

Regional leaders call to avoid competition between cohesion policy and over-centralised EU Recovery Plan



“The CoR’s President invited the EU Ministers responsible for cohesion policy to create real partnership among EU, national, regional and local actors to deliver the recovery that our citizens need

The President of the European Committee of the Regions Apostolos Tzitzikostas intervened today at the informal meeting of Ministers responsible for cohesion policy. The debate focused on how to ensure synergies between cohesion policy and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the EUR 672.5 billion instrument that is the cornerstone of the recovery instrument Next Generation EU, known also as the [Recovery Plan for Europe](#).

During his intervention, [Apostolos Tzitzikostas](#), President of the European Committee of the Regions and Governor of the region of Central Macedonia, said: *“Cohesion is by far more than a policy, it is one of the fundamental values on which we have built our Union and the driving compass for the EU’s most powerful investment tools. The pandemic has a differentiated socio-economic impact and all recovery measures need to take this reality into account. We must absolutely avoid any competition between structural funds and the RRF, where key investments are channelled through a strongly centralised facility, simply because the rules are easier and there is no need for national co-financing. Only a true partnership among EU, national, regional and local actors can deliver the recovery that our citizens need. This is why I have used today’s opportunity to ask ministers to help us strengthen this partnership in every country.”*

In October 2020, the CoR adopted its [opinion on the RRF](#), and repeatedly warned against the risks of overlap or even competition among funding tools. [Christophe Rouillon](#) (FR/PES), Mayor of Coulaines and the CoR’s rapporteur-general on the RRF, highlighted that: *“we must welcome the Portuguese Presidency’s aspiration to maximize synergies between cohesion policy and national recovery and resilience plans at the operational level. In our view, these synergies would a priori be best guaranteed if the national plans also applied the principle of partnership with local and regional authorities, which is the DNA of cohesion policy. As national plans come in, we must ensure that these plans do not harm cohesion through the so-called structural reforms. To avoid this, the Commission and the Council must share their analyses of the national plans not only with the European Parliament but also with the European Committee of the Regions.”*

Based on the results of an [ad hoc study](#), the CoR is now preparing an own-initiative opinion on engaging local and regional authorities in the preparation of partnership agreements and operational programmes during the 2021-2027 period. [Juraj Droba](#) (SK/ECR), President of the Bratislava Self-

Governing Region and rapporteur on the opinion, stated: *“The principles of partnership and multilevel governance are prerequisites for the preparation of quality strategic documents that will reflect the real needs of our territories. Therefore, we want to have our voices heard and be fully-fledged partners for our governments and EU institutions.”*

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