

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022
of the commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC)

1. Introduction

The 2022 Work Programme of the SEDEC commission was developed having in mind the overarching priorities of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) for its current term of office¹, the Strategic Guidelines for 2022 developed by the CoP², as well as the European inter-institutional context and in particular the *European Commission's Work Programme for 2022*³. It sets out the milestones for work to be carried out in 2022, ensuring continuity and coherence in delivering the CoR's political priorities.

2022 will be a crucial year for the European Union and its local and regional authorities. It will be marked by the enormous efforts required to "*rebuild better*" after the COVID-19 pandemic and address the challenges of the green and digital transitions. Several large-scale processes will dominate the European context, such as the final stages of the Conference on the Future of Europe, the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the Green Deal for Europe. At the same time, the European Commission has announced a number of important legislative initiatives for 2022, in line with the priorities agreed jointly by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.

Against this background, the CoR has adapted its institutional approach to focus on the development and implementation of result-oriented planning, with a clear objective of increasing the relevance and visibility of the CoR's political action in the inter-institutional context. For this reason, the work programmes of the CoR commissions set out the specific objectives in each policy area as well as crosscutting priorities among the six commissions and put forward a strategy to channel the CoR's political messages to the other EU institutions.

With a view to demonstrating and further developing the added value of the European Committee of the Regions as an advisory body, the CoR has been developing new and innovative tools to gather evidence and expertise in support of the CoR's strategic activities. It is essential that the CoR effectively taps into the wealth of experience of its members and the local and regional authorities they represent in implementing its priorities and strategic orientations. In this regard, the *CoR's studies programme will be designed to support the main objectives in the thematic planning of the*

¹ In June 2020, shortly after its Constitutive plenary session of February 2020 and during a time of major disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the CoR defined its priorities for the current mandate in the Resolution *The European Committee of the Regions' priorities for 2020-2025 - Europe closer to the people through its villages, cities and regions*. (RESOL-VII/004 - 2020-01392-00-00-RES-TRA)

² On 30 November, following a joint discussion with the Commissions' Chairs, the CoP adopted the Strategic Guidelines for the CoR's political activities in 2022

³ COM(2021) 645 final and annexes, available at: [2022 Commission Work Programme – key documents | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/com_inf_21_645)

Commissions, as well as to address the horizontal research needs of the CoR. If needed, studies will also support the flagship projects and will include foresight perspective and a clear outreach dimension, with outcomes that can easily be used in institutional and public communication.

In terms of policy-making, more attention should be given to "outlook opinions" where the European Commission could request input from the CoR at a very early stage as well as the "follow up of the opinions" in view of enhancing their impact. In the context of implementing the "active subsidiarity approach", the new working methods of the European Commission should upgrade the quality of cooperation between the CoR and the other EU institutions by focusing on the European added value of all initiatives, in line with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, and within the context of a revisited EU better regulation agenda.

In the context of longer-term multi-annual planning, relations with the Council and the incoming EU presidencies will continue to progress in 2022, with a view to optimising cooperation and political dialogue, particularly as regards the legislative planning and the delivery of the EU strategic agenda.

2. Priorities of the SEDEC commission

The remit of the *Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC)* covers the following fields:

1. Employment Policy
2. European Pillar of Social Rights, including Social Policy, Social Protection
3. Equality
4. Social Economy
5. Demographic Change
6. Labour Mobility
7. Education and Training (including Lifelong Learning)
8. Innovation, Research and Technology and smart specialisation
9. Bio-economy
10. Artificial Intelligence
11. EU Information Society, including Trans-European ICT Networks
12. Audio-visual Industry and Media Technologies
13. Youth
14. Sport
15. Multilingualism and Promotion of Minority Languages
16. Culture and Cultural Diversity and Creativity

2.1 Priority policy areas⁴

The SEDEC commission will concentrate its efforts on the following priority policy areas with high relevance to the EU agenda and a direct impact on local and regional authorities (LRAs):

1. Employment and Social Policies
2. Education and Culture

⁴ An explanatory sheet for each proposed priority policy area is enclosed in Appendix III. These policy areas will also be the first to benefit from the Thematic Planning process.

3. Youth
4. Research and Innovation

Within these priority policy areas and in order to translate them more effectively and visibly into political action and increase the impact of the Committee's political work, the SEDEC commission identified *one* specific **flagship initiative**: the European Year of Youth 2022 (within the Youth policy area).

