet fully implemented everywhere at EU and Member State level. The CoR reiterates its firm belief that the place-based approach of EU policies will bring the best results as the policies will be adapted to specific local conditions, and as such will more effectively address the challenges of the regions, cities and municipalities, thereby reducing the differences between their levels of development.</p>	<p>The Commission acknowledges the importance of a place-based approach and supports its development through cohesion policy and the ESI Funds, including the new territorial instruments (ITI, CLLD).</p>
<p>16. The CoR notes that since the 2009</p>	<p>The Commission is committed to exploring indicators that complement GDP at the</p>

<p>debate on "GDP and Beyond", the available data at the EU level has significantly increased and there is a need to explore other indicators that complement GDP when measuring progress, in particular at the level of EU regions and cities in completing EU objectives.</p>	<p>regional and urban level. The work on the Europe 2020 index (Regional Focus 1/2015) is an example of how progress can be measured at regional and urban level. It measures the distance to the 2020 targets at national, regional and urban levels. These measures will be updated annually and can help identify policy priorities for different regions and types of territories.<sup>1</sup></p>
<p>17. The CoR stresses that the majority of EU policies have a regional and local dimension which can be assessed through a Territorial Impact Assessment (TIA) and should be taken into account when these policies are being designed and revised. The CoR started the pilot phase of its TIA Strategy in 2014 on selected files, during which different methodologies and approaches were tested. It strongly welcomes the fact that, following the Better Regulation Package published on 19 May 2015, the Commission will be using TIAs as one element of impact assessment. In line with the above, the CoR therefore stresses the role of the EU urban agenda – with particular reference to internal areas – and the overriding importance of implementing it for the development of regions. The CoR refers to its opinion "Towards an Integrated Urban Agenda for the EU" (25 June 2014), highlighting the proposal therein for a white paper on an integrated urban policy. Finally, the CoR emphasises that it agrees with the statement of the Commission which announced concrete steps towards adopting the EU Urban Agenda, for which EUR 80</p>	<p>One of the main objectives of the EU Urban Agenda is to reflect urban needs and to avoid potential bottlenecks for authorities responsible for urban areas. In line with the Staff Working Document on the Results of the Public Consultation on the Key Features of an EU Urban Agenda<sup>2</sup>, the Commission will continue the methodological development of Territorial Impact Assessment, as part of the impact assessments, and support specific assessment of urban impacts where relevant. In this context, the Commission services may ask for support from the Committee of the Regions in preparing its impact assessments.</p> <p>The Commission has launched the first call of the Urban Innovative Actions<sup>3</sup> with a budget of EUR 80 million of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), in which the proposed themes are linked to those of the Urban Agenda.</p>

<sup>1</sup> For more information see: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/information/publications/regional-focus/2015/the-europe-2020-index-the-progress-of-eu-countries-regions-and-cities-to-the-2020-targets](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/regional-focus/2015/the-europe-2020-index-the-progress-of-eu-countries-regions-and-cities-to-the-2020-targets)

<sup>2</sup> Commission Staff Working Document 109 final of 22/5/2015 on "Results of the public consultation on the key features of an EU Urban Agenda".

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.uia-initiative.eu/>.

<p>billion of the EU budget would be allocated. It calls on the Commission to build on the CoR's experiences.</p>	
<p>20. The CoR and the Commission are currently working on an Urban Impact Assessment pilot project which should be further developed in the future and could serve as a valuable tool for assessing these effects which would result in better law-making. It also underlines that the Committee of the Regions has been calling for EU policies to better take into account the accumulative impact of small and medium-sized towns and cities.</p>	<p><i>Please see above.</i></p> <p>The Better Regulation guidelines, approved on 19 May 2015, describes that all potential impacts - positive or negative - should be analysed according to their likely magnitude and affected parties should be mapped out. These parties can include different territories and regions (less developed or prosperous regions, cities, rural areas, border regions, overseas territories etc.).</p> <p>The Commission continues to investigate new sources of urban data including remote sensing and big data.</p>
<p>24. The CoR requests that Member States and the European Union invest considerably more resources to acquire the missing statistical data, reflecting various territorial challenges and strongly develop data collection at the lowest administrative level. This is particularly important in those countries where Eurostat territorial units do not really reflect real geographies at local or regional level. Without a complete and evolving picture of the European Union's regions, it is not possible to create effective policies that address the challenges they face. The CoR recalls that in the new Structural Funds Regulations, there is a Thematic Objective 11 of the Structural Funds that is precisely available for funding investments in developing better data at local and regional level, but that is regrettably little used for that purpose so far. At the</p>	<p>The Commission will continue to invest in collecting missing territorial data, including at the sub-NUTS<sup>4</sup>-3 level.</p> <p>The Urban Agenda aims to strengthen the urban knowledge base and knowledge exchange, and to ensure comparable and reliable data to support evidence-based urban policy making.</p>

<sup>4</sup> NUTS = Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics.

<p>same time, the CoR reiterates the need to decrease the administrative burden on various stakeholders, including local and regional authorities, by developing suitable tools to enable collection of statistical data and reporting to be made more rigorously and selectively systematic, in order to streamline processing. It is important to ensure that the resources available under thematic objective 11 are widely known.</p>	
<p>33. In policy areas in which competencies lie at the European level, a territorial dimension must be considered systematically. In this respect, the CoR welcomes the Commission's Better Regulation initiative and agrees that "applying the principles of better regulation will ensure that measures are evidence-based, well designed and deliver tangible and sustainable benefits for citizens, business and society as a whole ". The CoR is particularly pleased that the Better Regulations initiative takes up key principles outlined in its charter for multi-level governance in Europe.</p>	<p><i>Please see comments under points 17 and 20.</i></p>
<p>37. Cohesion Policy should ensure coherence of local and regional plans with European objectives. Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes are the main instruments in this respect. The CoR underlines that Cohesion Policy funding through the European Structural and Investment funds can contribute to the necessary financial assistance in order to implement plans. It also stresses that implementation of local and regional development plans can further be facilitated through specific instruments of Cohesion Policy such as Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD), which should be used more widely.</p>	<p>The Commission follows closely the use and implementation of the new instruments such as ITI and CLLD in the current programming period. The Commission aims to support and facilitate the use of these specific instruments in the Member States and will study how they have been used.</p> <p>To help national authorities in applying the new territorial tools for the programming phase, the Commission issued guidelines on ITI and CLLD to help local actors in setting-up and implementing ITIs. The Commission published a report "Scenarios for Integrated Territorial Investments" in 2015, illustrating four examples of how ITI can be used in practice in different</p>

	territorial contexts. Guidance <sup>5</sup> for local actors on CLLD was also published in 2014.
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<sup>5</sup>[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance\\_clld\\_local\\_actors\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_clld_local_actors_en.pdf).

<p><b>N°2 A fair and efficient corporate tax system in the European Union (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>COM(2015) 302 final – COR 2015/3865 - ECON-VI/006</b>  <b>115th Plenary Session – December 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Jean-Luc VANRAES (BE/ALDE)</b>  <b>DG TAXUD –Commissioner MOSCOVICI</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the CoR opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>The CoR firstly highlights the complexity of the current rules on corporate taxation within the EU, as well as the lack of coordination and complementarity between the different systems of the various Member States. The CoR then stresses that a common consolidated corporate tax base (CCCTB) is likely to have positive effects on economic growth, employment and tax equity as well as on public finances, including those of local and regional authorities; and moreover, that adequate, transparent and effective tax collection which is fair for all companies would bring about reductions in the tax burden.</p>	<p>The Commission welcomes the Committee's broad support for the aims of the Common Consolidated Corporate Tax Base (CCCTB) and is pleased that it shares the view underpinning the announced re-launch of this Commission proposal, that the CCCTB will contribute to achieving revenue stability, a stronger Single Market, greater corporate resilience and efficiency and a fair and level playing field for businesses.</p>
<p>The CoR furthermore considers it desirable to immediately introduce a common consolidated corporate tax base. Since the negotiations on consolidation have been difficult and protracted, the Committee thus supports the Commission's approach concerning the postponement of the CCCTB's consolidation element if this allows for progress to be made with the negotiations on the other elements of the proposal, in particular establishing the common tax base.</p>	<p>The Commission is currently working on a possible staged approach with a mandatory common tax base, as announced in its Work Programme for 2016. The Commission remains fully committed to consolidation which would bring reductions in the tax burdens and offer a holistic solution to the problem of profit shifting in the EU.</p> <p>The re-launched CCCTB will be deployed in two steps: Efforts will first concentrate on agreeing the rules for a common corporate tax base (CCTB). As a second stage, consolidation is postponed until the common base has been agreed and implemented, in order</p>

