



19th European Week of Regions and Cities 2021

Guide for Event Partners

This guide explains how the 19th European Week of Regions and Cities will be organised in 2021 and how potential partners can apply to hold their sessions in the programme, and sets out the roles and tasks of the organisers and the various partners.

1. What is the European Week of Regions and Cities?

The European Week of Regions and Cities (#EURegionsWeek) is the biggest annual Brussels-based event dedicated to cohesion policy.

It has grown to become a unique communication and networking platform, bringing together regions and cities from all over Europe, including politicians, administrators, experts and academics. Over the last 18 years, it has done much to promote policy learning and the exchange of good practice.

In 2020, the first ever digital #EURegionsWeek reached a record number of more than 12.000 participants and 510 sessions. This confirmed the ability of the event to maintain its relevance as a platform for discussing and showcasing the development of EU cohesion policy, and making decision-makers aware of the views of regions and cities and their practical proposals for EU policy-making, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Who are the event organisers?

The European Week of Regions and Cities is organised jointly by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR). Together they are responsible for the design and format of the conference and its programme, and for general coordination and communication with all partners.

3. What is the purpose of the European Week of Regions and Cities?

- **To discuss common challenges** for Europe's regions and cities and examine possible solutions by bringing together politicians, decision-makers, experts and practitioners of cohesion policy, as well as stakeholders from business, banking, civil society organisations, academia, the EU institutions and the media;
- **To provide a platform for capacity-building, learning and exchange of experience** and good practice for those implementing EU cohesion policy and managing its financial instruments;
- **To facilitate cooperation and networking** between regions and cities;
- **To feed into the debate on EU cohesion policy** in a wider context, including recent research and views from third countries and international organisations.



4. 2021 context

The 19th EURegionsWeek will take place at a crucial time. The COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped the political agenda at all levels, putting the crisis and its health, social and economic aspects, its impact on people and local communities, and possible EU measures for the recovery at the core of the public debate.

In 2021, the event will provide an opportunity to learn more about and engage in further debate on the European response to the health, social and economic challenges. It will focus on the capacity of the EU and of national and regional governments to support European citizens and their local communities with practical measures and public policies aimed at investing in a fairer, greener and more digital future. In this respect, the new cohesion policy and new generation of EU programmes for 2021-2027, as well as the EU's financial instruments for tackling the COVID-19 crisis, will be centre stage in the 2021 event.

The EURegionsWeek will also serve as a platform for fostering the ongoing debate on democracy and citizen's engagement on the future of Europe and provide an opportunity for an important inter-institutional debate on the Green Deal, less than one month before COP26.

As 2021 is the European Year of Rail, the European Week of Regions and Cities will seize the opportunity to promote rail as an environmentally friendly, innovative and safe mode of transport. Rail means better accessibility for the regions and more mobility within society, economic development and lower emissions.

The event will tap into all the advantages of a digital format and at the same time ensure the opportunity to debate, keeping communities connected, exchanging best practices and ideas between partners and participants. Hosting the #EURegionsWeek digitally means pushing forward the digital evolution already in progress throughout our society, facing the current global health crisis with a positive and proactive approach.

5. When and where is the event taking place?

The 19th European Week of Regions and Cities will take place from **11 to 14 October 2021**. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and taking into account the related health and safety restrictions (social distancing) the 2021 #EURegionsWeek will take place in a digital format

Partner sessions will be organised online by default.

6. Topics for the 2021 event

Under the slogan ***"Together for recovery"***, the #EURegionsWeek will be centered on the four thematic topics of this year, reflecting EU institutions' priority to launch a fair, green and digital recovery:



- **Green transition: *for a sustainable and green recovery*.** What is EU's regions and cities role in addressing both short- and long- term green transition challenges? What is their contribution to sustainability and green recovery efforts and how the green revolution happens on the ground, ensuring its inclusiveness and fairness? Focus on investment in sustainable transports also in relation to the EU Rail Year.
- **Cohesion: *from emergency to resilience*,** showcasing the added value of cohesion policy and its synergy with other investments tools to face the pandemic emergency and to contribute to the European recovery. What is the impact of the work of regions and cities in using cohesion funds for the health, social and economic recovery? What are their needs and proposals? How can we assess today's achievements and challenges of the ESI funds and EU measures?
- **Digital transition *for people*:** how to use ESI funds to successfully deliver the digital transitions. How regions and cities can address the digital challenges and how citizens can contribute to this process?
- **Citizens engagement for an inclusive, participative and fair recovery:** Mobilising EU citizens for the post-pandemic re-launch of local economies, reflect on the current EU delivery of cohesion policy and its effectiveness in addressing people needs.

