

# #CohesionAlliance



EU-wide support for a strong cohesion policy for every region



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## What is the Alliance?

Currently worth one third of the EU budget, the EU's cohesion policy reduces regional disparities, creates jobs, opens new business opportunities and addresses major global issues such as climate change and migration.

The **#CohesionAlliance** is a coalition of those who believe that EU cohesion policy must continue to be a pillar of the EU's future. The Alliance was created through cooperation between the leading European associations of cities and regions and the European Committee of the Regions. It demands that the EU budget after 2020 makes cohesion policy stronger, more effective, visible and available for every region in the European Union.

From national, regional and local governments to SMEs, NGOs, schools, universities, cultural organisations, anyone who believes in EU cohesion policy is welcome to join the **#CohesionAlliance**.



# Foreword



Communicating about Europe's added value and debating on our Union's future is the only way to regenerate citizens' desire for Europe. In May 2017, EU Commissioners Corina Crețu and Marianne Thyssen launched seven proposals to increase the visibility of cohesion policy across the continent. One of them was a bottom-up campaign revealing how some of the most iconic local or regional projects have been supported or launched thanks to investment from the cohesion policy. What other European policy could have a more tangible and positive impact on the daily life of citizens? Cohesion policy is living proof that Europe is delivering on the ground for every European region: in deprived neighbourhoods, in less advanced territories, through territorial cooperation or in rural or mountainous areas.

Responding to the Commissioners' call, the European Committee of the Regions, together with the major European associations of regions and cities, launched the **#CohesionAlliance** for a strong cohesion policy in the future. Every day, it demonstrates the European added value of the continent's main investment and solidarity policy. Cohesion policy responds to a fundamental objective enshrined in the European Treaties to reduce economic, social and territorial disparities. Its measures to foster social inclusion and better living, to provide growth-supporting investment in times of crisis, to fight climate change, to support industrial policy and to enhance European territorial cooperation are needed to ensure integrity and coherence inside the internal market.

As we want a united European Union, we support a strong cohesion policy after 2020. This means an ambitious budget that matches our ambitions.

**Karl-Heinz Lambertz**

President of the European Committee of the Regions



# Opening statements



A strong renewed cohesion policy for all regions is central to the future of the European Union (EU). Cohesion policy is and should remain at the core of the Europe. It is our most powerful tool, improving the quality of life of citizens. It promotes a unified, strong and competitive Europe through investments in both, developed, and less developed regions.

Cohesion policy is comprehensive yet remains flexible. By this I mean that while the challenges facing Europe are shared, they are best addressed by the regional and local context. Experiences from my region Västra Götaland in Sweden show that the programmes are flexible and provide support in times of need - be it a financial or migration crisis. Through a variety of funds, we are able to pool public resources, synergise and efficiently address the obstacles facing us and provide help for our citizens when needed.

Cohesion policy is vital for all regions - regardless of GDP level. In the case of my region the policy has been crucial for our research and

innovation ecosystem. Without it, some actors would not have been able to develop their research infrastructure. Cohesion policy provides legitimacy and reassures actors that the projects are sound and represent an overall good investment. It has also helped create world class facilities that now compete on a global scale – investments that would not have been possible without Cohesion policy.

Cohesion policy and its multi-level governance structure is unique and something to be treasured. It provides the EU with legitimacy and brings the EU closer to its citizens. In a time of fragmentation, it would be thoughtless to dismantle the only policy whose foundations were built on solidarity. If we want a Europe for all, we need a Cohesion policy for all.

**Magnus  
Berntsson,  
President of  
the Assembly of  
European Regions**



European Cohesion is the concept behind the world's widest supranational integration process initiated in 1957 with the Treaty of Rome. It was re-validated with the first regulation of the Structural Funds in 1988 and consolidated with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. In our opinion, the following development of EU Regional and Cohesion Policy has been a successful EU effort to strengthen European stability and harmonisation through cooperation and solidarity among ALL European territories, which still need to be maintained.

Cohesion has been crucial for the development of regions facing particular challenges, often multiple and complex hurdles, as it is the case of EU border areas. There are strong disparities between EU Member States, but also within every State, and global challenges affect particularly those regions "behind average". In this framework, Cohesion reduces economic, social and territorial differences, breaks down legal and administrative barriers and thus promotes growth and employment in all regions, and allows investments in the real economy, while supporting a polycentric development of the territory with balanced opportunities between agglomerations and metropolitan zones, middle-sized cities and rural areas.

Border and cross-border regions have made a smart use of EU and national solidarity addressing shared difficulties, building stable bridges between societies, based on trust, across national boundaries, and also reacting bottom-up to general challenges. Nevertheless, people living in border regions are still facing considerable organizational and often financial burden when implementing projects and doing business across the border.