	<p>not to hold back progress on other important elements of the proposal such as anti-base erosion measures.</p>
<p>The CoR calls on the Commission to carefully study the potential impact on local and regional authorities, particularly on their budgets, of a new legislative proposal to implement the CCCTB, without however restarting the whole procedure for analysing the impact of the CCCTB, which would unnecessarily delay its implementation.</p>	<p>An impact assessment will build on and refine the previous economic analysis by also expanding on the expected effects of some new elements (such as measures aimed at further promoting Research and Development (R&amp;D)). It will also take into account the outcome of the discussions held in the Council on the various elements of the tax base, as well as the stakeholders' input into the recently closed (on 8 January 2016) public consultation.</p> <p>Given that the Commission's intention is to present the revised proposal before the end of 2016, the above analysis should not delay its implementation.</p>
<p>The CoR calls for the package on base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) developed at the level of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to be implemented by the Commission and the Member States and regions with legislative powers in the area of corporate taxation on a binding basis through a new anti-BEPS directive in order to combat these phenomena effectively within the EU.</p>	<p>As a part of the Corporate Tax package included in the Commission's 2016 Work Programme, the Commission will introduce a package of measures which will implement international aspects linked to base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS).</p> <p>Anti-avoidance provisions are part of the new legislative and non-legislative proposals to be included in this package. The Commission aims at providing common rules which will ensure legal certainty in tackling base erosion and profit shifting issues and enhance coherence in the Single Market.</p>

<p><b>N°3 The future of the Covenant of Mayors (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>COR 2015/2592 - ENVE-VI/006</b>  <b>115<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - December 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Ms Kata TÜTTŐ (HU/PES)</b>  <b>DG ENER – Commissioner ARIAS CAÑETE</b></p>	
Points of the CoR opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>8. The CoR calls on the Commission to ensure that the Covenant of Mayors is able to continue its activities beyond 2020 and thus to provide the Commission with an autonomous administrative budget commensurate with the project's growing political ambitions, in order to secure its long-term future. Taking into account the fact that 2020 is approaching and that the EU climate and energy framework will be in place until 2030, 2030 should be designated as a medium-term horizon and 2050 as a long-term target, as was the case with the strategy for transitioning towards a low carbon economy by 2050.</p>	<p>The Commission supports the Covenant of Mayors as a bottom-up initiative facilitating the achievement of the EU energy and climate objectives. Any financial support after 2020 can be determined only in the context of the preparation of the next multi-annual financial framework.</p>
<p>9. The CoR, in the medium term, suggests amending the 2030 target on the basis of scientific reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the recommendations of the Committee of the Regions on the 2030 climate and energy framework, namely to set a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% compared with 1990. The Committee nevertheless notes that the EU regulatory framework which is currently being drafted sets a European target of reducing greenhouse gases by 40%.</p>	<p>The at least 40% greenhouse gas emissions reduction target is in line with the recommendations by the IPCC in order to achieve the below 2°C objective in a likely manner. Based on the evolving science surrounding the long-term temperature goal(s) and mitigation pathways needed to reach it, the EU should continue to review possible impacts on the EU ambition level.</p> <p>A survey carried out among Covenant signatories has shown that the preferred minimum target for 2030 is a reduction of CO2 emissions by 40%, in line with the EU climate and energy framework. Covenant signatories are welcome to</p>

	set themselves more ambitious targets.
<p>15. The CoR encourages the Commission to likewise promote the successful principles and good practice of the Covenant of Mayors beyond the EU and to encourage dissemination of the multi-level governance model for climate objectives in order to pave the way for further decentralised cooperation.</p>	<p>The Commission agrees on the strong added value of the Covenant of Mayors beyond the EU and the benefits of its replication in other parts of the world. The Commission, in cooperation with the CoR, launched, on 8 December 2015 within the margins of the COP21 in Paris, the Global Covenant of Mayors in order to promote the principles – including multi-level governance – of the EU Covenant of Mayors worldwide.</p> <p>A total budget EUR of 60 million will be available to support the EU and Global Covenant of Mayors until 2020.</p>
<p>26. The CoR reiterates its recommendation, already expressed in its opinion on the EU strategy on adaptation to climate change, in favour of integrating the Covenant of Mayors and the "Mayors Adapt" initiative, and recommends doing the same with the Pact of Islands initiative.</p>	<p>The Commission, in cooperation with the CoR, European Parliament and representatives of pan-European city networks, has initiated the extension of the Covenant of Mayors beyond 2020 in a new Covenant initiative which incorporates adaptation to climate change and integrates Mayors Adapt.</p> <p>The Covenant of Mayors Office cooperates with the Pact of Islands, and a number of activities are being considered to support islands and their integration into the Covenant of Mayors.</p>
<p>32. The CoR observes with concern that small and medium-sized towns find it very difficult to access the EU's resources, either because they are not aware of the funding possibilities that they can benefit from, or because they do not have access to the skills required to develop proposals for the kind of projects that are likely to be funded. The CoR therefore strongly urges the Commission and the Covenant of Mayors</p>	<p>To guide small and medium-sized municipalities on funding opportunities for Covenant signatories, the Covenant website regularly features updated information prepared by the Covenant of Mayors Office and the Commission. A revision of the guide in order to include all available EU funding facilities is currently ongoing.</p>

<p>to inform these towns about funding possibilities that are available to them in order to formalise their commitments. More broadly, it advocates the establishment of dedicated funding schemes for small and medium-sized municipalities.</p>	
<p>35. The CoR invites the Commission to enable the Covenant of Mayors Office to support - possibly via an online platform - the interconnection of local and regional authorities' projects so that they can access the service proposed by the EIB-managed ELENA programme; it also requests that the Commission broaden access to technical support and capacity-building for signatories.</p>	<p>The Commission supports the bundling of projects as an effective way to unlock public funding and mobilise private investments. It will take the suggestion into account in the preparation of the next multi-annual contract for the operation of the Covenant of Mayors Office which will be prepared during 2016. The existing support structure already takes into account the role of regional authorities which can play a crucial role in their capacity as Covenant Territorial Coordinators.</p>
<p>38. The CoR stands ready to develop actions in order to increase the visibility of the Covenant of Mayors among its members and encourages those who have not done so yet to become parties to the Covenant on behalf of their respective local or regional authorities.</p>	<p>The Commission warmly thanks the CoR for its support and strongly welcomes the CoR's availability to promote the (new) Covenant of Mayors among its members.</p>

<p><b>N°4 European Agenda on Migration (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>COM(2015) 240 final - COR 2015/2607 – CIVEX-VI/006</b>  <b>115<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - December 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Francois DECOSTER (FR/ALDE)</b>  <b>DG HOME – Commissioner AVRAMOPOULOS</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the CoR opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>4. The CoR regrets, in this context, that the meetings of heads of state held to date barely addressed the humanitarian dimension of the situation.</p>	<p>The conclusions of the European Council of 18/19 February 2016 considered it necessary to put in place the capacity for the EU to provide humanitarian assistance internally. Regulation 2016/369 on the provision of emergency support within the European Union was adopted by the Council on 15 March 2016. The Regulation empowers the EU to take a needs-based emergency response when an exceptional disaster occurs within its territory. The Regulation aims at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity.</p> <p>The Leaders' Statement of the Heads of States along the Western Balkans route, who met on 25 October 2015, pointed out the need for operational measures with EU funding and operational instruments to concretely address humanitarian needs. The Commission ensured a systematic follow-up of the political orientations. Short-term needs including those to be covered by EU funding and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) involvement were in particular targeted through dedicated joint visits to the concerned Member States on the Western Balkans Route (WBR-missions).</p>

11. The CoR calls on the European Commission to launch an information campaign directed at local and regional authorities and citizens, which:

- provides up-to-date and understandable information on the true scale of the migration phenomenon;
- makes available the data collected as regards the monitoring of migration flows, once migrations have crossed European borders; and
- reports on best practices in integration, particularly as regards demographic and economic effects

The Commission has already made available to the general public large amounts of information material providing up-to-date and understandable information on the scale of the migratory phenomenon. Detailed data on migration and asylum flows is available on the Europa and the Commission websites (see for instance factsheets on migration: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/background-information/index_en.htm), and data and figures on monitoring of flows: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/press-material/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-migration/press-material/index_en.htm)).