2.1.1 Employment and Social Policies

The SEDEC commission will continue to directly contribute to the implementation of the **European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR) at the local and regional level**. This will contribute to measuring and monitoring progress towards the headline targets of the Action Plan and to support the political objectives enshrined in the principles of the Pillar and the commitments agreed at the Porto Social Summit.

The SEDEC commission looks forward to the proposal for a **Recommendation on minimum income**, which is also expected to build on the work of the Adequate Minimum Wages Directive, where the CoR had a strong influence through its opinion.

The SEDEC commission will follow up on the implementation of the **European Skills Agenda** as it is one of the three headline areas of the European Pillar Action Plan. The SEDEC commission welcomes the emphasis placed by the European Commission on the investment in digital skills in education and training. SEDEC intends to look into how upskilling and reskilling can foster social recovery and job creation from the local and regional perspective.

The SEDEC commission will also contribute to the **New European Care Strategy**, which is due to cover both childcare and long-term care. Concerning the latter angle, SEDEC has already adopted a relevant own-initiative opinion on the topic and intends to continue looking into this key issue in light of the future Commission's proposal. The SEDEC commission will also look into possibilities of contributing towards the "Protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work". This proposal will be the natural follow-up to the Operational Safety and Health at work strategic framework 2021-2027, for which the SEDEC commission is in the process of drafting an opinion.

The SEDEC commission will work in close cooperation with DG EMPL in relation to the European Commission's Communication to strengthen the **social dialogue** at EU and national level, with a view to emphasising the importance of European sectoral social dialogue for local and regional authorities. The SEDEC commission will continue to support and directly contribute to the **European Platform on Combatting Homelessness** through its membership of the Platform but also the Steering Board.

The SEDEC commission will explore opportunities to roll out the **European Local Job Forum** events, possibly from summer 2022, if the pandemic permits it. The events are planned to take place *in situ*, therefore the pandemic has prohibited their rollout so far.

The SEDEC commission will continue to strive for a **Union of Equality** by supporting and contributing to EU policies that are aimed at ensuring that all persons live with dignity, without fear of discrimination or violence on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, socio-economic background or ethnicity. The SEDEC commission will build on its previous contributions to equality, such as the recent relevant opinions and will also closely monitor their implementation. In 2022, the SEDEC commission will also work on an opinion on the proposal for a strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021-2030) and looks forward to the important legislative proposal on "Strengthening the role and independence of equality bodies".

2.1.2 Education and Culture

The SEDEC commission will continue to underline the need for investments in education and culture, two important factors in making communities more resilient and enabling them to cope more easily with crises and to adapt faster to new circumstances.

In order to close the skills and knowledge gaps, further aggravated by the pandemic, the SEDEC commission is ready to work with the European Commission in defining new measures to facilitate and promote **digital skills** in schools and higher education, while continuing to actively promote the concept of digital cohesion.

Building on its direct contribution to the establishment of the **European Education Area** (EEA), the SEDEC commission intends to further participate in the next design and implementation stages, including by promoting a territorial dimension within the upcoming **EU strategy for universities** and the new ways for deeper and sustainable **transnational cooperation in higher education**.

The SEDEC commission will continue to forge closer links between the EEA and the European Research Area (ERA) based on a cross-cutting approach closely linked to regional policies.

The SEDEC commission will continue to strive for **culture and cultural heritage** to remain high on the political agenda at European, national, regional and local level and it will work to strengthen support for the cultural and creative sectors (CCSs), seriously affected by the COVID-19 crisis, by encouraging a culture of solidarity in the recovery phase.

The SEDEC commission will support the implementation of the New European Bauhaus initiative. The **New European Bauhaus**, as an essential part of the European Green Deal and many other policy frameworks, can be implemented only through a multilevel governance and place-based approach. The SEDEC commission, therefore, will continue to raise awareness about the initiative and promote it among CoR members, in cooperation with other competent CoR commissions.

In the area of **audiovisual media policy**, the SEDEC commission will consider the role of all levels of governance with a view to reinforcing safeguards for the freedom of expression and independence of the media, as an enabling factor for local democracy and the cultural sectors. In anticipation of a new legislative proposal, the European Media Freedom Act, the SEDEC commission will focus on the situation of local and regional media so as to prevent situations where a governmental or non-

governmental body can decide unilaterally which content is trustworthy, how access to online platforms is controlled and which content is deprioritised.