EU Cohesion Policy should remain a basic piece of the European Project, addressing all territories and all essential policy areas, guaranteeing better coordination and a wider participatory approach for all political levels, and taking into account the role of the private sector, civil society and the Academia.

**Oliver Paasch,  
President of Association of  
European Border Regions**







CALRE gathers 74 regional parliaments with legislative powers of the European Union – representing, as a whole, about 250 million European citizens – and has, from among its members, regions that are extremely diverse, some considered to be more and less developed, continental, maritime, island, outermost and mountain territories, and all of them, without exception, converge in the uncompromising defense of the EU Cohesion Policy, considered to be an indispensable and fundamental policy to the European project and our collaborative future.

Actually, the Cohesion Policy, in the last three decades, had a decisive contribution to the development of all the European regions and to the decrease of disparities among the different EU territories.

That is why, given the challenges that Europe is facing, CALRE considers that is absolutely undesirable a possible devaluation of the Cohesion Policy in the period after 2020, either as a result of less financing and reduction of its total weight in the Union's budget,

either of its dilution for other goals and European policies, either still of its substitution for exclusively financial mechanisms or the restriction of its applicability to the less developed regions. On the contrary, the cohesion policy should continue to be the EU main tool of investment in Europe's regions and territories after 2020.

In conclusion, is time to unite and converge for the defense of European Union's fundamental principles, such as cohesion and solidarity. That is why CALRE joined, since the very beginning, to the **#CohesionAlliance**. Europe needs a strong and efficient Cohesion Policy, in each and all of its regions.



**Ana Luí,**  
**President of**  
**Conference of**  
**European Regional**  
**Legislative Assemblies**



From hyper-connected capital regions to outermost regions – as my region the Azores – Cohesion Policy offers equal opportunities to European citizens irrespective of where they live.

This is the only EU policy with such strong territorial approach, investing on the basis of needs defined by those who know best on the ground.

The European Structural and Investment Funds enable regions to be better prepared to face the pressing challenges of unemployment, economic development, climate change, internal security, migration and demographic change. On the other hand, most of these challenges are EU priorities and can only be realized on the ground by EU policies which are owned at regional level and by citizens – such as Cohesion Policy.

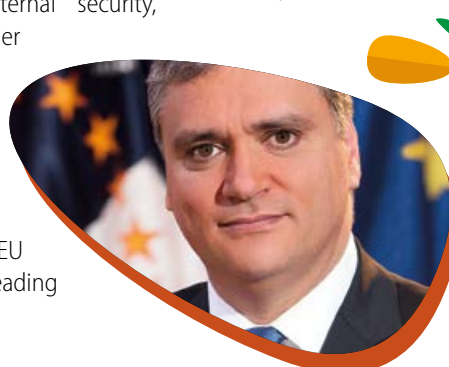
This is why we are extremely concerned by recent Commission's proposal for the future EU budget, where major cuts to Cohesion Policy, leading

to a renationalization of the Policy in some Member States, are presented as possible policy options.

If the European Union is discharging itself from its responsibilities in terms of solidarity and balanced development and public investment across Europe, do we really think Member States alone will take this responsibility?

Looking at the future, we believe a reinforced Cohesion Policy covering all regions, with a strong financial envelope, should be the top priority of the Leaders' agenda in months to come.

The principles of economic, social and territorial cohesion, enshrined in the European Treaties, must be reflected in a comprehensive way within Cohesion Policy and in any future scenarios for the future of Europe.



We, regional authorities, are therefore strong supporters of the Cohesion Alliance!

**Vasco Cordeiro,**  
**President of the Conference**  
**of Peripheral Maritime Regions**



Europe is being tested on many fronts, including its cohesion policy, that is currently being put into question. While discussions are underway in the Council and Commission's halls, towns' and regions' position is clear: we believe it should not only remain one of the EU's fundamentals, but that its territorial dimension be strengthened.

Why do we stand for cohesion policy? Because it demonstrates to the people that the EU cares about them. In Emilia-Romagna alone, the European Regional Development Funds will support almost 7,000 companies and 317 start-ups. This is just one example illustrating how cohesion policy brings change to Europe's territories with an impact on jobs and growth.

For this reason, local government associations, under the umbrella of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), advocate for a secured budget to enable all regions to respond to our most pressing challenges, such as employment, migration or climate change.

However, keeping cohesion policy as such is not enough: access to funds should be simplified so territories with fewer resources can also benefit from them.

