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Euroopa Parlament Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινοβούλιο European Parliament Parlement européen Parlaimint na hEorpa
Europski parlament Parlamento europeo Eiropas Parlaments Europos Parlamentas Európai Parlament
Parlament Ewropew Europees Parlement Parlement Europejski Parlamento Europeu Parlamentul European
Európsky parlament Evropski parlament Euroopan parlamentti Europaparlamentet

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

The Committee of the Regions is made up of 350 members representing the regional and local authorities of the 28 Member States of the European Union. It issues opinions sought on the basis of mandatory (as required by the Treaties) and voluntary consultation and, where appropriate, own-initiative opinions. Its members are not bound by any mandatory instructions. They are independent in the performance of their duties, in the European Union's general interest.

LEGAL BASIS

Article 13(4) of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), Articles 300 and 305 to 307 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), Council Decision (EU) 2015/116 of 26 January 2015 appointing the members and alternate members of the Committee of the Regions for the period from 26 January 2015 to 25 January 2020.

OBJECTIVES

Created in 1994, after the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty, the Committee of the Regions (CoR) is an advisory body which represents the interests of regional and local authorities in the European Union and addresses opinions on their behalf to the Council and the Commission. Members can be, for example, leaders of regional authorities, mayors or elected or non-elected representatives of regions and cities of the 28 EU Member States.

In the words of its mission statement, the CoR is a political assembly of holders of a regional or local electoral mandate serving the cause of European integration. It provides institutional representation for all the EU's territorial areas, regions, cities and municipalities.

Its mission is to involve regional and local authorities in the European decision-making process and thus encourage greater participation by citizens.

In order to better fulfil this role, the CoR has long sought the right to refer cases of infringement of the principle of subsidiarity to the Court of Justice. Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, it now has this right under the terms of Article 8 of Protocol No 2 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

In the field of cohesion policy, the Committee of the Regions, through its Commission on Territorial Cohesion Policy (COTER), focuses on evaluating the outcome of the negotiations on partnership agreements and operational programmes, and fulfilment of the partnership principle in the context of the ESIF programming for 2014-2020, as



well as on the cohesion reports by the Commission. Other topics include mobility in geographically and demographically challenged regions and the two macro-regional strategies on the Adriatic-Ionian region (EUSAIR) and on the Alpine region (EUSALP).

ORGANISATION

A. Composition (Article 305 TFEU, Council Decision 2014/930/EU)

1. Number and national allocation of seats

In accordance with the provisions of Council Decision 2014/930/EU of 16 December 2014, the Committee of the Regions is made up of 350 members and an equal number of alternate members, split between the Member States as follows:

- 24 for Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom;
- 21 for Spain and Poland;
- 15 for Romania;
- 12 for Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden;
- 9 for Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania and Slovakia;
- 7 for Latvia and Slovenia;
- 6 for Estonia;
- 5 for Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta.

2. Method of appointment

Members are appointed for five years by the Council acting unanimously on proposals made by the Member State concerned (Article 305 TFEU). For the period from 26 January 2015 to 25 January 2020, the Council has adopted Decision (EU) 2015/116 of 26 January 2015 appointing the members and alternate members of the Committee of the Regions. The term of office is renewable. Members must either hold a regional or local authority electoral mandate, or be politically accountable to an elected assembly (Article 300(3) TFEU). Every time a member or alternate member's seat on the CoR becomes vacant at the end of their term of office (e.g. at the end of the regional or local mandate on the basis of which the member was proposed), a separate Council decision becomes necessary.

B. Structure (Article 306 TFEU)

The Committee of the Regions elects its President and officers from among its members for a term of two and a half years. It adopts its Rules of Procedure and submits them to the Council for approval (last adopted on 31 January 2014 on the basis of Article 306(2) TFEU). Its work is carried out in six specialist committees, which draw up draft opinions and resolutions that are then submitted for adoption in plenary. As a rule, it holds six plenary sessions per year.