The SEDEC commission will also contribute to the realisation of a community of best practice in promoting **European values** through education and culture that would help to facilitate dialogue and the exchange of these good practices at local and regional level.

2.1.3 Youth

Within this policy area, the flagship initiative of the SEDEC commission will be the **2022 European Year of Youth**. In this context, the SEDEC commission is determined to support the rights of all young people, regardless of their background, by encouraging and promoting actions aimed at providing adequate resources and opportunities to young people in all areas of their lives.

The SEDEC commission will spearhead the CoR contribution to the European Year of Youth 2022, and strive to successfully mainstream youth concerns into all EU policies through dedicated initiatives, debates, research, stimulation of activities at local and regional level, exchange of good practices, and awareness raising actions. Throughout the Year, the SEDEC commission will pay special attention to youth participation in civic and democratic life, to young people's integration into the labour market, to education, training, reskilling and upskilling, which are vital in the context of the green and digital transitions, and to the fight against "brain drain", poverty, discrimination and social exclusion.

Building on its contribution to youth initiatives at European level in recent years, such as the European Youth Guarantee, the European Solidarity Corps, the EU Youth Strategy and the European Child Guarantee, the SEDEC commission will continue to support new actions aimed at responding to the needs and aspirations of the younger generations through, *inter alia*, its contribution to the implementation of current EU youth programmes at local and regional level.

The SEDEC commission will closely follow the development of the **ALMA** (Aim, Learn, Master, Achieve) programme, a new Commission initiative helping disadvantaged young Europeans who are not in any kind of employment, education or training. ALMA is expected to help these young people gain professional experience abroad with the necessary social support. The ultimate objective is to integrate them into education, vocational training or quality employment.

The SEDEC commission will also closely follow the child-related measures of the upcoming **European Care Strategy**, which will be accompanied by a revision of the Barcelona targets for high quality and affordable childcare, and the implication of these initiatives for children at local and regional level, since they will specifically address childhood education and care with a special focus on children with disabilities and from vulnerable groups.

2.1.4 Research and Innovation

The SEDEC commission will continue to contribute to the implementation of the Renewed European Research Area (ERA) agenda and particularly to the rolling out of the ERA Hubs concept in European cities and regions, promoting a place-based approach. Furthermore, it will aim to encourage CoR

members and their regions and cities to actively participate in the governance and partnerships related to the recently launched five European Missions, linked to the principle of smart specialisation.

In the area of **smart specialisation**, the SEDEC commission will continue to cooperate with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission with a view to adapting the smart specialisation methodologies so as to respond in the most efficient way to the current societal challenges faced by the local and regional authorities across the EU: the green and digital transitions. Moreover, the SEDEC commission will focus on smart specialisation strategies as a tool for effective policy coordination at the regional level in implementing the EU research, innovation and regional development policies and commission a study on these issues under the standing framework contract in support of political work. Finally, this process will be strengthened with the contributions of synergies and complementarities of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and other relevant instruments co-designed by and with the participation of local and regional authorities.

2.2 Other thematic issues

2.2.1 Sport

The SEDEC commission will continue to support sport and physical activity at local and regional level, including investments in infrastructure and grassroots sports. The SEDEC commission will continue to work with the Sport Hub Alliance for Regional Development in Europe (SHARE initiative) and it will contribute to the European Commission HealthyLifestyle4All campaign. The SEDEC commission will continue to contribute to the next "European Week of Sport" (EWoS) in 2022, maintaining the focus on the role of LRAs in the promotion of physical activity and sport for all, including people with disabilities.

3. Follow-up of opinions

The opinions of the CoR are the main political tool to convey the political viewpoint of CoR members to the other institutions of the European Union. Throughout this term of office, the CoR and its constitutive bodies, as well as all services of the administration, will put additional focus on the follow-up of opinions and in thematic communication strategy in advance as well as following their adoption, in order to ensure that the messages of the CoR can achieve the greatest political impact in the EU decision-making process.

