#CohesionAlliance webinar: "The European Recovery Plan and its implications for EU cohesion policy"

Tuesday 14 July – 12h00-13h30

Link to Webex for the speakers: <https://ecor.webex.com/ecor/j.php?MTID=m49898a0e115cba837aecd51aeab7fc7a>

**Please connect 30 minutes early for a quick connection and the sound check.**

**Intervention Illaria Bugetti, spokesperson for territorial development of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)**

Dear President Tzitzikostas,

Dear Commissioner Ferreira,

Dear colleagues

Thank you for the initiative of organising this exchange a few days prior the meeting of the heads of states and governments where they will discuss the future multi-annual financial framework and the recovery plan.

We are experiencing an extremely challenging time: the coronavirus has severely impacted our economy and our society and it will take years to recover from the crisis.

At the beginning of the crisis, states and governments acted purely national, they closed borders, did not allow shipping of protective equipment outside their country and took unilateral measures.

However, soon it became obvious that we need solidarity. We need each other’s support in order to get out of the crisis and to prepare for the future.

When presenting the priorities of the German Presidency to the members of the European Parliament last week, Chancellor Angela Merkel highlighted **solidarity and cohesion** as one of the five areas that the European Union needs to work on if it wants to emerge unified and strong from the current crisis: "Europe is capable of achieving great things if we work together and stand together in solidarity", she concluded.

Ms Merkel understands quite well the link between solidarity and European Cohesion Policy.

Local and regional governments of different sizes were hit by the coronavirus in diverse ways and with varying levels of intensity. Therefore, the way out of the crisis needs to be tailored according to the needs.

Cohesion Policy can address the asymmetrical shocks of this crisis, its place-based approach allows to adapt the measures to the local and regional situation, and it demonstrate its concrete value for citizens and businesses.

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions has been one of the founding members of the Cohesion Alliance. We strongly believe that Cohesion Policy has already demonstrated and will continue to demonstrate its relevance and usefulness for European territories and citizens.

Cohesion Policy will support a longer-term development perspective: it will help to make our societies more resilient and contribute to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

We need to prepare for the future and ensure that we can deliver the necessary services to our citizens: in the past months municipalities, cities and regions have shown the importance of functioning local and regional public services, especially in times of emergency.

They have worked tirelessly to protect lives, to support businesses and to secure the overall economic resilience of our communities. They have ensured uninterrupted delivery of our most important public services.

At the same time, they had to bear extra costs to finance additional health, economic and social measures, and had to face losses in their revenue.

This situation is critical as it will reduce the capacity of local and regional governments to invest in sustainable and future-oriented projects – many of them contributing to common European policy objectives.

Therefore, I would like to stress again: the need for support from the European Union to the local and regional governments in the coming years will be absolutely vital. The European Cohesion Policy as an instrument of solidarity will be crucial to not only recover, but to prepare for the future.

Thank you for your attention.