But above all, the future cohesion policy must be designed together with Europe's territories. To make this happen, CEMR and its associations, with the support of the European Commission's DG REGIO, have triggered 60 dialogues throughout Europe to discuss the added value of cohesion policy on the ground, as well as the investment priorities of our towns and regions.

Europe will have no future without a strong cohesion policy, as through it, citizens experience Europe at its best.



**Stefano Bonaccini,**  
**President of**  
**the Council of**  
**European Municipalities**  
**and Regions**

#### Go further

CEMR's position paper on the future of cohesion policy:

[www.bit.ly/FutureCohesion\\_CEMR](http://www.bit.ly/FutureCohesion_CEMR)

CEMR's key messages on the future EU budget:

[www.bit.ly/EUbudget\\_CEMR](http://www.bit.ly/EUbudget_CEMR)



We, mayors of European cities, are confronted daily with the range of challenges our citizens are facing. Access to good education and decent work, affordable housing and sustainable mobility, a healthy and safe environment, food safety, quality health and social care are all pressing issues. Solidarity drives us when we design long-term solutions, always with an eye on the needs of future generations.

Cohesion policy has helped us immensely to effectively address these challenges, both through co-financing our investments, but even more through supporting cooperation and local innovation. It has been a great incentive to develop new sustainable solutions in partnership with other local stakeholders.

With the financial support offered through cohesion policy and via the urban agenda, we are testing new forms of governance, working with citizens' groups, businesses and civil society to deliver better solutions. We learn from and share knowledge with other cities across Europe. We work with our neighbours to provide better housing and more sustainable public transport, water and waste

management in our wider region. We are also investing in projects that make our cities more sustainable, by reducing emissions, noise and energy use and reusing resources.

We support the Cohesion Alliance. Cohesion policy must remain the strongest expression of the EU's solidarity. It is the glue that holds the entire EU together in the fight for a future that is more sustainable, inclusive, democratic and prosperous. A strong cohesion policy will help Europe remain a role model for the world around us for generations to come.



**Daniël Termont,**  
**President of EURO CITIES**

# Declaration

## #CohesionAlliance for a strong EU cohesion policy beyond 2020

Cohesion policy is the main European investment policy to achieve the EU Treaty objective of economic, social and territorial cohesion. In doing so cohesion policy has a clear added value in creating jobs, sustainable growth and modern infrastructure, overcoming structural barriers, boosting human capital and improving the quality of life. It also enables cooperation between regions, cities and municipalities from different Member States, as well as cooperation with the private sector, knowledge institutions and social partners at regional level.

As **#CohesionAlliance** we are working together for a strong policy to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union beyond 2020. We therefore sign up to the following principles and call upon representatives of all institutions at European, national, regional or local level, civil society, and businesses to do the same in the months to come.

### As **#CohesionAlliance** we declare that cohesion policy...

1. works as a **long-term investment policy for all regions** in Europe to support growth and jobs at local and regional level by promoting innovative solutions for issues such as climate change and energy transition, social inclusion, as well as for cross-border, transnational and interregional co-operation;
2. is needed more than ever as an expression of European solidarity to **overcome the economic, social and territorial divide** by providing every citizen, wherever they live in Europe, with a tangible opportunity to experience the advantages of our European Union;
3. must be **better communicated** as the EU policy closest to the citizen, having a direct impact on their daily lives;
4. must continue to be an effective policy with **sufficient resources** of at least one-third of the future EU budget to be delivered via grants and, where appropriate, via financial instruments;
5. must be based on the existing European Structural and Investment Funds with a common set of provisions;
6. requires the **strengthening of the partnership principle and the place-based approach** by reinforcing the key role of local and regional authorities in delivering the policy by actively engaging urban and rural communities and promoting tools to trigger and support local development through integrated strategies;
7. must be **better coordinated with other EU policies on a level playing field** by taking into account the specificities of municipalities, cities and regions in the European Union;
8. must **not be subject to conditionalities** at European level that cannot be influenced by local and regional authorities and other beneficiaries;
9. must be **simplified and improved**, based on increased trust between the levels of government implementing the funds and a more flexible and differentiated approach.