4. Interinstitutional cooperation

The SEDEC commission will continue developing its relations with the European Parliament's ITRE, EMPL, FEMM, CULT, IMCO and LIBE Committees, as well as with the LGBTI Intergroup, with the European Commission Directorates-General RTD, EMPL, GROW, EAC, CNECT, REGIO, JUST and the JRC and with the Council. The SEDEC commission will especially continue to deliver and monitor the implementation of the actions included in the Joint Action Plan with DG EAC, DG RTD and the JRC.

The SEDEC commission will also expand its scope of enhanced cooperation with DG EMPL, by working in close collaboration on the upcoming proposals on minimum income and the new European

Care Strategy, while launching with DG EMPL the European Local Job Forum events in 2022. Furthermore, the SEDEC commission will continue to contribute to the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan and provide input to the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness through SEDEC members appointed as CoR representatives.

The SEDEC commission will explore opportunities to substantiate its opinions by commissioning additional analysis from the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS), as provided for in the cooperation agreement between the CoR and European Parliament.

Where appropriate, the SEDEC commission will invite representatives from the rotating EU Presidency, relevant MEPs, in particular EP rapporteurs, high-level representatives of the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee to its meetings.

5. Cooperation with other organisations and bodies

The SEDEC commission will continue to work closely with international centres of expertise, such as the OECD, with European think tanks and NGOs, as well as specialist networks of LRAs in fields relevant to the SEDEC commission such as CEDEFOP (skills, VET, apprenticeships), the HABITACT forum (homelessness), the ELISAN network (social action), REVES (social economy), EQUINET (equality), ERIO (Roma), ERRIN, EURADA and EARTO (research and innovation), URBACT, EUROCITIES, EUCIS-LLL, T3 (education), Eurochambres, SOLIDAR (social action), Europa Nostra and the Council of Europe Cultural Routes (cultural heritage), European Youth Forum, European Voluntary Service (youth), SHARE, Sport and Citizenship, UEFA and ISCA (sport). Information exchanges in areas of common interest will also be continued.

The SEDEC commission will also pursue cooperation with several member organisations of the Social platform, including the AGE platform (ageing), FEANTSA (homelessness, also co-members of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness), the European Anti-Poverty Network (EAPN), the European Disability Forum (EDF) and the European Women's Lobby (EWL), COFACE (Confederation of Family Organisations in the EU), EASPD (European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities), EUROCHILD, the European Public Service Union (EPSU) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

The SEDEC commission will continue to have exchanges on employment and job creation issues with the relevant European Social Partners: ETUC (workers), BUSINESSEUROPE (private firms), UEAPME (small businesses), CEEP (public employers) and the Bio Based Industry Consortium. Finally, the SEDEC commission will explore ways to cooperate with the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee of Local and Regional Governments.

6. Complementary activities

Organisation of Conferences and Seminars

As outlined in the thematic section, the SEDEC commission intends to organise or cooperate with other institutional players in organising events linked to the priorities of its consultative agenda.

The following external event will be organised:

- An external meeting and conference on "Engaging Youth in Science, Research and Innovation", in Brno, Czech Republic on 3-4 October 2022.

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N.B.: Annex and Appendices overleaf.

APPENDIX I

List of documents already allocated to the SEDEC commission to be dealt with in 2022

Reference of European Commission document	Title of European Commission document	Procedure	Scheduled adoption by the CoR
COM(2021) 323 final	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on EU strategic framework on health and safety at work 2021-2027 Occupational safety and health in a changing world of work	Own-initiative opinion	26-28 January 2022
COM(2021) 573 final	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on New European Bauhaus. Beautiful, Sustainable, Together	Own-initiative opinion	27-29 April 2022
COM(2021) 609 final	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on European Missions	Own-initiative opinion	27-29 April 2022
COM(2021) 615 final	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the EU Strategy on Combating Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021-2030)	Own-initiative opinion	29 June – 1 July 2022
COM(2021) 762 final	Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on improving working conditions in platform work	Mandatory	29 June – 1 July 2022

APPENDIX II

List of the principal legislative and non-legislative proposals corresponding to the political priorities of the SEDEC commission for 2022⁵

Reference of European Commission document	Title of European Commission document	Procedure	Scheduled adoption by the CoR
<i>Employment and social policies</i>			
2022 Commission Work Programme, p. 13	Protection of workers	Legislative, incl. impact assessment	Tbc
2022 Commission Work Programme, p. 18	Minimum income	Non-legislative	Tbc
<i>Education and culture</i>			
2022 Commission Work Programme, p. 10	Digital in education and skills	Non-legislative	Tbd
2022 Commission Work Programme, p. 28	Education package	Non-legislative	Tbd
<i>Youth</i>			
2022 Commission Work Programme, p. 24	Revision of the Barcelona targets	Non-legislative, accompanying the European care strategy	Tbd
<i>Research and Innovation</i>			

⁵ The list is indicative and subject to change.

