

Nikola Dobroslavic appointed European Committee of the Regions rapporteur for the EU long-term budget

Cities and regions also discussed cross-border cooperation, low-emission mobility and the Urban Agenda

□ **How to boost growth and cohesion in EU border regions and how to deliver on low-emission mobility, as well as the state of implementation of the Urban Agenda were the main topics discussed during the meeting of the commission for territorial cohesion policy and the EU budget (COTER) of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR). Also on the agenda was the appointment of the member responsible for shaping the position of cities and regions on the future EU budget.**

On 2 May, the European Commission will present the proposal for the next EU long-term budget. During the commission meeting, COTER members appointed **Nikola Dobroslavic** (HR/EPP), Prefect of Dubrovnik-Neretva County, as rapporteur for the “MFF framework beyond 2020 package” with the task of shaping the position of regions and cities on the financial plan for the future of Europe over the next decade.

The local and regional representatives also adopted three opinions, which will move to the CoR plenary session on 4-5 July for final discussion and adoption by the full CoR assembly.

– The potential of EU border regions is at the heart of the [draft opinion](#) drawn up by **János Karácsony** (HU/EPP), Member of Tahitótfalu Council. The rapporteur points out that legal, administrative, physical and cultural obstacles need to be addressed in order to strengthen cooperation between EU border regions. The complexity of the current systems is a particular burden on local and regional authorities and deters small-scale projects or small associations and NGOs from applying for support despite having excellent project proposals.

He further defends a strong budget for European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) under the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), as “*supporting ETC initiatives offers extremely high European added value by boosting economic growth and cohesion, as well as by building a better EU for citizens,*” said Mr Karácsony.

– Cross-border cooperation also plays an important role in the [draft opinion](#) on low-emission mobility drawn up by **Michiel Scheffer** (NL/ALDE), member of the executive council of the province of Gelderland. He argues that cities and regions need to cooperate with neighbouring and cross-border regions to keep the infrastructure interoperable when changing to alternative fuels.

Only if the infrastructure for alternative fuels and services such as public transport remain accessible and reliable, will consumers be willing to support the change.

The rapporteur further calls on the European Commission to provide for enough budgetary resources to support the regional deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure and clean vehicles, and to promote EU-wide economies of scale to make the transition affordable for local and regional authorities. He also points out that changes in transport systems must account for regional differences in traffic density and distances.

“Spatial and urban planning can promote the use of clean forms of mobility such as walking, cycling, public transport and electric cars. We also need to be aware of the fact that these forms of transport are not an option everywhere. We should not discriminate against remote or peripheral areas through higher costs for accessing the European network which would undermine territorial and social cohesion,” said Mr Scheffer.

– Achieving sustainable and efficient urban mobility is only one of the priorities of the [Urban Agenda](#) for the EU, which started with the Pact of Amsterdam in May 2016. Cork city Councillor **Kieran McCarthy** (IE/EA), focuses in his [draft opinion](#) on the assessment of the implementation of the Urban Agenda, and calls on the EU institutions to reaffirm their commitment and place the process on a formal footing.

“The Urban Agenda offers too much potential to improve the way in which our cities will work in future to be restricted to a mere high quality networking exercise . It must instead be recognised as a binding political declaration, with tangible investments and outcomes which have real legitimacy and an impact on legislation,” said Mr McCarthy.

Also on the agenda of the meeting was a presentation on the progress of Territorial Impact Assessment activities by DG REGIO and JRC and an initial exchange of views on port reception facilities for the delivery of waste from ships, which will feed into the draft opinion by **Spyros Spyridon** (EL/EPP), Municipal Councillor of Poros.

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