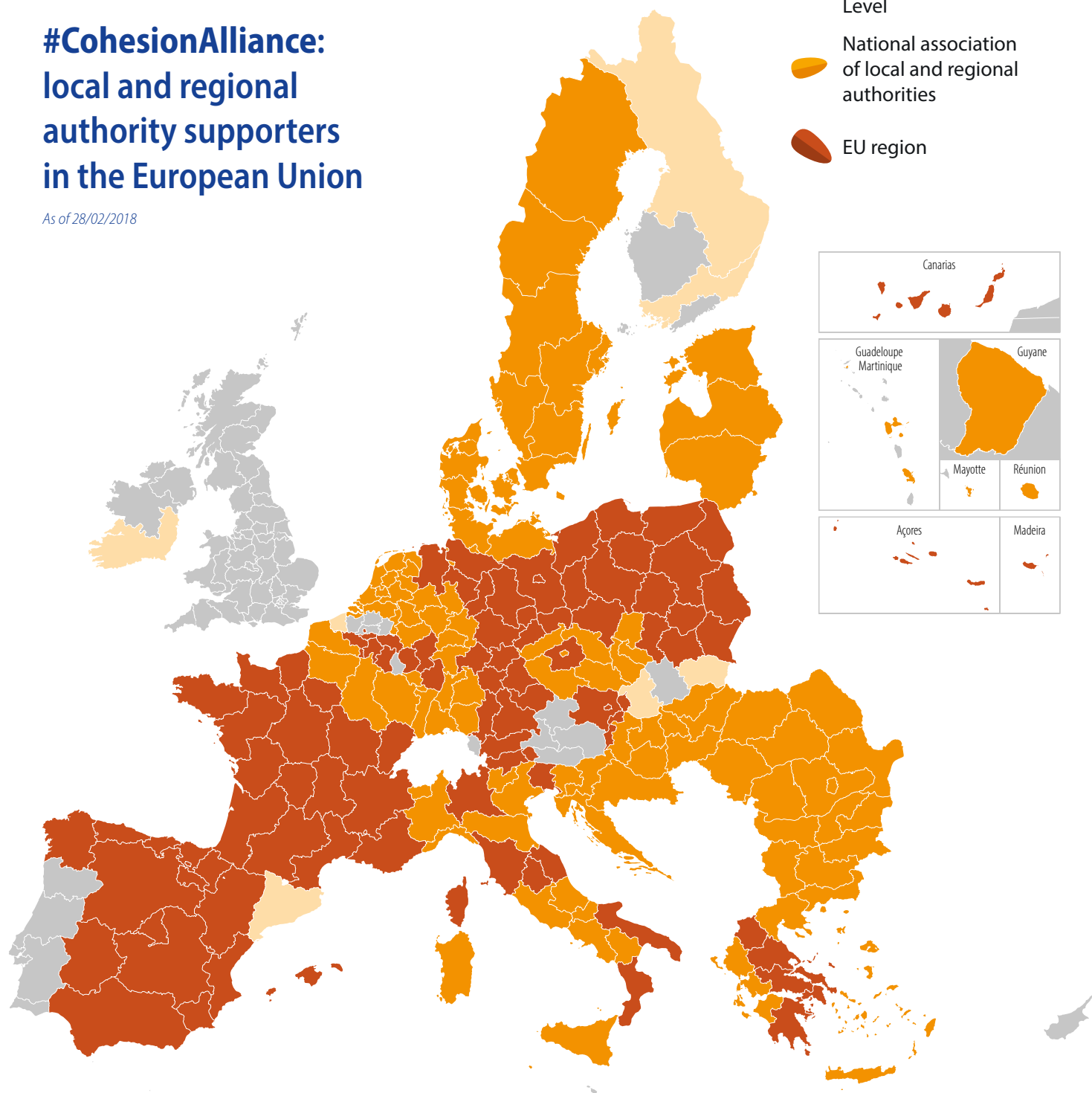
# Map of Alliance supporters



## #CohesionAlliance: local and regional authority supporters in the European Union

As of 28/02/2018

-  No supporters
-  Local and regional authorities below NUTS2 Level
-  National association of local and regional authorities
-  EU region





# Supporters and signatories

**80%** of European population covered



**88** Regions



**62** Cities (46) and counties (16)



**33** National associations of local and regional authorities



**21** European associations



**3500** Individual signatories





# Quotes from Alliance supporters

## Antonio COSTA

Prime Minister of Portugal

Grande parte do sucesso da União Europeia deve-se à sua Política de Coesão, cujos objetivos permanecem tão centrais como quando foi criada. A sua maior mais-valia foi ter trazido a UE para o dia a dia dos seus cidadãos.

#CoRplenary  
#CohesionAlliance  
#FutureofEurope



## Willy BORSUS

Minister-President of the Walloon Region

La région wallonne rejoint une alliance pan-européenne pour protéger les investissements régionaux de l'UE après 2020

#CohesionAlliance  
@CoR\_President

## Rena DOUROU

Regional Governor of Attica

It is the duty of us all to fight so as not just to protect but to strengthen an effective social, economic and territorial cohesion policy which needs to be at the heart of the European idea

#CohesionAlliance  
@EU\_CoR  
@CoR\_President  
@perattikis



## Cristina CIFUENTE CUENCAS

President of the Region of Madrid

Firmando con @CoR\_President la 'Alianza por la cohesión', una apuesta por el mantenimiento de los fondos comunitarios para avanzar en el reequilibrio de la UE más allá de 2020.

