

OPEN LETTER TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

'A modernised Cohesion Policy at the heart of a strengthened European Union'

The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) is following very closely the current debate on the Multiannual Financial Framework for the post-2020 period. The challenging context of the upcoming EU budget negotiations and the emergence of new priorities likely to be supported by the EU budget are calling into question the very existence of Cohesion Policy.

We, representatives of regions in Europe, call on the European Commission **to cement the place of Cohesion Policy as the EU strategic investment policy for all European citizens** for the post-2020 period, in line with the [CPMR position on post-2020 Cohesion Policy](#) adopted last June.

We urge the European Commission to take the following messages into account in its upcoming legislative package for the post-2020 EU Budget and Cohesion Policy:

1 Cohesion Policy must continue to cover all European regions and citizens for the post-2020 period, while pursuing simultaneously the objectives of economic, social and territorial cohesion. As a long-term territorial investment policy, Cohesion Policy brings European added value both at EU level and for citizens. It is essential to exploit the potential of the Single Market by focusing on Europe's strategic assets across Europe. Cohesion Policy mobilises significant public investment at national, regional and local levels to co-finance projects which contributes to the realisation of EU objectives.

2 Cohesion Policy needs a strong post-2020 financial envelope so that it keeps delivering long-term European public goods as enshrined in the EU Treaties. Cohesion policy is the closest European policy to citizens and the face of Europe in the territories. From reducing regional disparities, providing a social and economic stabilisation effect in times of crisis, to fostering European solidarity and competitiveness, promoting peace and cooperation across borders, Europe needs a strong Cohesion Policy now more than ever.

3 The European Social Fund must continue to be an integral part of Cohesion Policy to ensure that the EU's renewed focus on Social Europe can be realised on the ground. The European Social Fund has an essential territorial dimension that mirrors areas of regional competences across Europe. This is also supported by evidence showing that place-based and tailor-made solutions are essential to best address social issues as an integrated part of sustainable development.

4 Cohesion Policy cannot evolve to become an EU instrument to incentivise Member States to carry out structural reforms. Cohesion Policy already supports certain aspects of the European Semester, such as the modernising of public administration. Cohesion Policy and the European Semester have different timeframes and processes. If Cohesion Policy is to retain its 'raison d'être' as a territorial development policy, reconciling both would require a substantial reform of the European Semester.

5 Cohesion Policy core principles, such as shared management, partnership and multilevel governance, must be maintained. Trust, regional empowerment and smart processes to define priorities for investment at the regional level are key to improving the potential of the policy and ensuring growth and jobs to achieve a sustainable development within the EU.





Region of South Aegean



CPMR MEMBER REGIONS SUPPORTING THE OPEN LETTER

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CANTABRIA
CORNWALL
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EMILIA ROMAGNA
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HELSINKI-UUSIMA
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