

A STRONG RENEWED REGIONAL POLICY FOR ALL REGIONS POST 2020

“We, Regions and local entities of Europe, are responsible for the design and implementation of development strategies, for providing services to our citizens and for carrying out the necessary reforms to prepare our territories for the future. While deeply attached to the fundamental principles of EU Regional policy, we believe that there is still a long way to go to achieve economic, social and territorial cohesion in Europe. These goals remain more relevant than ever, given the crises that threaten the very heart of the European Project.

We are, and wish to remain, key partners of the European institutions and to be closely associated in the preparation of a renewed Regional policy that responds to the main challenges Europe faces today and into the future. We, Regions and local entities of Europe, are thus ready to contribute to the re-shaping of the post-2020 European Regional Policy. We are committed to provide concrete and innovative contributions on the various elements of the debate, including simplification, flexibility, results-based performance assessment and the link with the European semester.”

For these reasons, we, the undersigned regions, have adopted the following declaration:

The democratic legitimacy of the European Union is built upon the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, where decisions should be taken as close to the citizens as possible. Cohesion policy is one of the major European policies fully embracing these principles through shared and multilevel governance, partnership, solidarity, cooperation, evidence- and place-based arrangements. It is people-centred and its instruments are tailor-made to allow regions and cities to contribute to the EU objectives according to their specific situations and needs. For European policies and initiatives to be relevant and successful, the EU needs the true involvement of regional and local actors. Cohesion policy is key to the stable and reliable planning and delivery on the ground of long-term investments in strategic EU priorities, such as research, innovation, renewable energy, SME, competitiveness, job creation etc. It is the EU policy that can be best measured.

A policy for all regions in Europe

Cohesion policy brings together all regions of Europe and therefore helps to both promote convergence and to reduce disparities within and between regions while also enabling them to achieve common European goals. Therefore **Cohesion policy must continue to cover each and every region for the post-2020 period.**

Sufficient funding for all

A well-resourced budgetary allocation is the pre-condition for a credible delivery across the EU. In recognition of the types of socio-economic and environmental challenges that persist right across the EU, **grants** must be maintained as the **main funding instrument for all regions**. Additionally, regions should be able to use financial instruments where appropriate.

Keeping the largest amount of financial allocations for the less developed regions should not be questioned. At the same time it is vital to support the transition regions in their efforts to further grow and to enable more developed regions to consolidate and strengthen their achievements through sufficient funds. It is recognised that more developed regions facilitate and trigger dynamic processes among all regions.

European Territorial Cooperation a key element

By bringing together actors from different Member States and regions, cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation deliver an essential contribution to Europe and its citizens and ensure a highly visible European added value. Therefore this comprehensive policy of territorial cooperation should be further strengthened and well-resourced.

An approach based on regional realities

A more flexible **approach reflecting the different types of funding measures** must be guaranteed to achieve effectiveness and efficiency, responding quickly to needs and challenges. Simplification is a condition for better delivery. A proportional balance needs to be struck between the administrative burden and the extent of support. Regional policy requires flexibility to be able to embrace diverse regional needs in the programming and implementation of projects. **A new type of partnership built on trust** between regions, Member States and EU-institutions should be established in order to implement the policy more effectively.

We, regions and local entities of Europe, call on the European Institutions as well as the Member States to take this common position into consideration with regard to the shape of the future cohesion policy post 2020.

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Region

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Name