#CohesionAlliance



## Ramón Luis VALCÁRCEL

Vice-President of the European Parliament

Signing off my full support to #CohesionAlliance. A strong #CohesionPolicy is the best tool with which the EU can help its regions to thrive.



## Mercedes BRESSO

Member of the European Parliament

Aderisco all'appello #CohesionAlliance. La politica di coesione europea deve essere uno dei pilastri dell'UE:

<http://cor.europa.eu/it/takepart/Pages/cohesion-alliance.aspx>



# #CohesionAlliance



## Claudio DE VICENTI

Italian Minister in charge  
of territorial cohesion and  
Mezzogiorno

#EURegionsWeek Più politiche  
di coesione per sentirci tutti  
cittadini di una sola grande  
comunità: l'UE

**#CohesionAlliance**

## Corina CREȚU

EU Commissioner for  
Regional Policy

the **#CohesionAlliance** :  
because #cohesionpolicy is a  
symbol of a Europe that cares  
for ALL.

**More than ever needed...**



## Georges DASSIS

President of the European  
Economic and Social  
Committee

#Cohesionpolicy is a key  
instrument in order to fight  
for inclusive growth & ensure  
harmonious development for  
EU regions.

**#CohesionAlliance**



## Iskra MIHAYLOVA

Chair of the Committee on Regional  
Development, European Parliament

"Cohesion policy is the main European  
investment policy instrument with a great  
positive impact on our regions and cities,  
on our citizens' lives, highlighting the  
European solidarity.

Post 2020 Cohesion policy should  
support economic growth, job creation,  
competitiveness and social inclusion,  
providing European added value.

The **#CohesionAlliance**, has turned out  
to be a catalyst for a strong cohesion policy  
post 2020 covering all European regions."

## François BONNEAU

President of  
Centre - Val de Loire Region

J'ai signé hier à Bruxelles avec @  
CoR\_President, Pdt du Comité  
des Régions d'Europe la  
**#CohesionAlliance**, parce  
la solidarité, la réduction des  
disparités régionales sont  
essentiels dans l'avenir de #UE.  
La cohésion européenne c'est  
1/3 du budget de l'#UE



## Hervé MORIN

President of Régions  
de France

"Régions de France supports  
an ambitious European  
budget. Cohesion policy  
should not be jeopardised at  
the expense of new priorities  
after the Brexit. Our first  
claim is therefore to have a  
cohesion policy with European  
Structural and Investment  
Funds for all the Regions in  
Europe and in France!"



# #CohesionAlliance

## David KIMELFELD

President of Lyon  
Metropolitan area

"Cohesion policy has a crucial leverage effect for local public policies. In Lyon area, the European Social Fund is decisive to accompany more than 8,000 people to get a new job. It supports a hundred projects for employment each year. Cohesion policy is therefore a fundamental contribution for a sustainable urban development for all".



## Jan OLBRYCHT

Member of the European  
Parliament

Cohesion policy is not only a "traditional policy": it is an investment policy. Thanks to shared management and involvement of regional and local authorities, cohesion policy supports EU growth and strengthens citizen's trust in the EU. That is why we should support **#CohesionAlliance**.

## Reiner HASELOFF

Minister-President of Saxony-Anhalt

Sachsen-Anhalt ist heute der **#CohesionAlliance** beigetreten - gemeinsam sind wir stark.

EU-Förderung hat zum wirtschaftl. Erfolg des Landes beigetragen & muss weiterhin in allen Regionen stattfinden, um das Erreichte zu bewahren



## Lambert VAN NISTELROOIJ

Member of the European  
Parliament

Cohesion is the glue that holds Europe together. My response to the @EU\_Commission recent communication on **#EUBudget** and **#CohesionPolicy** **#CohesionAlliance**



## Tony FITZGERALD

Lord Mayor of Cork

@EU\_Commission I signed the **#CohesionAlliance** declaration for a strong cohesion policy post2020  
@corkcitycouncil  
@CorkEveningEcho great work by @cllrkmac

## Mario OLIVERIO

President of Calabria Region

Ho accolto con convinzione l'invito a sostenere e sottoscrivere l'adesione a **#CohesionAlliance**, l'iniziativa politica promossa dal Comitato europeo delle Regioni a favore del mantenimento di una politica di coesione ambiziosa anche dopo il 2020.