In addition, the Commission is working on a new series of information products to explain the extent and the challenges of the migratory and refugee crisis and to illustrate the actions and measures taken at EU level. This material will also be made available to EU Representations for dissemination between regional and local authorities and citizens.

The Commission has a dedicated website on integration (<https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/index.cfm?action=furl.go&go=/home?lang=en>) which serves as a platform to disseminate good practices, and where the regional and local dimension is highly taken into consideration. One of the most visited sections of the website is the map of local and regional authorities, developed in close cooperation with the Committee of the Regions.

	<p>The Commission is working on a series of actions that will be presented shortly to reinforce the support to Member States in the field of integration, in particular by increasing cooperation at EU level between national, local and regional authorities in this area (exchange of best practice, information, benchmarking activities among others).</p> <p>Regular meetings between various Commission services and the national administrations and authorities in charge of EU funds are held to concretely address the integration challenges and strengthen synergies between the national and EU funding.</p> <p>The detailed information on the legal scope and type of actions eligible under each of the relevant shared management EU Funds as well as under the IFIs was prepared by Commission services and is available on:</p> <p><a href="http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/docs/synergies_between_amif_and_other_eu_funds_in_relation_to_migrants_en.pdf">http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/financing/fundings/docs/synergies_between_amif_and_other_eu_funds_in_relation_to_migrants_en.pdf</a>.</p> <p>The Commission provides regular reports on relocation and resettlement; the third one has been adopted on 18 May 2016 (COM(2016) 360). The Commission also reports on the implementation of the EU-Turkey statement; the first report has been presented in April 2016 (COM(2016) 231).</p>
<p>17. The CoR reiterates that it is time to establish more clearly what shared responsibility and solidarity may entail when it comes to asylum and migration issues. It is clear that different countries, regions and local authorities have different</p>	<p>Strong asylum policy also means reinforced capacity building and improved reception conditions in the mid and long term.</p> <p>In this context, the multiannual funding instruments, and especially the Asylum</p>

<p>ideas of what constitutes fair sharing of responsibility or solidarity, based on their specific characteristics such as economic power. The CoR regrets that the Commission's communication does not suggest any long-term solutions as regards planning and resources to prepare for reception sufficiently early.</p>	<p>Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), are available for the national, regional and local authorities from 2014 to 2020 to support relevant actions.</p> <p>The ongoing process of an intensified dialogue with Member States on the synergies between the EU funding aims also at developing a proactive approach and preparedness ahead of future migratory developments.</p> <p>The Council Decisions on Relocation are based on the principles of shared responsibility and solidarity in view of supporting Greece and Italy with the relocation of 160,000 asylum applicants. The allocation of migrants among the various Member States has been taken on the basis of a relocation key that takes into account inter alia the GDP of the Member State, or the unemployment level.</p>
<p>18. The CoR, however, regrets that the communication does not address sufficiently the issue of resources available to local and regional authorities to allow them to fulfil their obligations where migration and integration are concerned, ensuring they have access to national and EU funds (such as the Asylum and Migration Fund, the Neighbourhood Policy Instrument and the European Social Fund).</p>	<p>The Commission is encouraging Member States and regions to optimize the use of all available EU funding.</p> <p>The role of local and regional actors to address integration challenges is explicitly recognised in the basic acts establishing the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund. Article 9.1. of Regulation (EU) No 516/214 points out the importance of consistent strategies involving the local and regional authorities to implement actions aiming at third country nationals.</p> <p>Taking into account the provisions on partnership framework, particularly Article 12 of Regulation (EU) No 514/2014, the Commission granted special attention, together with the national Responsible Authorities, to the</p>

setting up and functioning of partnerships with local and regional actors as well other stakeholders. The Commission will monitor the functioning of partnership frameworks in the annual implementing reports, the Monitoring Committees and the evaluation reports.

The European Social Fund (ESF) is also an important instrument that can be used to support the integration of migrants, including asylum seekers and refugees. The ESF can fund for example a wide range of activities facilitating the integration of migrants into the labour market, training, language courses, counselling, vocational training and education. Moreover, the ESF can also provide support to reinforce the capacity of public administration services (at national, regional or local level) and NGOs.

As regards EU external relations, the EU is currently putting in place cooperation programmes that engage the local authorities involved in all stages of migration management: support and protection of migrants and asylum seekers, introduction of measures to integration, programming of active policies to make migration a development factor. The underlying principle of these programmes is to go beyond the emergencies linked to the ongoing refugee crisis, and contribute to building local integration models and sustainable development.

Cooperation with local and regional authorities remains a distinctive feature of the revised European Neighbourhood Policy in the Neighbourhood South region. A pilot

	<p>project of EUR 2 million - City to City – was for instance adopted and aims at establishing a cooperation platform between ten cities of the EU and of the Neighbourhood South region.</p>
<p>22. The CoR calls on the Commission to take appropriate supporting measures to prevent people smuggling; one important step is the adoption of the Resolution 2240 by the UN Security Council on 9 October 2015, which allows Member States to intercept vessels off the Libyan coast suspected of people smuggling.</p>	<p>The Commission's Action Plan against Migrant Smuggling sets out the specific actions necessary to fight migrant smuggling. In addition, Europol set up (on the 22/02/2016) a European Migrant Smuggling Centre to strengthen its capacity to support Member States in better preventing and fighting against migrant smuggling. In 2016, a consultation and impact assessment will be launched on Directive 2004/81 on residence permits issued to victims of human trafficking and persons subject to smuggling in order to possibly review it. The Commission will launch new, or enhance existing, bilateral and regional cooperation frameworks with relevant third countries. It will also offer financial and technical assistance to third countries to build up their capacity to deal with this challenge.</p>
<p>25. The CoR wishes to alert the Commission to the reality of the human tragedy that the migratory situation is creating in Europe; by the end of August over 3 400 known deaths in the Mediterranean according to the IOM, 700 deaths in the space of a few days in April 2015, and at least 13 deaths linked to migrants trying to cross the Channel. Migrants often fall victim to smugglers involved in human trafficking, as was the case at the end of August when 71 migrants shut in the back of a lorry died in Austria, abandoned by those smuggling them.</p>	<p>The Commission is fully aware of the human tragedy that the migratory situation is creating in Europe. One of the Commission's first priorities is to save lives. The Commission in cooperation with Frontex and the Member States tripled the presence at sea, increasing the human resources and assets available for Frontex Joint Operations Poseidon and Triton, and thereby contributing to saving over 330,000 of human lives in 2015 and 2016. Fighting migrant smuggling is also one of the top priorities of the</p>

<p>28. The CoR urges that particular attention be paid to strengthening synergies between the various bodies and systems set up to date, on the basis of their specific remit and scope: such as Frontex, SIS II and EUROSUR, operating within the framework of migration and the movement of persons and, in terms of security, EUROPOL and EUROJUST, working to prevent and eradicate the criminal offences (people smuggling and human trafficking) linked to irregular transits</p>	<p>Commission.</p> <p>There is a long-standing cooperation between agencies on these issues. As an example, the Joint Operational Team Mare, established in March 2015 and hosted and supported by Europol, focuses on organised crime groups involved in migrant smuggling by boat across the Mediterranean Sea towards Europe and subsequent secondary movements. It aims at identifying concrete investigative leads and relies notably on Europol and Frontex intelligence resources and on cooperation with Interpol.</p> <p>In order to strengthen synergies, the Commission is supporting frontline Member States in hotspots to further strengthen the security dimensions, mainly through an enhanced operational cooperation between national law enforcement agencies, Frontex and Europol being deployed on the ground.</p>
<p>31. The CoR strongly welcomes the Commission's commitment to submit proposals in early 2016 amending the Dublin Regulation, under which asylum could be requested and examined outside the EU; calls on the Commission to ensure that the distribution of responsibility between Member States is based on sustainable criteria and that the fundamental rights of migrants are also respected; this must be underpinned by an EU-wide mandatory distribution key for sharing asylum seekers between Member States.</p>	<p>The Commission submitted a proposal for further reform of the Dublin Regulation on 4 May 2016.</p> <p>The main elements of that proposal include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a fairer system based on solidarity: with a corrective allocation mechanism (the fairness mechanism). The new system will automatically establish when a country is handling a disproportionate number of asylum applications. It will do this by reference to a country's size and wealth. If one country is receiving disproportionate numbers above and beyond that reference (over 150%</li> </ul>

of the reference number), all further new applicants in that country will (regardless of nationality) be relocated, after an admissibility verification of their application, across the EU until the number of applications is back below that level. A Member State will also have the option to temporarily not take part in the reallocation. In that case, it would have to make a solidarity contribution of EUR 250,000 for each applicant for whom it would otherwise have been responsible under the fairness mechanism, to the Member State that is reallocated the person instead;