APPENDIX III

Explanatory sheet for each Priority Policy Area

Policy area	Employment and Social Policies
CoR commission	SEDEC
Policy objectives, key challenges and impact indicators	<p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up to the Action Plan for the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights (EPSR), by reasserting the role of LRAs in the Action Plan and ensuring a local and regional focus; • Ensure that the best practices regarding the implementation of the EPSR are shared between regions and local authorities; • Implement the scheme for enhanced cooperation with DG EMPL, as it was agreed between DG EMPL and the CoR. • Implement the concept of the Local Jobs Fairs (together with DG EMPL). <p><u>Challenges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 recovery: effectively monitor the EU recovery efforts in relation to employment and social protection; • The EPSR to reinforce the EU's social dimension and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and the ongoing green and digital transitions; • Full territorial implementation of the EPSR. <p><u>Impact indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key CoR positions are reflected in the design and implementation of EU legislation and initiatives; • Take up and mention of CoR analyses, policy proposals and demands. Participation in events, surveys, and others. Stronger relationships with other organisations and bodies.
Progress report summary on the fulfilment of the policy objectives in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact indicators were realised in 2021, underpinned by the implementation of the novel scheme for enhanced cooperation with DG EMPL; • CoR opinion on <i>The implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights from the local and regional perspective</i> was adopted by the CoR plenary in May 2021; • CoR opinion on <i>Adequate minimum wages in the European Union</i> was adopted by the CoR plenary in March 2021; • CoR opinion on <i>Future plan for care workers and care services – local and regional opportunities in the context of a European Challenge</i> was adopted by the CoR plenary in July 2021; • CoR opinion on <i>Eradicating homelessness in the European Union: the local and regional perspective</i> will be adopted by the CoR plenary in December 2021; • Strengthened cooperation and policy dialogue between Commissioner

	Schmit's services and the CoR.
Proposed CoR measures and support activities in 2022 with timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Monitor the implementation of the Action Plan for the EPSR and ensure CoR participation; – Possible opinion on the proposal for a Council recommendation on minimum income, as a step towards eradicating poverty in the EU and as a natural and meaningful follow-up of the adequate minimum wages directive; – Possible opinion on the European Commission's Long-Term Care Initiative, scheduled for the second Semester 2022; – Possible opinion on the communication on the working conditions of people providing services through platforms.
Key inter-institutional developments for follow-up and indicative timeline for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 1 January: start of the French Presidency of the Council of the EU. – Ministerial level conference of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness. – 1 July: start of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU. – Q3: Protection of Workers: protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to asbestos at work, Legislative, incl. impact assessment. – Q3: Minimum income: recommendation on minimum income, Non-legislative. – Q3: European Care Strategy: Communication on a European care strategy, accompanied by the revision of the Barcelona targets and a proposal for a Council Recommendation on long-term care, Non-legislative.

Policy area	Education and culture
CoR commission	SEDEC
Policy objectives, key challenges and impact indicators	<p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to directly contribute to the establishment of the European Education Area (EEA) and to support the European Universities' initiative, insisting on regional engagement by and with higher education institutions; • Support a global approach to research, innovation, education and youth policy areas, ensuring synergies between the EEA and the European Research Area (ERA); • Reassert the role and place of LRAs in the Updated European Skills Agenda and ensure a local and regional focus in the European cooperation on skills and vocational training; • Strengthen support at local and regional level for cultural and creative sectors (CCSs), seriously affected by the COVID-19 crisis, and encourage a culture of solidarity in the recovery phase; • Continue to promote the role of local and regional authorities in the development of the New European Bauhaus.