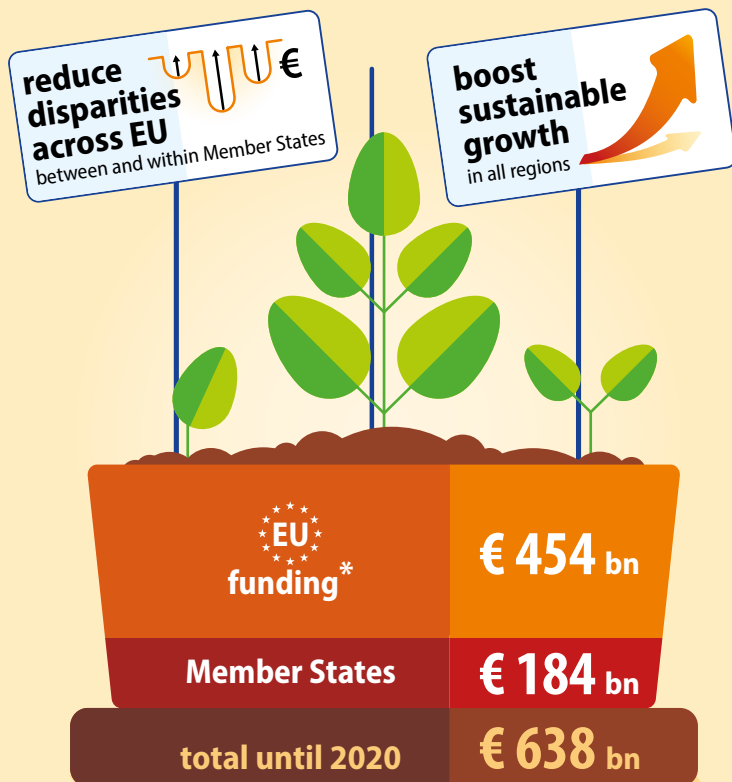




# Infographic on cohesion policy

## The future of the EU's cohesion policy

### What is cohesion policy ?

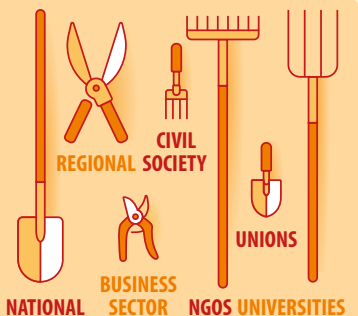


\*Represents 1/3 of the EU budget <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/>

### It is the only EU policy...



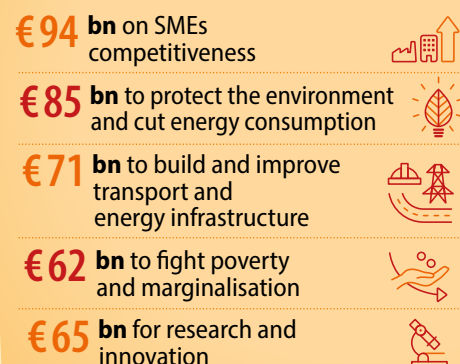
**&** ... where key investment decisions are agreed **together by EU, national and regional governments**, after a wide **consultation of local stakeholders**



### Achievements 2007 - 2013



### Investments 2014 - 2020

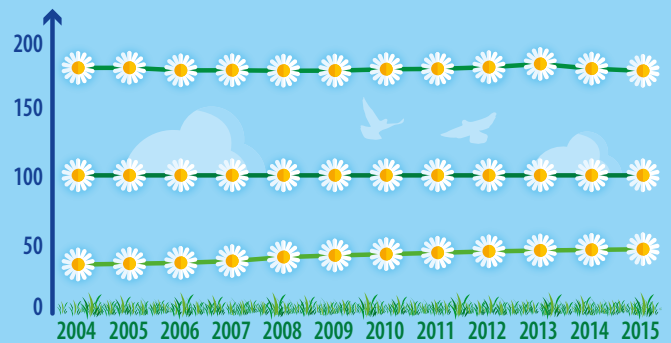


# Cohesion policy: why we need it more than ever ?

To **strengthen** the most concrete sign of EU solidarity



To **reduce** disparities across Europe



Over the period of 2004-2015, the top 10% and the bottom 10% of the regions are demonstrably converging

## How to make it better ?

1

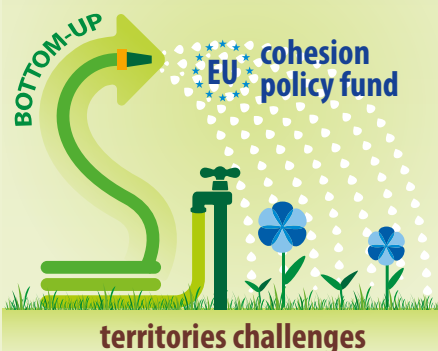
### flexible

😊 **Yes** to general objectives being shared at EU level

😞 **No** to top-down investment priorities

#### Why?

To help regions and cities deal with their own specific challenges (e.g. migration, demographic change, natural disasters risks, etc.)



