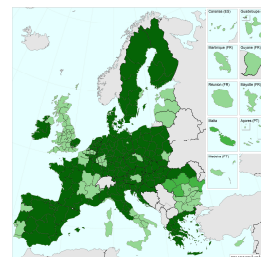


A STRONG RENEWED REGIONAL POLICY FOR ALL REGIONS POST 2020

28th September 2016

Brussels

Programme



Wednesday, 28 September

from 10.15 Arrival at the Committee of the Regions, Registration procedures
Location: CoR, Rue Belliard 99–101, 1040 Brussels

- 11.00 Start of the **conference: “The contribution of EU Regional Policy to manage future challenges”**
- Welcome speech by **Markku Markkula**, President of the Committee of the Regions
 - Opening speech by **Erwin Pröll**, Governor of Lower Austria and initiator and patron of the “Initiative of Regions”
 - Moderator **Michael Schneider**, State Secretary of Saxony-Anhalt and President of the EPP-group and rapporteur of the Committee of the Regions for the Future of EU-Cohesion Policy
 - Regional presidents/representatives (6 mins per speaker):
 - **Paul Magnette**, Minister president of Wallonia (Belgium)
 - **Sergio Chiamparino**, President of Piemonte (Italy)
 - **Francina Armengol i Socías**, President of the Balearic Islands Government (Spain)
 - **Renaud Muselier**, Deputy President and First Vice-President of the region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, President of the Europe Commission of the French Regions Association (France)
 - **Benjamin Immanuel Hoff**, Minister for Cultural, Federal and European Affairs of Thuringia (Germany)
 - **Witold Stępień**, Marshal of Lodzkie (Poland)
 - **Miapetra Kumpula-Natri**, Chairman of the Regional Assembly of Ostrobothnia, Pohjanmaa (Finland)
 - **Raffaele Cattaneo**, President of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE)

Location: CoR, JDE 51, Rue Belliard 99-101, 1040 Brussels

hosted by:



EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

12.30-13.30 Light lunch
on the invitation of Governor Erwin Pröll
Location: CoR, Atrium 5, 5th floor, Rue Belliard 99-101, 1040 Brussels

- 13.30-15.00 Continuation of the **conference**
- Moderator **Michael Schneider**, State Secretary of Saxony-Anhalt and President of the EPP-group and rapporteur of the Committee of the Regions for the Future of EU-Cohesion Policy
 - Regional presidents/representatives (6 mins per speaker):
 - **Robert Uitto**, Regional Commissioner and Chairman of Jämtland Härjedalen (Sweden)
 - **Martin Hyský**, Member of the Regional Council of Vysocina (Czech Republic)
 - **Lilijana Madjar**, President of the Development Council of the Western Slovenia Cohesion Region (Slovenia, shared speaking time)
 - **Ivan Žagar**, President of the Development Council of Eastern Slovenia Cohesion Region (Slovenia, shared speaking time)
 - **Henrik Ringbæk Madsen**, Member of the Regional Council of North Jutland (Denmark)
 - **Michiel Rijsberman**, Regional Minister of Flevoland (Netherlands)
 - **Sorin Mihai Grindeanu**, President of Timiș County Council (Romania)
 - Presidents/representatives of Interregional Organisations:
 - **Hande Özsan Bozatli**, President of the Assembly of European Regions (AER)
 - **Pavol Frešo**, President of the Working Community of the Danube Countries
 - **Eleni Marianou**, General Secretary of the Conference of Peripheral and Maritime Regions (CPMR/CRPM)

Location: CoR, JDE 51, Rue Belliard 99-101, 1040 Brussels

at 15.00 **Joint walk** to the Representation of the Free State of Bavaria;
exceptionally via the VIP parking exit of the CoR

Location: Rue Wiertz 77, 1000 Brussels

15.00-15.30 Pre-Reception with drinks and finger food

- 15.30 **Ceremony of handing-over the books of signatures to the high representatives of the EU institutions**
- Welcome address, **Barbara Schretter**, Director of the Representation of the Free State of Bavaria to the EU
 - Welcome speech, **Beate Merk**, Bavarian State Minister for European and international affairs by video message
 - Interview with **Erwin Pröll**, Governor of Lower Austria and initiator and patron of the “Initiative of Regions”

15.50 **Handing-over ceremony of the books of signatures** by Governor Erwin Pröll to President Markku Markkula, Commissioner Corina Crețu and MEP Iskra Mihaylova as well as the representative of the Slovakian EU-Presidency (tbc)

afterwards **Statements**

- **Markku Markkula**, President of the Committee of the Regions
- **Corina Crețu**, EU-Commissioner for Regional Policy
- **Iskra Mihaylova**, MEP and Chair of the Committee of Regional Development of the European Parliament
- High representative of the Slovakian EU-Presidency (tbc)

Group photo of all politicians on the stage

Group photo at the stairs in the courtyard (Exit of all politicians to the courtyard - only in case of good weather)

afterwards **Reception**
on the invitation of Minister of State Beate Merk
Location: Rue Wiertz 77, 1000 Brussels

17.00 Official end of the event

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.