



**European Committee
of the Regions**

Conference of Presidents

Brussels, 19 May 2026

Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Dear President,

The Conference of Presidents of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) would like to express its deepest concern on the reported plans to dismantle the Directorate-General for Regional Policy (DG REGIO). Cohesion policy is not just a political priority. It is a Treaty obligation and a cornerstone of the EU's commitment to its citizens. The CoR needs a strong, recognisable institutional partner in the European Commission to ensure that the territorial dimension remains at the heart of EU decision-making.

If confirmed, the weakening or dismantling of DG REGIO would send a deeply worrying political signal, contradicting the commitment that no region and no community should be left behind, and undermining the essential bond between the Union and its citizens who care deeply about the local communities and regions they live in.

Cohesion policy is indeed one of the European Union's fundamental policies aimed at reducing regional disparities, strengthening territorial cohesion and ensuring that all regions and municipalities can contribute to and benefit from the European project. Its legitimacy and effectiveness are rooted in proximity, multilevel governance and partnership with local and regional authorities. Therefore, any reorganisation of the European Commission should not pre-empt the decision of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU on the future structure of EU policies within the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

In this context, we believe it is essential that the regional dimension of future European funding continues to be supported by a fully-fledged DG REGIO within the European Commission, with a clear political mandate, dedicated expertise and the institutional capacity necessary to ensure that cohesion remains at the heart of European policymaking.

The territorial and regional assessment and implementation of future EU funds cannot be reduced to a purely administrative or centralised function. Ensuring that legislation, programmes and investment priorities are properly evaluated through a territorial lens requires a strong and autonomous governance framework, capable of directly interacting with regional and local authorities, thus safeguarding the specific objectives of cohesion policy and the diversity of Europe's regions.

The CoR's mission is to help build Europe from the bottom up defending the crucial involvement of the Union's eighty thousand subnational authorities in shaping European cohesion and will continue to defend their role in the future of our Union.

Kata Tüttö, President of the European Committee of the Regions

Juanma Moreno, First vice-president of the European Committee of the Regions

Sari Rautio, President of the EPP Group

Luca Menesini, President of the PES Group

François Decoster, President of Renew Group

Marco Marsilio, President of the ECR Group

Marie-Antoinette Maupertuis, President of the EA Group

Niina Ratilainen and **Tine Radinja**, co-presidents of the Greens & Progressives Group