

Changing the way the EU works: Regional parliaments launch initiative to strengthen their role in EU law- making



European Committee of the Regions to coordinate debates across regions to the EU legislative process

□The European Committee of the Regions ([CoR](#)) and the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies ([CALRE](#)) launched a pilot project today to strengthen the involvement of regional parliaments with legislative competences in the EU legislative process.

The initiative “Input from political debates in regional parliaments” was launched today during the [9th Subsidiarity Conference](#) held in the Italian Senate in Rome. The topics of the regional debates held across Europe will be used to feed the EU legislative process early on during the drafting of the annual European Commission [work programme](#). The Committee – the EU’s assembly of local and regional governments – will oversee the project, collating input, thereby ensuring the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity and that decisions are taken as close to citizens, with the EU only acting when it is viewed as being more effective than at the national, regional or local level.

The Committee’s President **Karl-Heinz Lambertz**, who is also President of Belgium’s German-speaking Community Parliament, said: “This initiative fires the starting gun on involving regional parliaments’ in EU policy making at an early stage. This project comes at a perfect moment just before the EU launches its Conference on the Future of Europe to reconnect with its citizens. We need to maximise the impact of every EU law by involving the right level of government – including those closest to citizens – regions and cities – throughout the policy-making to ensure they impact on daily life. The outcome of these regional parliament debates will be shared with the European Commission and contribute to future policy-making. It is not about less Europe, but an effective Europe that delivers results, putting citizens first”.

The President of the Italian Senate **Maria Elisabetta Alberti Casellati**, opened the conference and stressed how urgent is for the European Union and its Member States to provide adequate answers to citizens requests of counting more in EU decisions.

The initiative was endorsed by **Antonio Tajani**, Chair of the European Parliament’s Committee on Constitutional Affairs: “The pilot project goes in the right direction and aims at a stronger involvement of regional

parliaments in EU decision making. Regions' role is vital in implementing EU policies ranging from agriculture to tourism, from transport to health. Regional councillors should be part of the forthcoming Conference on the future of Europe, which will be called by President von der Leyen next year. Only by involving democratically elected representatives can we bring EU institutions closer to citizens" he said.

A priority that is fully shared by the coordinator of the Italian association of the Presidents of regional councils **Rosa D'Amelio**: "The Legislative Assemblies of regions are ready to contribute to the process of the Conference on the future of Europe which must be the embryo of a true European public space".

The input from regional parliaments during this project will be used to contribute to the early stage of EU decision-making. All EU regional parliaments with legislative power are welcome to participate the project "by contacting the CALRE secretariat (calre2020@parcan.es) by **24 January 2020**. Participating parliaments will be selected shortly after the closing date with debates expected to take place between 1 March and 15 May 2020.

It complements another project being organised by the Committee – the [Regional Hubs](#) (RegHubs) project launched in 2019 – where 36 regions are assessing the effectiveness of a selected number of EU policies currently being implemented like public procurement and air quality.

Note for Editors:

The **Subsidiarity Conference** is led by the European Committee of the Regions every two years with the aim of boosting the momentum of inter-institutional subsidiarity monitoring work and allowing real dialogue between all partners involved in the subsidiarity monitoring process. The Rome event is the ninth of these conferences, each of which has been held in a different EU Member State.

Subsidiarity ensures that the EU can only act when it is more effective than the national, regional or local levels in tackling certain issues. It is about ensuring that there is sufficient added value in all the EU's actions.

The concept of Active Subsidiarity is a new way of working that takes the traditional approach to subsidiarity a step further. It encourages all institutional, national and sub-national actors to contribute constructively to improving the added value of EU legislation throughout the policymaking cycle. The Active Subsidiarity approach was proposed by the CoR during the [Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and Doing Less More Efficiently](#) established by the current European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in November 2017 and chaired by Vice-President Frans Timmermans. The concept of Active Subsidiarity was taken up in the [European Commission's Communication on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality in October 2018](#) .