	<p><u>Challenges</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and training systems to continue to function and readapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, while becoming greener and more digital. The new methods and practices should ensure quality and inclusiveness and leave no one behind (digital cohesion); • Lack of a basic level of digital skills in the EU, no access to computers for low income families and many limitations to broadband access; • The COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown measures have affected the CCSs (hit very hard alongside the tourism sector); • Urgent adaptation to digital and remote productions and visits is needed to ensure alternative methods of creation and performance; • Continue to support art and creative sectors to fulfil their social and economic roles during the pandemic and in the recovery phase. <p><u>Impact indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key CoR positions are reflected in the design and implementation of EU legislation and initiatives; • LRAs and the CoR are included in the future European Education Area enabling framework and its platform; • Clear references to the role of LRAs in the design and implementation of the European Skills Agenda; • LRAs and the CoR are taken into account in the rollout of the European Bauhaus initiative; • The CoR becomes part of the network of mayors of the European Capitals of Culture.
<p>Progress report summary on the fulfilment of the policy objectives in 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact indicators were fulfilled in 2021, as also reflected in the first yearly monitoring of the Joint Action Plan (JAP) with Commissioner Mariya Gabriel's services; • CoR opinion on <i>European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience</i> was adopted by the CoR plenary on 3-5 February 2021; • CoR opinion on <i>Restart of cultural and creative sectors</i> was adopted by the CoR plenary on 3-5 February 2021; • CoR opinion on <i>Achieving the European Education Area by 2025</i> was adopted by the CoR plenary on 17-19 March 2021; • CoR opinion on the <i>Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027</i> was adopted by the CoR plenary on 5-7 May 2021; • Monitoring of the first year of implementation for the Joint Action Plan with Commissioner Gabriel's services to strengthen the policy dialogue and cooperation with DG EAC and JRC (Dec 2021); • the study on <i>The Role of Local and Regional Authorities in Achieving a European Education Area by 2025</i> was published on the CoR website and valorised in the dialogue with the other institutions.
<p>Proposed CoR measures and support activities in 2022 with timeline</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – CoR opinion on the <i>New European Bauhaus. Beautiful, Sustainable, Together</i> to be adopted by the CoR at the plenary of 27-29 April 2022; – Possible opinion on the forthcoming European Commission initiatives on

	<p>"Digital in education and skills" and the "Education package";</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Implementation and development of the Joint Action Plan with Commissioner Gabriel's services to strengthen the policy dialogue and cooperation with DG EAC and JRC; – Monitor the establishment of the EEA enabling framework and its platform and ensure CoR participation.
Key inter-institutional developments for follow-up and indicative timeline for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 1 January: start of the French Presidency of the Council of the EU. – Q1: Education package (non-legislative), comprised of 1) the European strategy for universities and 2) Building bridges for effective European higher education cooperation. – 27-29 April: CoR plenary session – adoption of the opinion on <i>New European Bauhaus. Beautiful, Sustainable, Together.</i> – April: Council meeting (Education and Culture). – 1 July: start of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU. – Q3: Digital in education and skills (non-legislative), comprising two Recommendations on 1) improving the provision of digital skills in education and training and 2) the enabling factors for digital education. – Q3: European media freedom act.

