



Brussels, 24 September 2018

High-level event on
**"Making sense of a territorially cohesive Europe beyond 2020:
The territorial dimension of EU cohesion policy and
urban-rural challenges"**

Draft agenda

9 November 2018, Carinthia (Austria)

1. Background information:

With the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union was given the mission of promoting territorial cohesion in addition to economic and social cohesion. This concept involves reducing geography-related disparities, ensuring consistency between EU policies, and strengthening ties between territories (regions, cities, towns, urban and rural areas, functional areas, etc.).

Today, cities are increasingly cooperating with neighbouring municipalities within functional regions to organise traffic and public transport, spatial planning, green spaces and the economy on an appropriate scale. Cooperation between urban areas and the surrounding countryside is crucial in this regard. These **functional urban-rural**¹ linkages require a different governance model and an integrated approach based on long-term perspectives.

Urban and rural areas are complementary functional spaces: the concern that is repeatedly being voiced in the discussions on the **Urban Agenda for the EU and the Territorial Agenda beyond 2020** is that a stronger focus on urban issues will mean less support for rural areas. Currently,

¹ The urban-rural typology is based on a classification of NUTS level 3 regions, according to the share of their population living in rural grid cells, distinguishing between: predominantly urban regions, where the rural population accounts for less than 20% of the total population; intermediate regions, where the rural population accounts for between 20% and 50% of the total population; and predominately rural regions, where the rural population accounts for 50% or more of the total population.

all European rural areas are facing poor accessibility, greater isolation from decision-making and research hubs, and the technology gap, all of which constitute shortcomings that many rural areas find difficult to overcome. In social terms, rural areas have lower employment rates than urban areas, and job creation is also lower. For this reason, the European Committee of the Regions emphasises the importance of developing a Rural Agenda alongside the Urban Agenda in order to strengthen links between urban and rural areas and to reinforce the role played by rural areas, which also contribute to growth and job creation. It is the belief of the European Committee of the Regions that an integrated approach to public policy is the only way to enable the economic, environmental and social challenges facing every part of Europe, and rural areas in particular, to be tackled.

EU policies must not encourage a competitive relationship between these two dimensions, but should instead promote cooperation and partnerships. These areas are, in fact, already integrated geographically, administratively and in terms of functional and thematic policies. The complementarity between the two dimensions therefore needs to be highlighted in order to enable new forms of governance among them, in particular through improved access to services, the development of digital technologies and promoting a new Rural Policy 3.0².

The overriding objective of an environmentally, economically and socially robust Europe and greater territorial cohesion can only be achieved if both the urban and the rural dimensions are strong. For that, a strong cohesion policy is needed after 2020. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the inclusion of territories from more than one Member State in these functional systems (cross-border and transnational cooperation). **Special attention must be paid to the specific issues that arise in these cross-border functional areas (urban or rural).**

As the #CohesionAlliance³ declared, cohesion policy works as a long-term investment policy for all regions in Europe to support growth and jobs at local and regional level by promoting innovative solutions for issues such as climate change and energy transition, social inclusion, and for cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation.

2. Main goal of the event:

This is an **event co-organised by the European Committee of the Regions in close cooperation with the province of Carinthia and within the framework of the #CohesionAlliance campaign.** This #CohesionAlliance campaign was launched by the CoR and the major European territorial associations on 9 October 2017. It has already received the support of the vast majority of regions and local authorities of the European Union.

This event will provide an opportunity for political representatives – within the ongoing discussion on the proposals for a new regulatory framework after 2020 – to reaffirm their commitment to a strong cohesion policy in the future, with a strengthened territorial approach favouring the implementation of

² <http://www.oecd.org/cfe/regional-policy/rural-policy-3.0.pdf>

³ <https://cor.europa.eu/en/engage/Pages/cohesion-alliance.aspx>

integrated and place-based approaches in functional areas in order to tackle urban-rural imbalances after 2020.

This event will thus be situated in a context of an EU interinstitutional discussion which will enable the participating **Austrian provinces, representatives of European associations of regions and cities and members of the Committee of the Regions and EU institutions** to present the key reasons to support this dimension of cohesion policy and to determine the main arguments and issues concerning the European Commission's proposals, ensuring that cohesion policy will properly address them in future.

It will therefore also be an opportunity to learn more about the main innovations proposed by the European Commission for the upcoming programming period and the policy developments in relation to the concept of functional urban-rural areas (including the territorial instruments proposed by the European Commission).

Draft agenda

*Veranstaltungszentrum Lakeside Spitz
Raum Leibnitz
Lakeside Park Klagenfurt, B11
9020 Klagenfurt*

08.30 Registration

09.00 – 09.15 Opening statements

Welcome speeches:

- **Peter Kaiser**, Governor of Carinthia

09.15 – 10.00 Urban-rural linkages to reinforce territorial cohesion in the European Union

The roundtable will look at the different kinds of integrated development tools (integrated territorial investment and community-led local development) to tackle the challenges faced by functional urban-rural areas, and at the lessons the EU should draw from the establishment of these agglomerations.

Statements on the role of cohesion policy to promote integrated territorial development:

- **Corina Crețu**, Commissioner in charge of regional policy⁴ (tbc)
- **Iłona Raugze**, Director of ESPON
- **Gérard Peltre**, President of the European Movement for Rurality

10.00 – 10.15 Coffee break

⁴ May be replaced by Normunds Popens, Deputy Director-General, DG REGIO, European Commission (tbc)

10.15 – 12.15 Integrated urban-rural development within the future CAP and cohesion policy

This session will consider whether better synergies between the future EU cohesion and agricultural policies can respond to the challenges of urban-rural cooperation in an effective and integrated way.

Chair: Peter Fritz, Head of Brussels Office of Austrian Broadcasting Company

Panellists:

- **Andrey Novakov (EPP/BG)**, Member of the European Parliament and co-rapporteur on the Common Provisions Regulations (tbc)
- **Andrea Cozzolino (S&D/IT)**, Member of the European Parliament and rapporteur on the ERDF (tbc)
- **Michiel Rijsberman (ALDE/NL)**, CoR member and rapporteur of the opinion on ERDF
- **Mercedes Bresso (S&D/IT)**, Member of the European Parliament and Chair of RUMRA (tbc)
- **Guillaume Cros (PES/FR)**, CoR member and rapporteur of the opinion on "The reform of the CAP "
- **Martin Eichinger (EPP/AT)**, Minister of Lower Austria in charge of Housing, Labour and International Relations
- **Christian Illedits (PES/AT)**, President of the Regional Assembly of Burgenland
- **Brigitta Pallauf (EPP/AT)**, President of the Regional Assembly of Salzburg
- **Ms Christine Oppitz-Plörer (EPP/AT)**, Chair of CEMR Financial Committee and First Vice-Mayor of Innsbruck

Speakers from the room:

- **Carinthia ministers**

12.15 – 12:30 Conclusions

- **Karl-Heinz Lambertz**, President of the European Committee of the Regions

12.30 Press conference

12.30 Networking reception
