

# Commission launches two projects to support cooperation and innovation in Romanian regions and cities

The Commission is launching two projects to provide expertise to Romanian regions and cities, in cooperation with the Romanian government and the World Bank.

Under the first project, Commission and World Bank experts will help Romanian county capitals develop stronger links with their periphery and use EU funding for projects that benefit the whole urban area, not only the main economic centre. For example, experts will study how to expand urban transport networks or how to cooperate better in the field of public services to make them more accessible.

Under the second project, a group of experts will help the eight Romanian regions to improve their innovation capacity and enhance cooperation between research centres and businesses to develop innovative products for the market. This project is launched under the "[Catching up Regions](#)" initiative, which helps low-income and low-growth regions catch up with the rest of the EU.

Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations and Regional Policy, Johannes **Hahn** said: *"Romania will benefit from significant resources to invest in sustainable urban development in the next-long term EU budget 2021-2027. The work of Commission and World Bank experts together with the Romanian authorities will help pave the way for the success of these investments. In parallel, we are providing tailored support to Romanian regions so they can capitalise on their assets, cooperate with each other and become more innovative."*

## **Better cooperation between Romanian county capitals and their periphery**

The project will focus on helping cities develop joint projects in the following sectors: public transport, environment and circular economy, digitalisation, entrepreneurship and education. The aim is to provide better services to citizens, make more efficient use of public funding and make sure positive spillovers reach surrounding, smaller towns as well.

Concretely, Commission and World Bank experts will help Romanian cities identify sectors with great potential for inter-municipal cooperation, help them design joint project, make the best use of EU funding and set the right administrative conditions for a lasting cooperation between partners.

The project is financed with €500,000 from the European Regional Development Fund. By the end of this year, the experts will issue a report with specific recommendations that should help Romania with the planning of several billion euros earmarked for urban investments and regional innovation in the next

long-term EU budget 2021-2027.

### **More innovative regions**

Romanian regions will receive tailored Commission and World Bank expertise in order to better commercialise research projects, build capacity for technology transfer, create jobs in research and innovation (R&I) and promote innovation in local small and medium businesses. The experts will help the regions to:

- support selected, high-potential research teams in the North East and North West regions and help them bring their innovative ideas to the market;
- facilitate the transfer and dissemination of knowledge and new technology between research organisations and businesses;
- promote public-private cooperation, helping public research organisations from the North East and North West regions to increase and improve R&I services provided to companies;
- help entrepreneurs from all Romanian regions test and improve the commercial viability of their prototypes, in view of creating a robust pipeline of projects ready to receive European and national funding in the future.

The project will be carried out until end 2020, with a budget of €2 million from the European Regional Development Fund. €110 million of funding is still available under the 2014-2020 [Regional Operational Programme](#) to support research activities linked to [smart specialisation](#) and technology transfer.

### **Background**

The [Catching up Regions](#) initiative has been launched by the Commission to study what holds back growth and investment in low-income and low-growth regions in the EU and how EU funds can be best used to address these challenges.

In 2016, a pilot phase was launched in the Romanian North East and North West regions with the help of the [Joint Research Centre](#) with the aim to develop, update and refine their [smart specialisation strategies](#), i.e. regional industrial and innovation strategies based on local competitive strengths, resulting in a set of projects that are currently being financed.

These projects will contribute to the design of the new Cohesion Policy programmes. For 2021-2027, the Commission proposed a total allocation of more than €30.8 billion in Cohesion Policy funding for Romania, €6.1 billion more than in the current period.