



Европейски парламент Parlamento Europeo Evropský parlament Europa-Parlamentet Europäisches Parlament
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 Parlament 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 329 members representing the regional and local authorities of the 27 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), and various Council decisions appointing the members and alternate members of the Committee, as proposed by the Member States, for their five-year term of office.

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 27 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. It is a political body bringing together and empowering Europe's locally elected representatives, including 329 members and 329 alternate members from 300 regions, 100 000 local authorities and 1 million local politicians representing 441 million EU 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.



According to the CoR's three political priorities for 2020-2025, adopted in July 2020, all decisions taken at EU level to tackle the major societal transformations facing villages, cities and regions today, such as global pandemics, the green and digital transitions, demographic challenges and migratory flows, must be taken as close to citizens as possible in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

Priority 1: Bringing Europe closer to people: democracy and the future of the EU. Modernising and reinforcing democracy at all levels of government in order for the EU to respond more efficiently to people's real needs.

Priority 2: Managing fundamental societal transformations: building resilient regional and local communities, responding to global pandemics, climate, digital and demographic transitions, as well as the flow of migration through a coherent, integrated and local European approach.

Priority 3: Cohesion, our fundamental value: place-based EU policies that put the EU at the service of its people and their places of living. Cohesion is not money, it is a fundamental EU value designed to foster economic, social and territorial cohesion.

ORGANISATION

A. Composition (Article 305 TFEU, Council Decision (EU) 2019/852^[1])

1. Number and national allocation of seats

In accordance with the provisions of [Council Decision \(EU\) 2019/852](#) of 21 May 2019, the Committee of the Regions is made up of 329 members and an equal number of alternate members, split between the Member States as follows:

- 24 for Germany, France and Italy;
- 21 for Spain and Poland;
- 15 for Romania;
- 12 for Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden;
- 9 for Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania and Slovakia;
- 7 for Latvia, Estonia and Slovenia;
- 6 for Cyprus and Luxembourg;
- 5 for 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 2020 to 25 January 2025, the Council adopted [Decision \(EU\) 2019/2157](#) of 10 December 2019 appointing the members and alternate members of the Committee. On 20 January 2020, the Council adopted [Decision \(EU\) 2020/102](#), whereby it also

[1] Council Decision (EU) 2019/852 of 21 May 2019 determining the composition of the Committee of the Regions, OJ L 139, 27.5.2019, p. 13.



appointed the members and alternate members for whom it received proposals from the respective Member State after 20 December 2019. 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 on the basis of Article 306 TFEU and submits them to the Council for approval. As a rule, it holds six plenary sessions per year. According to the political affiliation of its Members, it currently operates in six political groups.

The presidents of those groups meet as the Conference of Presidents, which prepares the work of the Plenary Assembly, the Bureau and the commissions and facilitates the search for political consensus on decisions to be taken.

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 CoR's draft estimates of expenditure and revenue, adopt its 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 its Rules of Procedure.

The CoR's work is carried out in six specialist commissions, which draw up draft opinions and resolutions that are then submitted for adoption in plenary: the Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs (CIVEX), the Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER), the Commission for Economic Policy (ECON), the Commission for Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE), the Commission for Natural Resources (NAT) and the Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC).

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 the seats of the institutions and of certain bodies, offices, 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 to jointly realise efficiency gains in the area of translation. The CoR (Section 7 of the EU budget) has an administrative budget of approximately EUR 100 million.

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 the benefit of an opinion. As an example of voluntary cooperation, in December 2020 the Commission and the CoR agreed a partnership on the integration of migrants with the aim of joining forces to support the work on integration into EU cities and regions. This partnership builds on the CoR's 2019 '[Cities and Regions for Integration](#)' initiative and provides a political platform for European mayors and regional leaders to share information and showcase positive examples of the integration of migrants and refugees.

B. Issuing an opinion on its own initiative

1. Every time 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 VI, point XII](#)) make the Committee on Regional Development (REGI) responsible for maintaining relations with the CoR, 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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