The plenary is chaired by the assembly's [President](#) (Article 306 TFEU), and its main functions are to adopt opinions, reports and resolutions, adopt the Committee's draft estimates of expenditure and revenue, adopt the Committee's political programme



at the beginning of every term, elect the President, the First Vice-President and the remaining members of the Bureau, set up policy commissions within the institution, and adopt and revise the Committee's Rules of Procedure.

In the interests of efficiency, some of its permanent Secretariat's services at its seat in Brussels (see Protocol No 6 on the location of seats of the institutions and of certain bodies, agencies and departments of the EU) are shared with the Secretariat of the European Economic and Social Committee. The European Parliament's Bureau also agreed with the CoR, in the framework of the 2014 budgetary procedure, to jointly realise efficiency gains in the area of translation. The Committee of the Regions (Section 7 of the EU budget) had an administrative budget of approximately EUR 89 million for 2014, with a staff of 532.

ATTRIBUTIONS

A. Opinions issued at the request of other institutions

1. Mandatory consultation

The Council and the Commission are required to consult the Committee of the Regions before taking decisions on matters concerning:

- Education, vocational training and youth (Article 165 TFEU);
- Culture (Article 167 TFEU);
- Public health (Article 168 TFEU);
- Trans-European transport, telecommunications and energy networks (Article 172 TFEU);
- Economic and social cohesion (Articles 175, 177 and 178 TFEU).

2. Voluntary consultation

The Commission, the Council and Parliament may also consult the Committee of the Regions on any other matter as they see fit.

When Parliament, the Council or the Commission consult the Committee of the Regions (whether on a mandatory or voluntary basis), they may set a time limit (at least one month in accordance with Article 307 TFEU) for its response. Should the deadline expire without an opinion being issued, they may proceed without benefit of an opinion.

B. Issuing an opinion on its own initiative

1. When the European Economic and Social Committee is consulted, the Committee of the Regions is informed and may also issue an opinion on the matter if it considers that regional interests are involved.

2. As a general rule, the CoR may issue an opinion whenever it considers such action to be appropriate. The Committee has, for instance, issued opinions on its own initiative in the following areas: small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), trans-



European networks, tourism, structural funds, health (the fight against drugs), industry, urban development, training programmes and the environment.

C. Referral to the Court of Justice of the European Union — ex-post judicial review

The Committee may also institute proceedings before the Court of Justice in order to safeguard the prerogatives allocated to it ([Article 263 TFEU](#)). In other words, it may bring proceedings before the Court of Justice if it considers that it has not been consulted when it should have been or if the consultation procedures have not been applied correctly (annulment of acts ([1.3.10](#))).

The right to bring proceedings under [Article 8 of the Protocol \(No 2\) on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, annexed to the Lisbon Treaty](#), if consultation procedures have not been correctly applied, enables the Committee of the Regions to ask the Court of Justice to ascertain whether a legislative act falling within the Committee's sphere of competence complies with the subsidiarity principle.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The European Parliament's Rules of Procedure (Annex V, point XII) make the Committee on Regional Development (REGI) responsible for maintaining relations with the Committee of the Regions, interregional cooperation organisations and local and regional authorities.

Under the [Cooperation Agreement between the European Parliament and the CoR of 5 February 2014](#):

- The CoR prepares impact assessments on proposed EU legislation, which it sends to Parliament in due time before the start of the amendment procedure. These impact assessments include detail at national, regional and local level on how existing legislation is working, plus opinions on improvements to the proposed legislation;
- One member from the CoR is invited to all relevant Parliament committee meetings. This rapporteur or spokesperson presents the CoR's opinions. In turn, Parliament rapporteurs can attend CoR committee meetings;
- The general legislative cooperation and the work plan are discussed twice a year between the Chair of the Conference of Committee Chairs of Parliament and the Chair's counterpart in the Committee of the Regions.

Since 2008, the REGI Committee and COTER have organised an annual joint meeting in the framework of the 'Open Days: European Week of Regions and Cities' event.

Udo Bux
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