2

### easier

😊 **Yes** to less bureaucracy

😊 **Yes** to more focus on impact

#### How?

Build a real partnership based on trust and improve cooperation among EU-National-Regional actors to cut redundant controls



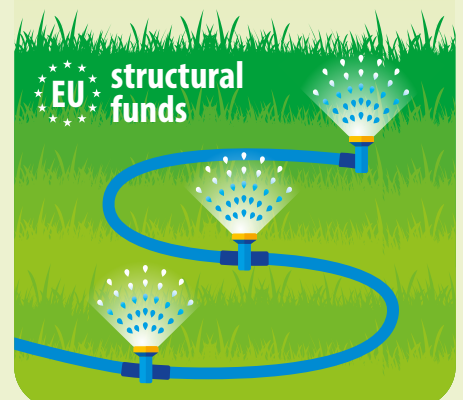
3

### connected

😊 **Yes** to integrate cohesion policy with national reform programmes

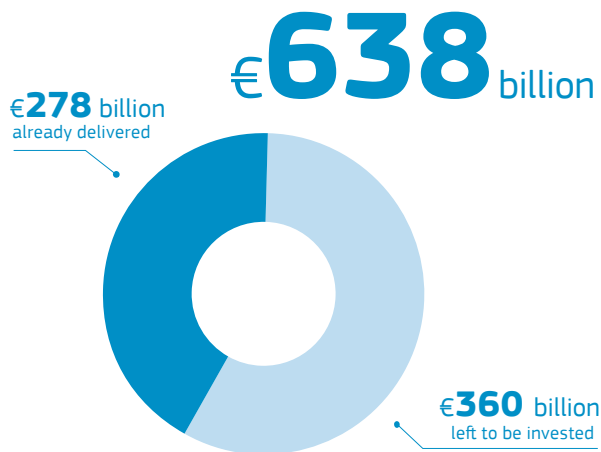
😊 **Yes** to more integration with other EU policies for research, SMEs, infrastructure, education etc.

😞 **No** to renationalising/centralising growth policies and tools





# Factsheet on cohesion policy



4 years into the 2014-2020 funding period, the implementation of European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds programmes has reached **full speed**, with **€278 billion** already delivered to the EU real economy by October 2017, which is 44% of the Funds' total envelope. **€360 billion** is left to be invested over the next 6 years, as the funding period will close in 2023.

The 2014-2020 framework is more ambitious, with new preconditions to fulfil before receiving money under the ESI Funds ("ex-ante conditionality"), which tangibly helped **improve the investment environment in Europe**. Nonetheless, the 2017 Strategic report shows that implementation is on the right track, with broadly the same pace as during the 2007-2013 funding period.

## MAIN RESULTS BY THE END OF 2016



**2 million projects** creating growth, jobs, protecting our environment and improving citizens' everyday lives were seeing the light of day; that is 1 million more than the year before.



**793,490 businesses** have already been supported under the 2014-2020 programmes, compared to 274,000 at the end of 2015. **This is supposed to lead to the direct creation of 154,000 new jobs so far.**



**7.8 million people** have received assistance in finding a job or developing new skills, up from 2.7 million the year before.

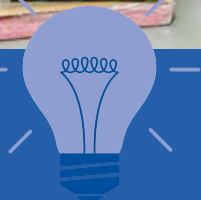


The biodiversity of **23.5 million hectares of agricultural land** have been improved, up from 11 million hectares in 2015.



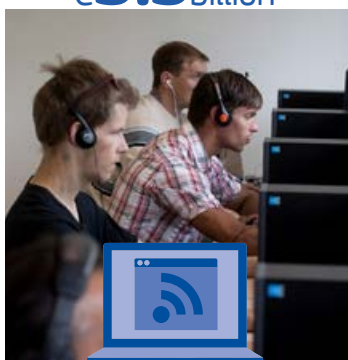
# INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH, INNOVATION, DIGITAL PROJECTS AND SMALL BUSINESSES

€15 billion



Already invested in **research and innovation projects**, leading to **29,000 researchers** benefiting from improved research infrastructure.