- a mechanism that also takes account of resettlement efforts: the fairness mechanism will also factor in the effort being made by a Member State to resettle those in need of international protection direct from a third country. This will acknowledge the importance of efforts to implement legal and safe pathways to Europe;

- a more efficient system: with shorter time limits for sending transfer requests, receiving replies and carrying out transfers of asylum seekers between Member States, and removing shifts of responsibility;

- discouraging abuses and secondary movements: with clearer legal obligations for asylum applicants, including a duty to remain in the Member State responsible for their claim, geographic limits to the provision of material reception

	<p>benefits and proportionate consequences in case of non-compliance;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- protecting asylum seekers' best interests: with stronger guarantees for unaccompanied minors and a balanced extension of the definition of family members.</li> </ul>
<p>32. The CoR recommends that the Commission proposal include the mutual recognition of successful asylum applications so those people afforded protection enjoy the same freedom of movement within the European Union as EU citizens. In addition, the Commission is urged to put forward a proposal for a general European immigration code, so that people who want to work in Europe are given the legal possibilities to do so. The Commission should also open up a path to labour migration for the citizens of candidate countries, making it easier for them to gain access to the European labour market.</p>	<p>Among the long-term initiatives proposed in the European Agenda on Migration, the Commission is to launch a broad debate on the next steps in the development of a Common European Asylum System, including issues such as the mutual recognition of asylum decisions. A longer term reflection towards establishing a single asylum decision process will also be part of the debate, aiming to guarantee equal treatment of asylum seekers throughout Europe.</p> <p>The Commission will take initiatives in the field of labour migration in 2016. In particular, it is envisaged to launch a fitness check of the existing acquis in the field of legal migration. The Commission will also propose a revision of the Blue Card Directive to improve the attractiveness of the EU for highly-skilled third country nationals.</p> <p>The importance of labour migration is indeed acknowledged in our relationship with candidates and potential candidates but remains largely limited to the remit of the Blue Card Directive.</p>
<p>33. The CoR urgently calls on the Commission and Member States to push ahead quickly with the introduction of hotspots as already approved, so that EU</p>	<p>As part of the immediate action to assist frontline Member States challenged by the high migratory pressure at the EU's external borders, in</p>

<p>agencies can help the worst-affected border regions with the registration of incoming refugees, and calls for further appropriate measures to be developed.</p>	<p>the European Agenda on Migration<sup>6</sup>, the Commission has proposed to develop a new Hotspot approach.</p> <p>Within the framework of the Hotspot approach, EU Agencies, namely Frontex, European Asylum Support Office (EASO), Europol and Eurojust provide operational assistance to Member States in accordance with their respective mandate in the field of managing external borders, dealing with applications for international protection and combatting serious organised crime such as facilitation of irregular migration.</p> <p>Staff and national experts from other Member States are being deployed by EU agencies that will help identify, screen and register migrants on entry to the EU, as well as to prepare and organise return operations for those who have no right to stay.</p> <p>Operational coordination on the ground among EU Agencies and national authorities is ensured by the EU Regional Task Force (EURTF) responsible for the overall coordination of the work of the different teams of experts involved in the hotspot approach as well as information flow among the different actors.</p> <p>The Commission would also refer to its Third Report on Relocation and Resettlement<sup>7</sup> presented on 18 May 2016, for an updated state of play of the hotspot implementation in Greece and Italy.</p>
<p>34. The CoR regrets that no specific</p>	<p>Resettlement of refugees from regions</p>

<sup>6</sup> COM(2015) 240 final.  
<sup>7</sup> COM(2016) 360 final.

<p>measures for asylum-seekers have been put forward by the Commission to create safe and legal routes into Europe, in order to avoid further loss of human lives on dangerous journeys. These include establishing a humanitarian corridor, issuing more visas on humanitarian grounds and setting up reception centres in countries of transit for processing asylum applications or determining eligibility for legal entry into EU countries.</p>	<p>outside the EU to the Member States is the best solution to create safe and legal routes to Europe for them. On the initiative of the Commission, Member States adopted conclusions on resettling 22 504 displaced persons from outside the EU who are in clear need of international protection. In December 2015, the Commission also adopted a recommendation for a voluntary humanitarian admission scheme with Turkey</p> <p>The implementation of these measures is under way. The Commission supports financially each Member State participating in these.</p>
<p>35. The CoR calls for a real European Migration policy and welcomes the commitment given by the Commission to propose new measures and review the Blue Card scheme in order to replace the 28 national systems and facilitate legal migration, and urges the Commission to 'build on the experience of local and regional authorities and their knowledge of the local situation when drafting these proposals.</p>	<p>The revision of the Blue Card Directive will be proposed in 2016. A public consultation on this review was held in July - September 2015 and resulted in responses from several local and regional authorities. The regional dimension of the Blue Card revision was also explored with the relevant services of the Commission.</p>
<p>36. The CoR regrets that the Commission did not echo the suggestion made by the Committee of the Regions to develop systems for sharing expertise and pooling experience and good practice. The Committee thus reiterates that a complete system of data sharing on the subject of migration and local authorities, based on the VIS system, should be implemented.</p>	<p>The Visa Information System (VIS), which is the system allowing Member States to manage the issuing of Schengen visas and to check these visas at the EU external borders, is a border-related system and therefore could not be used to analyse all aspects of migration from third countries.</p> <p>It is indeed unclear how such access would contribute to sharing experience and best practice. In addition to their access to the Eurodac system, local authorities in charge of asylum have already access to the VIS under</p>

	<p>Regulation 767/2008 (for the identification of the Member States responsible under Article 21 and for the examination of the asylum application under Article 22).</p> <p>Regarding the use of the relevant EU funding and linked policy measures, the Commission provides the national authorities with fora to share experience and best practice, for instance through the Funds' Committee meetings (AMIF and ISF Committee, FEAD Committee, ESF Committee), Experts Groups (ESIF) and Thematic Networks (e.g. under the ESF and also within the Urban Agenda).</p>
<p>40. The CoR asks the Commission to enforce a Single European Asylum System, which applies agreed criteria in a uniform way and provides humane and fair treatment for people seeking refuge in the Union, and a radical overhaul of the Dublin Regulation so that the differences between the 28 national systems, which are in danger of destroying Schengen, disappear, both in law and practice.</p>	<p>The Commission is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of the Dublin system, by conducting an evidence-based review covering the legal, economic and social effects of the system. In addition, the Commission is currently assessing the need for a more comprehensive reform of the Common European Asylum System with a view to ensuring full convergence in the asylum policy across the EU.</p>
<p>43. The CoR calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide enough financial, technical, administrative and law-enforcement support to all local and regional authorities affected by the influx of refugees and migrants while assessing the possibility of derogations from structural and financial constraints.</p>	<p>Member States and regions should optimize the use of the different EU funding opportunities, such as the AMIF, ISF, the ESIF and in particular the ESF and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) as well as the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. Although the AMIF is managed by Responsible Authorities at national level, the Commission has encouraged and urged Member States to closely involve regional actors in the different areas in which the Fund is</p>

