

Resolution of the Committee of the Regions on the ‘Stronger involvement of local and regional authorities in the Europe 2020 Strategy’

(2010/C 267/02)

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. **welcomes** the proposal of the Commission for a more efficient strategy for growth and jobs, which should meet the new objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth through the means of a strong ownership and partnership of various levels of governments;

2. **emphasises** that Cohesion policy, with its devolved approach and system of multilevel governance, is the only European Union policy to link the goals of the Europe 2020 strategy and the new challenges with local and regional authorities, but it does need sufficient funding. It is therefore essential that cohesion policy continue to be geared towards the goals of sustainable economic growth, social inclusion, employment, fight against climate change and the quality and efficiency of public service provision;

3. **proposes** that under cohesion policy, the major share of available resources must continue to go to the neediest and most problem-ridden Member States and regions of the European Union in order to help reduce the development gaps and thus make a practical contribution both to securing fairness of opportunity for the regions and to fostering European solidarity;

4. **regrets** that the proposed Europe 2020 strategy, similar to the Lisbon Strategy, does not properly take into account the role and contribution of regions and cities as sub-national governments of the 27 Member States which, due to their respective national legislative competences, can bring a real added value to reach the planned objectives as regards: social and economic development, education, climate change, research and innovation, social inclusion and fight against poverty;

5. **requests** the European Commission and the European Council to respect subsidiarity principle in the policy areas relevant for regional and local authorities which are often responsible for substantial policy competences and are key actors in delivering both the current Lisbon Strategy and the future Europe 2020 strategy;

6. **welcomes**, in this respect, the recent reference by the European Parliament to the importance of involving the local and regional authorities in the Strategy and **asks** to follow the European Parliament’s proposal made to the European Commission and the European Council to ‘take into account the advice of the Committee of the Regions on the EU 2020 Strategy’;

PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TERRITORIAL PACT OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES ON EUROPE 2020 STRATEGY

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

7. **proposes** to strongly support the proposal launched in the European Parliament to establish a ‘Territorial Pact of Regional

and Local Authorities on Europe 2020 Strategy’ having as objective to ensure a multi-level ownership of the future strategy through an effective partnership between the European, national, regional and local public authorities, especially when it comes to the design and implementation of the Europe 2020 headline targets and flagship initiatives; the Territorial Pact should be facilitated by the Committee of the Regions which has already developed a Europe 2020 Monitoring Platform with about 120 regional and local authorities involved;

8. **recommends** that the main activities should be twofold:

a) **Policy scrutiny and Implementation:**

- to constantly assess the capacity and the needs of regional and local authorities in order to be able to meet the Europe 2020’s headline targets;
- to encourage a full involvement of regional and local governments in reaching the Europe 2020’s objectives, according to the competences of each Member State;

b) **Governance and Communication:**

- to help contributing to the Europe 2020 inter-institutional partnership through a coordinated dialogue between the Committee of the Regions - as EU assembly of regional and local representatives - with, on one side, the European Institutions and on the other side with the Member States;
- to help communicate the objectives of Europe 2020 strategy to regions and cities and facilitate an exchange of good practices between local and regional policy makers;

9. **strongly encourages** Member States to help their regions and cities to establish national territorial pacts, in order to set-up, jointly with their central governments, national objectives and commitments towards the Europe 2020 objectives, with full respect of the national legislative framework;

10. **considers** that the added-value of regional and local authorities to the Europe 2020 strategy’s seven flagship initiatives could be the following:

10.1 **Flagship Initiative: ‘Resource efficient Europe’:** enhancing the effectiveness of the Covenant of Mayors to ensure that LRAs are fully involved in the conception, development, adoption and implementation of national climate change strategies and actions plans; developing a climate friendly infrastructure of regional and local public administrations; fostering green public procurement; encouraging green production and consumption by local companies; improve the governance and awareness raising on climate change;

10.2 Flagship Initiative: 'An industrial policy for the globalisation era': improving the legislative framework on public-private partnerships, simplifying public procurement legislation, including the use of e-procurement; reconciliation of work and family life through a better quality of public services; cutting red tape; support to Small and medium-sized enterprises; information, better access to credit and funding, training and advice to SMEs; further develop the CoR initiative 'European Entrepreneurial Region' to stimulate local and regional authorities to look at new ways of generating long-term economic growth through entrepreneurship;

10.3 Flagship Initiative: 'An Agenda for new skills and jobs': since local and regional authorities are large employers in the EU's Member States and because of the role they often play in providing education, training and measures supporting the labour market, they are key actors in delivering flexicurity policies; preparing people for integration into the labour market; improve the quality of education and training, including life long learning, and matching the supply of skills with labour market; develop the 'Erasmus programme for local and regional civil servants and for elected representatives' to contribute to a better knowledge of the management of public affairs;

10.4 Flagship Initiative: 'European Platform against Poverty': developing a territorialised social inclusion agenda to make local social services more effective and accessible to all and integrating people who are excluded from the labour market; better complementarity between EU funds addressing social inclusion and fight against poverty while using legal competences and tailored programmes to the local needs; creating a new dimension for combating poverty by recognizing the explicit needs of women in the workplace and as entrepreneurs through a new European Framework for Women's Economic Development and Enterprise; recognising the need for a focus on young people and

children; establishment of regional observatories to monitor indicators and policies related to social inclusion;

10.5 Flagship initiative 'Innovation Union': reform of the Research and Development and innovation systems; ensuring the regions contribute to achieving the 3 % targets, regional cross-border projects and the use of EGTC; enhancing cooperation between universities, regional research centres and the private sector, strengthening the use of EU programmes and structural funds; contribution to the Programming of European Research Area; participation to the 'European Innovation Partnerships'.

10.6 Flagship initiative: 'Youth on the move': modernising the agenda of higher education especially in terms of governance and financing; exchange of best-practice; contributing to the regional dimension of the National Action Plans; further developing the 'European Youth Capital' initiative; integrated action covering guidance, counselling and apprenticeships; promote learning mobility through projects financed by European Structural Funds;

10.7 Flagship Initiative: 'A Digital Agenda for Europe': Interoperability between European central, regional and local administrations; increased use of e-government to improve supplying of public services such as education, health, social inclusion, territorial planning, etc.; enhancing literacy in ICT; developing ICT-assisted concepts to disseminate and implement the results of R&D to real life processes; step-up awareness-raising on stimulating the infrastructure upgrade;

11. Instructs its President to send this proposal to establish a 'Territorial Pact of Local and Regional Authorities on Europe 2020 strategy' to the European Institutions and to the Member States in order to properly ensure the role that regional and local authorities in the future Europe 2020 strategy.

Brussels, 10 June 2010

*The President
of the Committee of the Regions*
Mercedes BRESSO