

# COVID-19: the EU Committee of regions to launch an exchange platform to support regional and local communities across Europe



*□An exchange platform will help sharing needs and solutions, will enhance mutual support and act as a feedback mechanism to enable a reality check of the EU measures from the local and regional angle. The CoR will provide local communities with regular and practical information about EU actions.*

**The European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has defined an Action plan to support and assist local and regional authorities on the forefront of the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic. The five-points Plan includes the launch of an exchange platform to help local and regional leaders sharing their needs and solutions and to enhance mutual support between local communities across Europe. It will also enable CoR Members to give their feedback on the EU actions already put in place, allowing a policy reality check from the ground. The CoR will provide regular and practical information about EU measures, with particular focus on the financing opportunities.**

The Action Plan – endorsed today via video conference by the CoR Conference of Presidents\* – calls EU institutions to foster EU support to local leaders via an EU Health Emergency Mechanism aiming, between others, at coordinating the distribution of essential medical equipment throughout the EU. To address the health, social and economic needs of the people, local and regional leaders need to protect their economies. The Action Plan asks for financial support for local businesses and people faced with unemployment and for EU support for tailor-made regional recovery strategies, currently drawn up by many EU regions to stabilise the economy.

**Commenting the endorsement of the Action Plan, the President of the European Committee of the Regions, Apostolos Tzitzikostas, said:** *“Our CoR members and all EU’s regional and local leaders are making extraordinary efforts in the fight against the pandemic. In these difficult times we must be united and act responsibly. Many Presidents of Regions and Mayors have asked me to establish an exchange platform that will allow CoR members and EU local and regional leaders to share their needs, feedback and ideas and to elaborate common solutions. The Action Plan will also allow to better target local communities’ healthcare needs and to address the social and economic aspects of the pandemic and their impact on local and regional authorities”.*

Within its institutional role, the CoR is the interface and reference point between the European Union and its local and regional governments. In the framework of the current crisis, it is ready to assist, inform, engage and represent regions and cities across Europe. In operational and concrete terms, the CoR Action Plan will:

- 1) foster EU support to local and regional authorities in the health sector, via the call for an EU Health Emergency Mechanism;
- 2) create a platform to exchange, cooperate and facilitate mutual support between cities and regions across EU;
- 3) provide, through CoR mechanisms, concrete feedback from the local and regional angle on how to address the health, social and economic aspects of the pandemic and their impact on the people and their local communities;
- 4) provide regular, practical information to local and regional authorities on EU measures to address the crisis;
- 5) facilitate a reality check on the ground of the EU's measures to fight the pandemic; gather evidence from Members to improve EU policies based on the experiences of the local and regional level (policy health check).

These actions and measures will be accompanied by communication targeted actions to explain what the EU is doing to assist and support local communities in their fight against the Coronavirus pandemic.

\* The Conference of Presidents of the European Committee of the Regions:

**Apostolos Tzitzikostas**, President of the European Committee of the Regions and Governor of the Region of Central Macedonia, Greece

**Vasco Ilídio Alves Cordeiro**, First Vice-President of the European Committee of the Regions and President of the Regional Government of the Azores, Portugal

**Olgierd Geblewicz**, President of the EPP Group in the European Committee of the Regions and President of the Westpomeranian Region, Poland

**Christophe Rouillon**, President of the PES Group in the European Committee of the Regions and Mayor of Coulaines, France

**François Decoster**, President of the Renew Europe Group in the European Committee of the Regions and Mayor of St Omer, France

**Władysław Ortyl**, President of the ECR Group in the European Committee of the Regions and President of the Podkarpackie Region, Poland

**Kieran McCarthy**, President of the EA Group in the European Committee of the Regions and Member of the Cork City Council, Ireland

**Satu Haapanen**, co-President of the Greens Group in the European Committee of the Regions and City Councillor of Oulu, Finland

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