	<p>· active, most notably integration.</p> <p>For the ESF and ERDF, the Commission also encourages the responsible Managing Authorities at the central and regional level to optimize the use of the funding on the ground including under the enhanced simplified cost options as laid down in the 2014-2020 Regulations.</p>
<p>46. The CoR therefore calls on the Commission to organise an annual Structured Dialogue on Integration together with the Committee of the Regions, with a view to drawing up, reviewing and updating guidelines for local and regional authorities across the continent in order to ensure smooth integration.</p>	<p>The Commission is fully aware of the fundamental role played by regional and local authorities and will take into account this dimension with great attention when proposing new actions/measures in this area. The Commission recalls that the local and regional dimension with regard to migration and integration is also addressed on a regular basis in the meetings of the National Contact Points on Integration as well as of the European Migration Forum, to which the CoR participates.</p>

<p><b>N°5 Standards of remuneration in employment in the EU (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>COR 2015/1689 - SEDEC-VI/002</b>  <b>115<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - December 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Mick ANTONIW (UK/PES)</b>  <b>DG EMPL – Commissioner THYSSEN</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the CoR opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>4. The democratic legitimacy of the European Union will be strengthened if Europe’s citizens recognise that social progress is also being addressed when the employment and social dimension are fully integrated into the yearly cycle of economic policy coordination (the European Semester), alongside the promotion of growth.</p>	<p>As from 2016, the European Semester devotes a strengthened attention to the employment and social dimension. The 2016 Annual Growth Survey (AGS) puts increased emphasis on employment and social issues in all the three priority areas (investment, structural reform and fiscal responsibility). It also announces that a renewed process of upward economic and social convergence is needed across Europe, to be also achieved through the progressive introduction of benchmarking, i.e. the cross-examination of indicators related to economic and social performance and policies. The involvement of social partners will be promoted at all levels. Moreover, three new headline indicators (activity rate, youth unemployment, long-term unemployment) have been introduced in the 2016 Alert Mechanism Report, pointing to a stronger emphasis on employment and social aspects in the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure (MIP). The draft euro area recommendation (adopted in parallel with the AGS) includes also a recommendation on employment issues.</p>
<p>5. The Committee of the Regions recalls that the EU has committed to achieving</p>	<p>The EU has subscribed to the UN Millennium Development Goals</p>

<p>the UN Millennium Development Goals and complying with the Resolution proclaiming the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017).</p>	<p>adopted on 25 September 2015 as part of the UN 2030 Agenda and was among the key stakeholders who forged the agreement. The EU is fully committed to implement the Agenda and announced a priority initiative in its 2016 Work Programme. Implementation of Europe 2020 and the UN 2030 will go hand in hand.</p>
<p>6. ILO Convention C94 on Labour Clauses in public contracts is currently binding in nine EU Member States, and applied voluntarily in others. However, possible legal inconsistencies between ILO Convention C94 and the EU Treaty must be clarified.</p>	<p>The Commission is aware of possible inconsistencies between ILO Convention C94 and the EU acquis. It has commissioned a study published in 2014 on the "Analysis in the light of the European Union acquis – of ILO up to date Conventions" in order to clarify the situation of the acquis vis à vis Convention C94 among others.</p> <p>Additionally, the Commission draws the attention to the entry into force of Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement allowing for social provisions in public contracts. The Member States shall transpose into national law the Directive by 18 April 2016 and communicate their national measures to the Commission. This will provide the opportunity for the Commission to analyse further possible inconsistencies with ILO Convention C94.</p>
<p>7. The Committee of the Region notes the calls from the European Parliament with regard to the issue of minimum wages, including its latest invitation to the European Commission to explore all options for strengthening the EMU and making it more resilient and conducive to growth, employment and stability, with a social dimension aimed at preserving</p>	<p>The Five Presidents' Report on "Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union" sets out the different stages for improving the functioning of EMU. It includes measures to boost convergence, jobs and growth, with a stronger focus on employment and social performance.</p> <p>In the framework of the European</p>

<p>Europe's social market economy, respecting the right to collective bargaining, under which coordination of the social policies of the Member States would be ensured, including a minimum wage or income mechanism proper to, and decided by, each Member State.</p>	<p>Semester, the Country-Specific Recommendations aim at boosting job creation and growth, and to contribute to prosperity and greater social fairness. The Commission also called on the Member States to improve employment policy and social protection to enable, support and protect people throughout their lives and to ensure stronger social cohesion as a key component of sustainable economic growth and to sustain Europe's social market economy.</p>
<p>9. The austerity-only policies that have been pursued after the crisis have exacerbated poverty and social inequalities.</p>	<p>Unemployment, poverty and inequalities in the EU exacerbated during the years following the outburst of the crisis. However, the ability of the employment and social protection systems to act as a buffer differed among Member States leading to divergent social outcomes. When the crisis first emerged, most Member States undertook some economic stimulus measures as part of the European Economic Recovery Programme. They also allowed automatic stabilisers (notably unemployment benefits) to play their role. In the context of rising deficits and public debt, fiscal consolidation became necessary in some countries. Fiscal consolidation needs to be growth-oriented and combined with investment and structural reforms, including reforms aiming at ensuring effective social protection systems, as stressed in recent Commission Annual Growth Surveys. Bringing back job-rich and inclusive growth is a necessary precondition for reducing unemployment and thereby poverty</p>

	<p>and social inequalities. There have also been efforts to support those in need through the European Social Fund (ESF), the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) and other policy and financial initiatives (e.g. youth guarantee, Recommendation on Long-term Unemployed). These efforts are now starting to pay off, although employment and social performance has still not reached the 2008 level:</p> <p>Employment has continued to increase and the number of people out of work is slowly dropping and more young people are now in jobs or in education and training. Following three consecutive years on the rise, the proportion of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU remains broadly stable.</p>
<p>10. The Europe 2020 poverty reduction targets.</p>	<p>In 2014 the Commission published a Communication taking stock of the Europe 2020 strategy<sup>8</sup>, including an overview of progress on the 2020 targets<sup>9</sup>. In 2015, a public consultation showed the Strategy is still seen as an appropriate framework to promote jobs and growth. While not delivering in all areas, it has added value by triggering action in the key areas for jobs and growth. However, the consultation also showed that the strategy is not yet sufficiently embraced by the Member States. In its Annual Growth strategy for 2016, the Commission confirmed the Europe 2020 strategy and the Commission will make the best use of the existing strategy and its tools by</p>

<sup>8</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/europe2020stocktaking\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/europe2020stocktaking_en.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/europe2020stocktaking\\_annex\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/europe2020stocktaking_annex_en.pdf).

	<p>improving its implementation and monitoring within the European Semester. Accordingly, the Commission has adjusted the guidance on the National Reform Programmes.</p>
<p>12. Minimum wage regimes vary considerably and in some countries the level set is below 50% of the median wage, making "in-work poverty" a growing problem.</p>	<p>The Commission has no competence in establishing a minimum wage in EU Member States, following article 153 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). National governments and/or national social partners decide whether or not a minimum wage is established. But when applicable, Recommendations to Member States on minimum wages have been and are issued through the European Semester.</p> <p>The setting of minimum wages needs to serve the twofold objective of protecting or creating jobs for the low-skilled and preventing or combating in-work poverty. Comparatively low minimum wages can be related to in-work poverty, but at the same time minimum wages set at too high levels might harm employment opportunities for the low-skilled or the ones with no work experience, and prevent them from accumulating skills and participating in employment and social life.</p>
<p>14. Member States should be encouraged to adopt an indicative fair wage, geared towards the use of 60% of median wage as a benchmark, and based on reference budgets, which are a package of goods and services an individual needs to live at a decent level, together with a set of equitable terms and conditions of employment.</p>	<p>As already stressed in the Commission's Employment Package of 2012, Member States are proposed to "encourage decent and sustainable wages". The latter concept is to be seen in the light of what is appropriate given the labour market position of the low-skilled, and taking the different impacts of the minimum wage (on labour market opportunities, on income) into</p>

