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FEEDBACK

CoR Opinion “The impact of climate change on regions: an assessment of the European Green Deal”

With the questions of a successful implementation of the EU Green Deal targets on the ground and the respective governance structures the rapporteur raises a very relevant topic. It is of utmost importance to bring the political goals, policy framework and funding opportunities decided higher levels of government and the knowledge about local potentials and needs together. “No effective pathway towards climate neutrality can be designed on paper: the deep knowledge and understanding of the specific challenges and opportunities of the various EU territories is fundamental for the success of this transition”, the working document therefore rightly says.

But in the Green Deal context this challenges and opportunities are concretely defined by the structures and interdependencies in functional areas, like metropolitan regions. The transitions e.g. to a more circular economy, clean mobility (commuting) or sustainable and efficient energy systems as well as water supply and cleaner air will be most effectively organised within the specific circumstances of these territories. Solutions for these challenges don't stop at the border of a single municipality and could even go beyond the states level in densely populated polycentric agglomerations.

Unfortunately, especially in federal states like Germany, the typical CoR-understanding of a “region” (in form of the “Länder”) or the NUT2-level (“Regierungsbezirk”) does not adequately grasp these functional areas. For the Green Deal strategies and funding schemes Metropolitan Regions and Regional Authorities should therefore not be forgotten - but rather put at the core. They can provide the necessary governance and cooperation in the functional area and thereby make a close alignment of sustainable regional development, land use planning and mobility planning happen. Functional areas like metropolitan regions are interlinking their core cities with the peri-urban and rural areas for a balanced sustainable development. Therefore, we are strongly advising to add functional areas as level of activity to the CoR's opinion on the Green Deal.

If the COVID-19-recovery should be linked to the Green Deal objectives, functional areas also need to be specifically supported by Cohesion Policy and the new Recovery Facility. The Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) for Regions and CLLD for subregional areas, which were developed in the 2014-2020 funding period, provide good conditions for integrated projects in functional areas. These are developed and implemented "bottom up, reflecting the needs of this level and making flexible reactions to new challenges possible. In spite of very good examples from other Member States, the instrument of ITI in Germany is not or only to a lesser

extent applied. The Metropolitan Region FrankfurtRheinMain greatly regrets this and calls on the CoR to demand these instruments more forcefully and ensure also a shared development of the recovery programmes with LRAs – including also a real partnership with the regional actors below the state level, such as the metropolitan regions.