Policy area	Youth
CoR commission	SEDEC
Policy objectives, key challenges and impact indicators	<p><u>Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the successful implementation of the 2022 European Year of Youth by ensuring that its objectives and legacy take into account a strong local and regional perspective and by underlining the important role of local and regional authorities for youth policy; • Support the mainstreaming of youth policy across all EU policies as a long term legacy for the European Year of Youth 2022; • Step up the SEDEC commission interinstitutional cooperation on youth policy, especially with DG EAC, the European Parliament, the Council presidencies, as well with relevant stakeholders such as the OECD, the Council of Europe or the European Youth Forum; • Encourage youth participation in democratic and civic life at regional and local level; <p>Contribute to the implementation of current EU youth programmes at local and regional level through the follow-up of CoR opinions on youth policy, such as the recent opinions on the European Youth Guarantee or the European Child Guarantee;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible adoption of an encompassing own-initiative opinion on youth policy to mark the CoR legacy of its policy work during the European Year of Youth 2022. <p><u>Challenges</u></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the daily lives of young people and exacerbated territorial inequalities in youth unemployment, labour precariousness and wellbeing. Resources and opportunities available to youth have also been constrained, especially in less-developed regions; • The overall risks of the pandemic are still present for young people, and even though the situation is currently improving, young people still suffer from high risks of unemployment, labour precariousness, poverty, exclusion, marginalisation, discrimination, inequality and poor mental health; • Access to basic services remains a challenges for children at local and regional level. 24.2 % of children in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2020. <p><u>Impact indicators</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CoR should be included in the National Coordinators' meeting for the European Year of Youth; • Key CoR positions should be taken on board in the design and implementation of the European Year of Youth 2022 and on youth policy initiatives more broadly, such as the European Child Guarantee, the EU strategy for the Rights of the Child, the EU Youth Strategy and the European Youth Guarantee; • Reinforced cooperation with the EU Youth Coordinator and DG EAC, through co-constructed initiatives should be a target for 2022 and beyond; • A successful and ambitious communication campaign and awareness-raising initiatives on youth policy at local level is a target; • In a future revision of the JAP between the CoR and DG EAC, youth policy could be reinforced; • The reinforcement of the cooperation with the Council of Europe, the participation in Council Presidency conferences on youth and the support of the European Youth Forum.
<p>Progress report summary on the fulfilment of the policy objectives in 2021</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact indicator was fulfilled in 2021 and enhanced cooperation was established with the EU Youth Coordinator; • The opinion on <i>Youth employment support: A bridge to jobs for the next generation Reinforcing the Youth Guarantee</i> was adopted during the CoR plenary of 3-5 February 2021; • The opinion on the <i>EU strategy on the rights of the child and the European child guarantee</i> was adopted during the CoR plenary of 12-14 October 2021; • A CoR action plan on the European Year of Youth was decided in November 2021; • The CoR Resolution on the European Year of Youth 2022 adopted at the plenary of 1-2 December 2021; • The study on the <i>Challenges of the European Child Guarantee at Regional and Local Level</i>, published in July 2021.

Proposed CoR and support activities in 2022 with timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A study on the implementation of the Reinforced Youth Guarantee at local level, to be published in the first quarter of 2022; – A CoR own-initiative opinion on the European Year of Youth 2022; – In the context of the European Year of Youth 2022, the organisation of initiatives, debates, research, stimulation of activities at local and regional level, exchange of good practices, enhanced interinstitutional cooperation and awareness-raising actions.
Key inter-institutional developments for follow-up and indicative timeline for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 1 January: start of the European Year of Youth 2022 and of the French Presidency of the Council of the EU. – 27 January: FR EU Presidency European Youth Conference. – 9 April: future FR EU Presidency of the Council high level conference on the implementation of the European Child Guarantee.

Policy area	Research and Innovation
CoR commission	SEDEC
Policy objectives, key challenges and impact indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The main policy objectives and key challenges remain virtually the same as during the previous two years: implementation of the Horizon Europe (FP9) programme, with particular attention to the policy and funding opportunities for local and regional authorities; Contribute towards developing the RIS4 model of regional smart specialisation strategies; • The European Missions, the new ERA (ERA Hubs), synergies with other EU and national funding instruments (e.g. Seal of Excellence) and mainstreaming the upgraded S3 strategies continue to be highly relevant for the CoR and regional actors; Request the participation of CoR members in the governance of the ERA forum, the ERA hubs and the European Capitals of Innovation.
Progress report summary on the fulfilment of the policy objectives in 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact indicators were fulfilled in 2021; the Joint Action Plan (JAP) with Commissioner Mariya Gabriel's services and its regular monitoring present a detailed overview of the fulfilment of the SEDEC commission's policy objectives set up for the past year; • Key rapporteurs and CoR members from all political groups actively participated in the Steering Group of the JAP, as well as during the coordinators' and regular meetings' discussions dedicated to this topic.
Proposed CoR and support activities in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The near-term measures include strong support for the pilot actions, initiated by the European Commission, regarding the rollout of the ERA Hubs and S4+ (smart specialisation) methodology in selected EU regions –

2022 with timeline	which, hopefully, would include many of the CoR members' regions.
Key inter-institutional developments for follow-up and indicative timeline for implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2022: continuation of the interinstitutional <i>Knowledge Exchange Platform (KEP 2.0)</i> and <i>Science meets Regions (SmR)</i> initiatives with the EC and EP – January 2022: S4+ conference with JRC on Smart Specialisation. – February: 2nd call for the Science meets Regions project. – March: visit of CoR members to JRC in ISPRA, Italy and major FR Presidency conference on R&I. – April: deadline for the ERA Hubs pilot and adoption of the European Missions opinion. – June: EU R&I Days (possible KEP event and high-level CoR participation).