	<p>account.</p> <p>That being said, setting minimum wages at a certain level, for example 60% of the median wage, derives from a different logic than the concept of fair wages if based on reference budgets. The latter typically apply to households and minimum income schemes, while minimum wages are job- and not household income-related and apply to individuals.</p>
<p>15. The Committee of the Regions draws attention to the work undertaken by the European Reference Budgets Network to develop a common methodology for reference budgets in Europe so that their contents, such as the food basket, is comparable across Member States.</p>	<p>The Commission shares the CoR's opinion about the importance of studying households' minimum budgets including the basic food basket. The Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion has just concluded a pilot study with the University of Antwerp. A follow-up study of minimum household budgets necessary for dignified living is planned for 2016.</p>
<p>16. Fair wage structures are important economic stabilisers and a key tool to boosting non-price competitiveness, thus acting as a significant driver of economic growth and helping avoid stagnation.</p>	<p>The Commission recognises that wages have an impact on aggregate demand, mostly through household consumption. Preserving the purchasing power of lower wages has an important role as an economic stabiliser, since the elasticity of consumption with respect to income is higher for low-wage earners.</p> <p>However, the role of wage structures and, more importantly, of overall wage developments on non-cost competitiveness is more complex, as it involves several channels (mostly acting in the medium to long-term). Accordingly it has to be assessed on a country-by-country basis, also taking into account cost competitiveness and job creation considerations.</p>

<p>16. With a view to making household incomes more secure, thought must be given to putting in place an excessive debt management procedure at European level which, inter alia, addresses the conditions for the expropriation of family homes.</p>	<p>There are no plans to put in place an excessive debt management procedure. On the other hand, the EU is monitoring private debt as part of the economic governance under the Macroeconomic Imbalances Procedure. It is also important to keep in mind that banks are unlikely to provide credits to households if foreclosure is automatically excluded in case of bad loans.</p>
<p>19. Fair wage, together with equitable terms and conditions of employment and an adequate social protection system, are some of the pre-conditions for fair competition between EU Member States so that they do not under-cut one another through "a race to the bottom" and "social dumping".</p> <p>20. This issue is particularly important in view of the Posted Workers Directive and subsequent European Court of Justice Judgements, which have meant that companies do not have to abide by sectorial minimum wage agreements that have not been declared generally applicable.</p> <p>21. National and regional authorities are urged to fully apply the Posting of Workers Enforcement Directive. The Committee of the Regions keenly awaits in this respect the European Commission's announced review of the current legislation applying to posted workers, the objective being to fight social dumping and that the same work at the same place is remunerated in the same manner</p>	<p>The 2014 Enforcement Directive<sup>10</sup> has provided for new and strengthened instruments to fight and sanction circumventions, fraud and abuses. The full effects of the Directive should become tangible as of mid-2016, as Member States will have until 18 June 2016 to transpose the Directive. The Commission has been assisting Member States to ensure that the Enforcement Directive is transposed accurately and within the deadline.</p> <p>Evidence shows that there is a wage difference between local and posted workers which varies between 10% and 50%, depending on the Member States and on the economic sectors. President Juncker has committed in his political guidelines to undertake a targeted revision of the Posting of Workers Directive to implement the principle of equal pay for equal work to prevent risks of abuse and social dumping. This commitment has been reiterated subsequently and the targeted revision of the Posting of Workers Directive was also part of the Commission Work</p>

<sup>10</sup> Directive 2014/67/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the enforcement of Directive 96/71/EC concerning the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 on administrative cooperation through the Internal Market Information System ('the IMI Regulation').

<p>throughout the EU.</p>	<p>Programme (CWP) 2016. In the meantime, the initiative was adopted by the College on 8 March 2016.</p>
<p>22. Further debate in this area could in particular be based on Articles 9 and 156 of the TFEU and should, to ensure respect for the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, take place through soft processes such as the Open Method of Coordination and as part of the European Semester, which has already addressed wage issues.</p>	<p>According to the Treaties, wage setting is a competence of Member States. While fully respecting the role of social partners and national practices in wage setting, the Commission annually provides analysis and issues country-specific recommendations to Member States on wage-related issues in the context of the European Semester, taking into account economic growth, job creation and social fairness considerations.</p>
<p>23. Fair wages as an economic factor could also be addressed in Country-specific Recommendations, which already include wage-setting in the area of the labour market and also address wage moderation.</p>	<p>Country-specific Recommendations (CSRs) in particular address issues of macroeconomic relevance that may inhibit Member States' growth potential. In the case of wages, what is most important is the alignment of real wages and productivity over the medium term as this has an impact on a country's cost competitiveness position. In that context, the wage-setting mechanism may also matter. Moreover, the CSRs sometimes also refer to the tax wedge especially for lower incomes.</p>
<p>24. Minimum wages vary considerably across those EU Member States that apply them. Fair wages proper to, and decided by, each Member State either by law or through collective bargaining, and in any case in full respect of its traditions and practices, could contribute to meeting the Europe 2020 target of lifting 20 million people out of poverty and social exclusion.</p> <p>25. Fair wages could assist in tackling unacceptable levels of inequality in</p>	<p>Minimum wages can indeed contribute to alleviating (in-work) poverty or reducing inequality. But setting minimum wage (or for that matter fair wages) at appropriate levels requires taking into account the different impacts it may have on poverty, inequality and employment.</p>

<p>Europe, which is a source of concern for social cohesion, a political matter and a risk to the EU's future growth potential.</p>	
<p>The Committee of the Regions welcomes the fact that some public authorities at the local and regional level have used their procurement policies to encourage and require contractors to pay fair wages to their staff. To this effect, it notes with satisfaction that Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement, which will enter into force in April 2016, explicitly mentions that the application of terms and conditions of employment which are more favourable to workers should not be prevented (Recital 37) and stipulates that contracting authorities may not use price only or cost only as the sole award criterion of public contracts (Article 67). Moreover, the CoR warmly welcomes the Judgement of the Court of Justice of the EU in Case C-115/14 (of 17 November 2015), stipulating that EU law does not preclude the exclusion from a procedure for the award of a contract of a tenderer who refuses to undertake to pay staff concerned the minimum wage.</p>	<p>The Commission shares the points made by the CoR.</p>

**N°6 The role of the social economy in restoring economic growth and combating unemployment (own-initiative opinion)**  
**COR 2015/1691 - SEDEC-VI/004**  
**115<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - December 2015**  
**Rapporteur: Mr Luís GOMES (PT/EPP)**  
**DG GROW – Commissioner BIENKOWSKA**

Points of the CoR opinion considered essential	Commission position
<p>Point 3</p> <p>The CoR also considers that investments in the social economy should have a role to play not only in the European Fund for Strategic Investments, but also in the European Social Fund and other EU financing sources, since they often contribute to creating quality jobs for EU citizens.</p>	<p>The ESF and ERDF Regulations 2014-2020 include new investment priorities for promoting and providing support for social enterprises. Member States have been encouraged and supported to make use of these investment priorities. As a result around EUR 1.3 billion for European Social Fund<sup>11</sup> and EUR 420 million for European Regional Development Fund<sup>12</sup> are now earmarked in the Member States for projects by social enterprises.</p> <p>Other funding programmes such as Erasmus for young entrepreneurs<sup>13</sup> can also help foster capacity-building. The COSME programme for SMEs will be used from 2016 onwards for social entrepreneurship projects (implementing the Social Business Initiative (SBI), capacity building and best practises). Under the new EU programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI)<sup>14</sup> at least EUR 86 million will be used for social entrepreneurship until 2020.</p>
<p>1.Point 7</p> <p>2.The CoR emphasises the importance of facilitating public involvement and social co-creation processes, by means of dynamic</p>	<p>In the 2014-2020 programming period, the European Social Fund will be implemented in close cooperation between public authorities, social partners and bodies representing the civil society at national, regional and local</p>

<sup>11</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/esf/home.jsp>.

<sup>12</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/funding/erdf/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/erdf/).

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu/>.

<sup>14</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1081>.