As in previous years, an online survey was carried out after the #EURRegionsWeek 2020 to ascertain participants' preferred topics for the following year. With 819 replies received, the majority opted for cohesion, followed by green, digital and citizens (citizen engagement in the Conference on the Future of Europe).

7. Target audience

The European Week of Regions and Cities and its events are aimed at:

- European, national, regional and local government officials and experts in the field of managing and evaluating cohesion policy programmes;
- representatives of private companies, financial institutions and European and national associations;
- members of the European Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament, and national, regional and local politicians, including young elected politicians (YEPs);
- members of the public who want to express their views and contribute to the debate on the future of Europe and their regions and cities;
- academics, researchers and postgraduate students and practitioners in the field of European cohesion policy;
- journalists from European, national, regional and local media outlets.

8. Who can apply to become a EURRegionsWeek partner?

- Applicants must be from/or have an established residence in:



- an EU Member State;
- a country contributing to/participating in an EU programme.
- Regional and national authorities in charge of managing programmes co-financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds (European Regional Development Fund /ERDF/, Cohesion Fund /CF/, European Social Fund /ESF/, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development /EAFRD/ and European Maritime Fisheries Fund /EMFF).
- EU institutions (institutional partners): directorates-general of the European Commission and EU agencies; legislative work departments and political groups of the European Committee of the Regions; the European Parliament (especially its Committee on Regional Development/REGI/and the European Parliamentary Research Service/EPRS/); the rotating EU presidency; and the European Economic and Social Committee.
- Local and regional authorities.
- European and national associations of local and regional authorities, or associations representing a local and regional angle.
- Civil society associations.
- European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs).
- Pan-European networking programmes financed by the ERDF.
- Companies involved in public-private partnerships.
- European associations representing the business sector.
- Financial institutions and European associations in the banking sector.

9. How to apply?

Potential partners are invited to submit a proposal using the online [application form for partners](#) by the 1st October 2021.

Partners can submit your application under two categories:

- as Event Partner
- as Regional Partnership

This year, it is not necessary to submit separate application forms.

Please take into account that due to the current situation, and in order to ensure a balanced schedule in a digital format, **the event organisers will limit the number of events in 2021**. Applicants (Event Partners and Regional Partnerships) are invited **to submit no more than one proposal** (one application per entity including the smallest entity in an organisation) and to focus on the quality of the event in order to increase their chances of being selected. Priority will also be given to applications with at least two or more partners, to highlight their capacity to work in partnership.

Please make sure you fulfil the criteria referred to and requested in the application form, such as (see application form, first paragraph):



- By applying, potential partners commit to high communication standards before, during and after their session, should the organisers retain their application. They also commit to minimising the environmental impact of their session as well as to respecting the paperless and plastic-free guidance received from the organiser.
- Potential partners would need to confirm that they are aware that the organisers reserve the right to cancel their session, should any of the above and any of the principles recorded on the Guide to Applicants fail to be respected or should the number of registered participants fail to reach 50 by end September 2021.

Partners are asked to follow this guide when contributing to the event and to comply with the deadlines and any other obligations communicated by the organisers.

The organisers reserve the right to exclude any event partner who fails to abide by the rules and obligations.

10. Regional Partnership application

A "Regional Partnership" is a **group of minimum four and maximum eight regions and cities jointly organising one event at the European Week of Regions and Cities.**

Regions, cities, towns or provinces who want to become a partner of the event, working in cooperation with other eligible regional or local authorities across Europe, can form a partnership and submit an application under the category "Regional Partnership".