€3.5 billion



Invested in **digital projects**, which should lead to better access to broadband for **915,000 additional households** and to **over 1.2 million inhabitants of rural areas** benefitting from improved digital services.

€26.3 billion



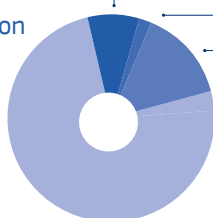
Invested to **boost the competitiveness of small businesses**. **196,000 companies** received advisory assistance and **10 900 businesses** received support to launch new products.

€9 billion



Invested in **helping farms holdings modernise their infrastructures** and improve their productivity.

€50.3 billion  
already  
delivered



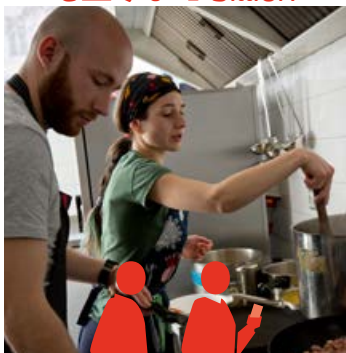
€131.1 billion  
left to be  
invested

€181.4 billion

Out of an envelope of €181.4 billion, €50.3 billion were already invested in research, innovation, digital services and infrastructures as well as in small businesses by the end of 2016. €131.1 billion is left to be invested.

# INVESTMENTS IN EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EDUCATION

€17.4 billion



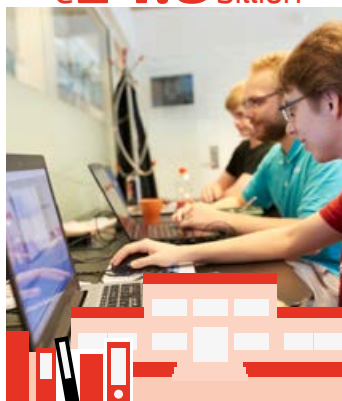
Already invested in projects supporting **quality and lasting employment and labour mobility**, reaching **4.2 million unemployed people**.

€16.5 billion



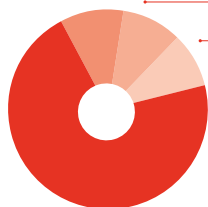
Invested in **social inclusion projects**, leading to a stronger **integration of 1.2 million vulnerable people, including migrants**.

€14.6 billion



Invested in **education and vocational training**, to tackle early-school leaving and offer training opportunities. Investments so far led to an additional capacity equivalent to **4.4 million people in childcare and school infrastructure**.

€48.7 billion  
already  
delivered



€119.6 billion  
left to be  
invested

€168.3 billion

By the end of 2016, **787,000 people have found a job and 820,000 people have gained qualification after participating in EU-funded training projects**. 634,000 people with disabilities have also been supported under ESI Funds programmes.

# INVESTMENTS IN THE LOW-CARBON ECONOMY, CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS AND TRANSPORT

€11 billion



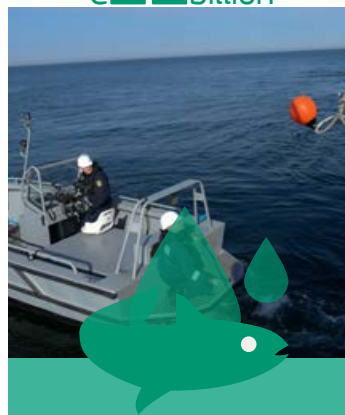
Already invested in **actions supporting a low-carbon economy**, such as energy efficiency and renewable energy projects, leading to **energy savings for 148,000 households**.

€16.5 billion



Invested in **climate change adaptation and risk prevention projects**. As a result, **4.6 million people now benefit from new or improved protection against floods**.

€22 billion



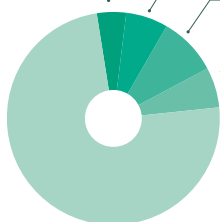
Invested in **the protection of the environment**. 60,000 km<sup>2</sup> of Natura 2000 areas and 1.5 million km<sup>2</sup> of Marine Protected Areas are now being managed better. **3.5 million people should now enjoy improved water supplies**.

€15.5 billion



Invested in **transport and energy networks**. As a result **687 km of TEN-T railway lines are being reconstructed or upgraded**.

€73.2 billion  
already  
delivered



€189 billion  
left to be  
invested

€262.2 billion

**More than 25% of the total ESI Funds envelope is dedicated to climate related projects**, in line with the EU objective of spending at least 20% of its budget on climate action. **Already €29.6 billion have been invested in climate change actions**. These investments are powerful tools for the EU to lead the fight for climate change prevention and adaptation and for meeting the Paris Agreement objectives.

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