<p>partnerships between the public sector, the wide range of social economy institutions and the private sector, especially the part made up of social enterprises, while also adopting an approach geared towards socially innovative measures and policies.</p>	<p>levels. To improve consultation, participation and dialogue with partners, the Commission has adopted a European Code of Conduct on the Partnership Principle.</p>
<p>Point 8</p> <p>The CoR highlights the relatively scant public recognition of entrepreneurial capacity in the social economy, deriving in part from the lack of connection between actors in different regions and countries.</p>	<p>To enable the recognition and development of the entrepreneurial capacity, the Commission is currently working towards establishing a "Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship" Competence Framework<sup>15</sup>. The framework is expected to have a wide use and to enhance cooperation between the worlds of education and work. It also takes on board the social dimension of entrepreneurship.</p>
<p>Point 12</p> <p>The CoR urges the European Commission to present, in the form of a proposal for a directive, a legal framework defining a European status of cooperatives, foundations, mutual societies and associations (notably charitable, philanthropic or cultural) in order to enable social economy enterprises to operate on a legally certain basis and thus enjoy the advantages of the internal market and free movement.</p>	<p>The Commission is currently working with the GECES (Groupe d'expert de la Commission sur l'entrepreneuriat social<sup>16</sup>) on different options concerning the creation of a legal framework for social enterprises in Europe. The report that will be published in 2016 will propose recommendations to the European Institutions, Member States and stakeholders involved in the topic.</p>
<p>Point 14</p> <p>The CoR recommends promoting cooperation between the social economy and vocational education in all its areas, and supporting the development of student and school cooperatives in order to expand career opportunities for young people and so help to prevent youth unemployment.</p> <p>Point 17</p> <p>The CoR suggests stepping up efforts already under way to amend the European rules on public procurement, making it possible to take</p>	<p>The Commission will launch a call for proposal in 2016 implementing a pilot project proposed by the European Parliament. The project will focus on promoting the image of cooperatives as a business model for young people by ensuring that it is adequately covered in educational curricula (secondary and university degrees).</p> <p>The Commission will continue to provide assistance to contracting authorities in Member States in the implementation phase of the directives. It is important to raise contracting authorities' awareness of the</p>

<sup>15</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/entrecomp>.

<sup>16</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/social-economy/enterprises/expert-groups/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/social-economy/enterprises/expert-groups/index_en.htm).

<p>account of social and regional/local considerations in public procurement. The Committee of the Regions is pleased, however, to note the recent adoption of the directives on public procurement and concessions (Directives 2014/24/EU, 2014/25/EU and 2014/23/EU).</p>	<p>potential benefits of socially responsible public procurement and to explain in a practical way the opportunities offered by the existing EU legal framework. The Commission is currently working with the GECES on those issues. The report that will be published in 2016 will propose recommendations to the European Institutions, Member States and stakeholders involved in the issue.</p>
<p>3.Point 19</p> <p>4.The CoR considers it crucial to unlock the potential of the social economy by improving access by the social economy to various forms of financing (such as European funds, venture capital, microcredit and crowdfunding) and by tapping sufficient financial resources at local, regional, national and EU levels, reconciling the necessarily demanding economic and financial requirements with the acknowledged public interest of the work carried out in the field by these organisations.</p>	<p>The Commission fully agrees with this point. Facilitating access to both private and public finance is key for social economy enterprises.</p> <p>The GECES is currently examining ideas to be given to the development of an adequate financial ecosystem capable of providing effective support for social economy and social innovation.</p> <p>The EaSI programme supports micro- and social enterprises by enabling their access to finance. A new guarantee scheme for microfinance and social entrepreneurship finance was launched in June 2015 through the European Investment Fund. The Scheme has earmarked EUR 40 million (out of a total of EUR 96 million) for social entrepreneurship finance. This funding is designed to bring social enterprises onto a level playing field with mainstream companies.</p>
<p>5.Point 22</p> <p>6.The CoR welcomes the creation by the European Commission of a multilingual digital platform – the "Social Innovation Europe Platform" – to foster exchange of information in the field of social innovation, but considers it necessary that the platform includes a separate section dedicated to social economy.</p>	<p>The Commission recalls that the "Social Innovation Europe Platform" was launched in early 2011 and now brings together a community of more than 5 000 members in Europe, many of which include social economy organisations:</p> <p><a href="https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/socialinnovationeurope">https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/socialinnovationeurope</a></p>

<p><b>N°7 The local and regional dimension of the sharing economy (own-initiative opinion)</b>  <b>COR 2015/2698 - ECON-VI/005</b>  <b>115<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - December 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Ms Benedetta BRIGHENTI (IT/PES)</b>  <b>DG GROW – Commissioner BIENKOWSKA</b></p>	
Points of the CoR opinion considered essential	Commission position
Overall assessment	<p>The Commission welcomes the Opinion of the Committee. The Commission shares the opinion that there is a wide diversity and range of activities considered to be part of the sharing economy and that there are a plurality of linguistic terms that have been coined to identify these activities, which are closely linked and potentially overlapping, including the term, collaborative economy, adopted by the Commission. The 'definition' of the collaborative economy elaborated in the Single Market Strategy<sup>17</sup> reflects the Commission's main competences and areas of concern, in particular the regulation of the Single Market.</p> <p>Following the orientations of the Single Market Strategy, the Commission is continuing to assess the legal and regulatory context surrounding the collaborative economy, including the treatment of individuals at regional and local level to ensure its balanced development. The earliest results of this exercise, including guidance on EU law, will appear in the forthcoming European agenda. In addition to legal and regulatory aspects, the Commission is</p>

<sup>17</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/14007/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/native>.

	<p>also assessing the wider economic impact of the collaborative economy, including employment implications. The Commission therefore welcomes the specific suggestions of the Committee of the Regions with respect to adopting a holistic approach to this new and rapidly growing phenomenon.</p>
<p>In the view of the CoR however, the proposed definition focuses on the commercial and consumer aspects of the sharing (or collaborative) economy while leaving aside the non-commercial and commons-based approaches. It calls therefore on the European Commission to further analyse and later define the different forms of the sharing economy.</p>	<p>The sharing economy will be further analysed in the context of a European agenda on the collaborative economy. The European agenda will set out the Commission's views and will include input from the various services involved.</p>
<p>The CoR underlines that the CoR is ready to play an active role in developing this agenda and suggests closer cooperation with the European institutions in this field.</p>	<p>The Commission will be pleased to receive the comments of the Committee of the Regions on the European agenda</p>

**N°8 The local and regional dimension of the Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) (own-initiative opinion)**  
**COR 2015/2700 - ECON-VI/003**  
**115<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - December 2015**  
**Rapporteur: Mr Helmuth MARKOV (DE/PES)**  
**DG TRADE – Commissioner MALMSTRÖM**

<b>Points of the CoR opinion considered essential</b>	<b>Commission position</b>
<p>12. The CoR affirms, with regard to public services, the relevance of referring in the negotiating Directives to Articles 14 and 106 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and to Protocol No 26 on Services of General Interest and calls for the autonomy of local and regional levels of government to be fully respected in accordance with Article 4(2) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU); it regrets to note, however, that the terminology concerning public services used in the different trade agreements currently being negotiated by the EU (CETA, TTIP and TiSA) is not consistent.</p> <p>21. The CoR opposes any encroachment on the sovereignty of national governments and LRAs, especially in the spheres of education, culture, theatre, libraries, museums and finance, as well as labour protection, environmental protection, data protection, publicly funded social and healthcare services, licensing of healthcare facilities and laboratories, waste management facilities and power stations, consumer standards, standards relating to social cohesion, schools and publicly-financed education services, and other, privately-financed education services, as well as</p>	<p>TiSA does not encroach on the sovereignty of national governments and local and regional authorities in any way.</p> <p>The Commission fully acknowledges the important role public services play in Europe, and recognises the autonomy of national governments and local and regional authorities in regulating these. The Commission, in its trade negotiations, fully respects the boundaries set by Article 14 and Protocol 26 of the Treaty.</p> <p>The EU has always excluded public services from commitments in all its trade agreements, since the General Agreement for Trade in Services (GATS) which entered into force in 1995. The approach we have used has proved effective until today and will continue to be deployed in the future.</p> <p>It is important to recall that trade in services agreements like TiSA aim at reducing discriminatory measures and certain types of quantitative restrictions on foreign service suppliers, however they do not impede the right to maintain and introduce non-discriminatory regulations, including on setting standards of quality in all services sectors.</p>

public procurement provisions.	
<p>24. The CoR is opposed to the inclusion of clauses that oblige authorities to fix the degree of liberalisation achieved at the time of the agreement (standstill clause), that prohibit a liberalised service from being returned to the public sector (ratchet clause), and that make any new service subject to automatic and complete liberalisation (safeguard clause).</p>	<p>In the architecture developed for TiSA, the standstill and ratchet clauses<sup>18</sup> apply only to national treatment. This means that these clauses only apply to the Parties' right to discriminate between foreign and domestic companies (so-called national treatment) and not to the market access commitments. Ratchet/standstill clauses do not prevent TiSA Parties from introducing new regulations in a given sector as long as it is done in a non-discriminatory manner. It is only discriminatory measures that are bound by the actual state of affairs in the EU (here the standstill applies).</p> <p>The TiSA architecture makes it possible to exempt sensitive sectors from the application of the standstill and the ratchet clauses. This is what the EU does, e.g. for public services (it is therefore possible to bring back private services to the public domain - renationalisation), but also for other areas where the EU wants to retain future leeway to discriminate foreign service suppliers (audio-visual, some financial services etc.).</p> <p>For non-exempted private services, this means that the standstill/ratchet applies to discriminatory measures (i.e. when foreign service suppliers are treated differently than national ones). The standstill/ratchet clauses do not impede</p>

