



Bringing Europe
closer to its people

Brussels, 29 June 2021

The place of regions in the European Union architecture in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe

The current pandemic has once again shown the importance of regional and local authorities* in delivering protection for European citizens, be it through the provision of healthcare and social services or by assisting businesses in the economic recovery. One of the key factors for dealing successfully with current challenges is a multilevel-governance approach that should be strictly reflected in the EU decision-making process. The Conference on the Future of Europe provides an opportunity to reflect on the place of regions in the European Union architecture in order to reinforce its democratic legitimacy and strengthen trust among citizens.

The 27 EU Member States vary in how their legislative and administrative powers are divided among different governance levels. Many have unitary and centralised systems while, in seven Member States, regions hold strong legislative powers and a degree of autonomy. Overall, local and regional authorities implement 70% of all EU legislation and represent one-third of public spending and about half of public investment. An *Alliance of Regions for European Democracy*, including both the parliamentary and executive levels, should be built. This Alliance should gradually include *all* of the European Union's regions and equivalent territorial units and should work closely with their representative bodies, with the purpose of increasing their legitimate impact on EU decision-making, reflecting their competences and common interests.

Bearing in mind the legitimate objective of enhancing the role of regions in EU policy-making, regional governments, parliaments and councils agree on making better use of the European Committee of the Regions and its remit set out in the Treaties, where appropriate, in order to better meet people's needs in the places where they live. Therefore, we, representatives of regions from all 27 European Union Member States, declare that:

1. We are convinced that the basic premise of democracy is the trust of the citizens as expressed by their vote in local, regional, national and European elections. Regions, and in particular regions with legislative powers, hold legal and political responsibility for shaping and implementing the European Union's legislation and bring added value to the European Union. Regions and their political leaders are close to their people and help strengthen citizens' trust in European democracy. In line with the subsidiarity and proportionality principles, regions play a fundamental role within the European Union's Member States. Therefore, existing evidence-based initiatives, such as the European Committee of the Regions' RegHub network for monitoring the implementation of European legislation and the European Commission's Fit for Future platform are welcome and should be further developed with support from European Union resources.
2. We are committed to using the Conference on the Future of Europe to establish a dialogue with citizens and we see the Conference as an opportunity to develop a discussion on the place of regions in the European Union's democratic architecture and to strengthen trust among European citizens. Our long-term political objective is to enhance the regions' political impact at the European level on matters with direct relevance to the work of local and regional authorities.
3. We are convinced that the European Committee of the Regions is one valuable way of representing our institutional and political objectives. Within this framework, we are, among other things, working together as a political Alliance of Regions for European Democracy. We are committed to using our expertise and democratic mandate to ensure that our deeper involvement makes the voices and needs of our citizens better heard and followed up with action at the European level.

Together, let's support the House of European Democracy, where the European Union is the protective roof, the Member States are the strong walls and the local, intermediate and regional authorities its solid foundations. Let's bring Europe closer to people and the places where they live.



European Committee of the Regions



GOVERNO DOS AÇORES



RÉGION SUD
PROVENCE ALPES CÔTE D'AZUR



Junta de Andalucía



LANDTAG VON BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG



State Parliament and State Government of Bavaria, Germany

Abgeordnetenhaus BERLIN



Bratislava Region, Slovakia



Parliament of the Canary Islands, Spain



REGION of CENTRAL MACEDONIA



CONFERENCE OF ITALIAN REGIONS AND AUTONOMOUS PROVINCES



PARLAMENT der Deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaft Belgiens



HESSISCHER LANDTAG



Gobierno de La Rioja



Autonomous Community of Madrid, Spain



LANDTAG Mecklenburg-Vorpommern



LANDTAG NIEDERSACHSEN

LANDTAG RHEINLAND-PFALZ



State Parliament and Government of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany



LANDTAG VON SACHSEN-ANHALT



SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEINISCHER LANDTAG



Government of Timis County, Romania



FÉDÉRATION WALLONIE-BRUXELLES



West Pomeranian Voivodeship, Poland

* In this declaration the term "regional and local Authorities" refers to public institutions with legal personality, components of the State structure, below the level of central government and accountable to citizens. Regional and local authorities are usually composed of a deliberative or policy-making body (council or assembly) and an executive body (the Mayor or other executive officer), directly or indirectly elected or selected at local level. The term encompasses different tiers of government, e.g. villages, municipalities, districts, counties, provinces, regions, etc. This also includes intermediate authorities.

