

# National recovery plans can make the Green Deal real but only if cities and regions are fully brought on board



The Green Deal Going Local working group of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) held its sixth meeting today with the green recovery as its top priority. Members discussed the importance of involving local and regional authorities in the implementation phase of the national recovery and resilience plans (NRRPs) which will support the European green transition in the next years. The meeting took place while the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen continues her tour through the EU capitals to hand over the endorsement of NRRPs to European leaders, and “make” the recovery “real”.

Opening the meeting, [Juan Espadas](#) (ES/PES), Mayor of Seville and Chair of the [Green Deal Going Local](#) Working Group and of the [CoR's ENVE commission](#), said: *“The post-pandemic recovery and the EU Green Deal must run in parallel. The Next Generation EU funds are the right response to build a greener and more sustainable Europe, but achieving this will require strengthening multi-level governance and fully involving local and regional authorities. Cities and regions have the knowledge and ideas for green recovery projects but also the overview of territorial disparities. They will guarantee a just transition that leaves no one behind.”*

[Michael Murphy](#) (IE/EPP), Chair of the [CoR's ECON commission](#) and member of Tipperary County Council, said: *“Indeed green local recovery is essential. Local and regional authorities have key remits in the field of green transition. This is one of the reasons why the ECON Commission has strongly advocated for the involvement of regions and cities in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans. We have had a reasonably positive dialogue with the European Commission and a promising one in particular with the European Parliament on this matter. This has led to the obligation for Member states to report on the consultation of local and regional authorities to draft the NRRPs.”*

Members exchanged views on the [Resilience Recovery Facility](#) (RRF) with Florian Flackenecker, from the [European Commission's Recovery & Resilience Task Force](#), who recalled the importance of using the recovery resources not only to invest but also to carry out reforms able to build a medium to long-term resilience rather than a short-term recovery. Mr Flackenecker celebrated the fact that all the NRRPs already endorsed by the European Commission exceed the minimum 37% dedicated to support climate investments and reforms, and highlighted that local and regional authorities will be key in the implementation of the plans and in achieving their objectives.

Last week, the European Commission endorsed the first bunch of national

recovery and resilience plans with the CoR requesting the Council of the EU to quickly greenlight national plans so that the first resources can reach concrete projects on the ground by July, helping to boost the digital and green transitions and to strengthen cohesion.

[József Kóbor](#) (HU/EA), the representative of European Alliance in the Green Deal Going Local working group said: *“The active involvement of local and regional authorities in the implementation of national recovery plans will be critical for the success of the Green Deal. Cities and municipalities like my own, Pecs, are taking ambitious actions to improve energy efficiency of buildings and electrify public transport, to name just two. It is crucial that money is wisely spent on sustainable investments that match the needs of European territories and we call for monitoring systems to track the implementation of climate action and green recovery at local and regional level.”*

The representative of The Greens in the Green Deal Going Local working group, [Bernd Voss](#) (DE/The Greens), said: *“The biggest mistake would be to see the social dimension pinned against the green recovery. The two must be addressed jointly. Courts across Europe are becoming ever clearer: Climate protection is more than just a basic right, it is also a fundamental necessity if we want to shape Europe and rebuild in a socially and just way. It is a question of freedom for us and future generations. It is a matter of intergenerational equality and freedom.”*

[Tjisse Stelpstra](#) (NL/ECR), representing the ECR in the working group, stated: *“All levels of government are required to achieve the goals of the European Green Deal and economic recovery from the COVID-pandemic. Local and regional authorities and their citizens need to be involved in the National Recovery and Resilience Plans. Furthermore, when talking about the Green Deal, we should not forget about combining sustainability with economic growth.”*

[Arianna Maria Censi](#) (IT/PES), member of the Milan Municipal Council shared Milan’s experience in urban reforestation: *“Environmental sustainability affects not only our own lives, but those of future generations. In this context, the Metropolitan City of Milan, as part of the [ForestaMi project](#), will contribute to planting 3 million trees by 2030 in the Milan metropolitan area. This is not only an important intervention of sustainable forestation, CO2 abatement and development of green infrastructures, but also an attempt to return services of social value to the territory, whose ultimate goal is the well-being of citizens and local communities, contributing to physical and mental health.”*

The meeting included a presentation of the [Network of European Regions Using Space Technologies](#) (NEREUS) [Władysław Ortyl](#) (PL/ECR), President of the Podkarpackie Region and Vice-President of NEREUS, said: *“The visibility of regions as important players in economic life, in particular in space, is becoming more relevant and important. Local and regional authorities can play a key role in the coordination of space policies and NEREUS is a reflection of that. Our flagship project is Copernicus for Regions, which demonstrates how regions use space data for monitoring biodiversity and the impact of*

*natural disasters.”*

[Andres Jaadla](#) (EE/Renew Europe), CoR Rapporteur on the [CoR's opinion on the EU Space Programme](#), said: *“The use of space technology deserves its fair share of consideration when we speak about fighting climate change! Regions are the key users and procurers of space-based applications, products and services and as such they are in the ideal position to implement the key goals of the climate transition, the EU Space strategy and EU space programme 2021 – 2027 making the Green Deal Going local!”*

Background:

The [‘Green Deal Going Local’](#) working group is a new initiative of the European Committee of the Regions that aims at placing cities and regions at the core of the European Green Deal and ensure that both the EU’s sustainable growth strategy and the COVID-19 recovery plan translate into direct funding for cities and regions and tangible projects for every territory,

The CoR’s ‘Green Deal Going Local’ working group is [composed of thirteen members](#).

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