<sup>18</sup> Standstill clause in a trade agreement means that the country has to list all the discriminatory barriers as they are at the moment of taking commitments and cannot introduce any new barriers.  
Ratchet clause in a trade agreement means that if - after entry into force of an agreement - a country unilaterally removes a barrier in an area where it had made a commitment, it cannot reintroduce it anymore.  
Typically, these are subject to exemptions (i.e. the parties exempt several sectors from that clause). The latter is the case in TiSA.

	<p>the right to regulate in a non-discriminatory way, i.e. authorities can increase or reduce, for example, environmental, health or other standards that apply to both foreign and domestic service suppliers as they wish.</p> <p>The EU also takes safeguards to exempt new services that are not classified under the relevant UN classification system from its commitments.</p>
<p>26. The CoR calls for a social chapter to be included in the TiSA laying down social protection standards, in particular labour standards, based on the relevant ILO conventions, without this chapter rendering the multilateralisation of the TiSA impossible;</p> <p>29. the CoR insists that the TiSA should include the option of judicial review with regard to respect for human rights in the context of trade in services.</p>	<p>The EU has not proposed a chapter on sustainable development in TiSA – different from its practice in other FTAs. This would significantly lower our ability to attract developing countries to the negotiation and it would make it particularly difficult to multilateralise the agreement in the future, as also pointed out by the Committee of the Regions.</p> <p>This however does not mean that the EU is not committed to international standards on labour, environment and human rights. TiSA does not affect the ability of each country to regulate its services markets in a non-discriminatory fashion. Therefore, it will not change or affect rules pertaining to, for example, safety, environmental standards, qualification requirements, labour and work conditions that apply equally to foreign and domestic services suppliers. Particularly regarding options for judicial review, Parties cannot derogate from the human rights obligations in undertaking TISA commitments; the relevant human rights instruments continue to apply. Providing judicial recourse for human rights violations is</p>

	<p>however beyond the scope of this trade agreement.</p>
<p>27. The CoR calls for the country of destination principle to be upheld where standards differ, including especially Mode 4 services (temporary free movement of service suppliers or of employees sent out by a supplier), to ensure that rules on qualifications and on labour and collective bargaining laws continue to apply in the host country; the temporary free movement of service suppliers or of employees sent out by a service supplier must on no account be used to prevent strikes or circumvent existing collective bargaining laws (by hiring temporary workers);</p>	<p>The EU pays particular attention to protecting the right to regulate, including on labour, in all trade agreements. The EU therefore maintains a safeguard in its TiSA offer which ensures that all EU and Member States' laws and regulations on non-EU citizens entering, staying or working in the EU will continue to apply, and that workers from outside the EU will not be allowed to enter the EU temporarily if this would affect a labour dispute, such as a strike, between management and workers inside the EU.</p>
<p>30. The CoR calls for legal disputes affecting compliance with this agreement to be referred to the public courts at the place of the defendant's registered office, and for proceedings to be conducted in the defendant's language and governed by the laws in force in the defendant's country; the right of appeal must be safeguarded; mechanisms for settling disputes between states should draw on the mechanism currently in place within the WTO; this agreement should not contain a mechanism for settling disputes between investors and states.</p>	<p>TiSA will not contain a mechanism for settling disputes between investors and states; it is envisaged to only contain a mechanism for settling disputes between states, in accordance with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the WTO.</p> <p>Trade agreements concluded at EU level, including TiSA, do generally not have what is termed "direct effect", which means that individuals or companies cannot claim any rights resulting from these trade agreements in domestic courts. A dispute between the parties to the agreement would therefore have to be settled in the context of the state-to-state dispute settlement mechanism applicable to TiSA.</p>
<p>34. The CoR welcomes the explicit exclusion of audio-visual services from the negotiations, but regrets that this does not also apply to cultural services; the CoR is consequently concerned that it is</p>	<p>The EU excludes audiovisual services from its commitments in the TiSA negotiations and indeed does not do so for cultural services.</p>

difficult to distinguish cultural services and calls for protection of local linguistic and cultural diversity, paying particular attention to the interests of minorities, as well as copyright and intellectual property;

Cultural services are in the scope of GATS and should therefore remain in the scope of TiSA, as it could otherwise be difficult to bring TiSA to the multilateral trading system.

Furthermore, some TiSA Parties and EU Member States have an interest in this sector. Some EU Member States - in TiSA and in other trade agreements - have taken commitments in, for example, news and press agency services (where there is strong offensive interest), theatres, bands, etc., which are all considered a part of cultural services.

However, the Commission fully acknowledges the need to protect cultural diversity. This is enshrined in the Treaty itself, and the EU has also taken international commitments, notably in the context of the 2005 UNESCO Convention. However, there are many ways to protect cultural diversity effectively other than extending the areas of exclusion from TiSA negotiations.

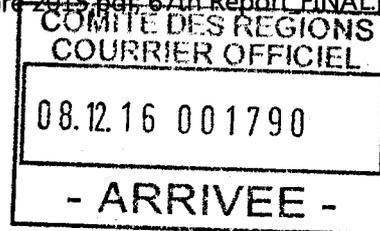
<p><b>N°9 Contribution to the fitness check on the EU Birds and Habitats Directives</b>  <b>COR 2015/2624 - ENVE-VI/005</b>  <b>115<sup>th</sup> Plenary Session - December 2015</b>  <b>Rapporteur: Mr Roby BIWER (LU/PES)</b>  <b>DG ENV – Commissioner VELLA</b></p>	
<p><b>Points of the CoR opinion considered essential</b></p>	<p><b>Commission position</b></p>
<p>Overall assessment</p>	<p>The Commission is currently evaluating the Birds and Habitats Directives. In the meantime the Commission takes note and thanks the Committee of the Regions for its opinion.</p>

## Strigini Chiara

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**From:** Hagemann Annette on behalf of Burianek Jiri  
**Sent:** mercredi, 07 décembre, 2016 18:51  
**To:** adonis  
**Cc:** Burianek Jiri; Spinaci Gianluca; Gsodam Christian; Thieule Laurent; Wobben Thomas; dir-b-contact-point; dir-c-focal-point  
**Subject:** FW: Ares(2016)2539218 - Suivi des avis du Comité des Régions - session plénière de décembre 2015  
**Attachments:** Note de couverture\_suivi CdR décembre 2015.pdf; 67th Report\_FINAL.pdf

Pour enregistrement dans Adonis.  
Annette



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

**From:** EC ARES NOREPLY [<mailto:DIGIT-NOREPLYARES@ec.europa.eu>]  
**Sent:** mercredi, 01 juin, 2016 15:55  
**To:** Burianek Jiri  
**Subject:** Ares(2016)2539218 - Suivi des avis du Comité des Régions - session plénière de décembre 2015

Veillez trouver ci-joint le document Ares(2016)2539218 concernant "Suivi des avis du Comité des Régions - session plénière de décembre 2015" envoyé par M/Mme LEARDINI Pascal le 01/06/2016.

Please find attached document Ares(2016)2539218 regarding "Suivi des avis du Comité des Régions - session plénière de décembre 2015" sent by Mr/Ms LEARDINI Pascal on 01/06/2016.

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