Regional Partnerships can only be made up of regional and local authorities – applications including other type of partners will be rejected. In addition to the general conditions and organisational aspects set out for all event partners, the following criteria should be also met:

- Regional Partnerships must be composed of at least four and not more than eight regions or cities, towns or provinces from at least three countries, with at least one partner from an EU Member State. *Please note that during the evaluation process, priority will be given to partnerships with more than four partners.*
- Regions and cities can only be part of one Regional Partnership in a given year
- Regions and cities can take part in EURegionsWeek either as a Regional Partnership or as a partner
- Regions and cities are encouraged to work with other regions or cities with whom they have not previously formed a partnership;
- Partnerships applying for workshops should include at least one CoR member and/or political representative. Their names and qualifications need to be clearly indicated in the application.

N.B. Regional Partnerships can only apply to organise the following formats: workshops, information sessions, EURegionsTalks, participatory labs.

In normal circumstances, Regional Partnerships can host their session at their regional office in Brussels (with a minimum capacity of 50 seats), or at the European Committee of the Regions.



In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2021, sessions will take place in a digital format with possible limited in-person participation. The possibility of hosting sessions at regional office venues will be evaluated and confirmed in due course by the organisers.

More specifically, speakers and moderators gathering at a common venue in order to facilitate the smooth running of the remote session and a possible limited audience will only be allowed after confirmation by the event organisers, in line with the Belgian health and safety measures.

For promotional purposes, one representative, copyright-free, high-resolution photo from each partner region/city in a regional partnership could be provided. The photo should bear the name of the partner region/city and should be uploaded via the online application form.

By providing the photo, the partner region/city authorizes the CoR to use it in online communication for promotional purposes. The CoR reserves the right not to publish photos that do not comply with the technical requirements.

11. What conditions and requirements do event applicants have to meet?

- Each applicant must appoint one session organiser as "lead partner" (if not assuming the role himself/herself) who is fully responsible for the preparation and follow-up of each session. The session organiser-lead partner will be the only contact person for the event organisers (DG REGIO/CoR). Using their email address, the session organiser should create an EU login to get access to the session content and manage their session/activity;
- The subject matter of the session must be transferable to other regions and cities;
- Speakers and conference moderators must have both expertise on the specific topic and experience in public speaking. The session organiser is responsible for briefing the speakers and the moderator and providing them with the necessary support. The moderator should make sure that each contribution keeps to the allotted time and that the floor is passed amongst the speakers smoothly.
- Selected applicants commit themselves to ensuring a gender balance on the panels with both female and male speakers. Male-only panels will be refused;
- Participation of members of the European Parliament and members of the European Committee of the Regions as speakers is encouraged ;
- By applying, partners commit to minimising the environmental impact of their sessions as well as to respecting the paperless and plastic-free guidance received from the organiser;
- Partners must use the heading "European Week of Regions and Cities" and the branding of the event, in accordance with the branding guidelines, as well as any promotional material produced by the event organisers (available on the event website). They are invited to promote the event and their sessions and to use the hashtag #EURRegionsWeek on social media.
- In using the official branding materials, partners commit their self to respect the EURRegionsWeek privacy policy and to use images or picture of people only if the copyright



owner of the material has expressly granted its prior written consent and authorization and mentioning of photo credit.

- Selected partners are strongly encouraged to ensure inclusiveness, for example by involving young people, civil society and minorities.
- For digital sessions, it might be necessary to appoint a technical (back-end) moderator to support the panel and the smooth running of the session and manage the digital tools. Details on requirements will be available at a later stage.
- For a thorough assessment of applications, partners should provide a detailed description, including a draft agenda, a concept of the session, and explain its benefit, attractiveness and innovative elements. Partners should be able to explain how they will ensure effective interaction (particularly in a digital format), why their session is special and why it should be selected.
- Participants at the European Week of Regions and Cities cannot be charged a fee for any event. The partners are not allowed to conduct commercial activities during these events;
- Joint organising of sessions between regional offices, the European Commission and the CoR is encouraged. This will make the programme more dynamic and lead to a better mix of politicians, high-level officials, academics and private-sector entrepreneurs, making the event unique;
- The organisers of the European Week of Regions and Cities will look at the quality and relevance of the session proposed. It should prompt debate, networking, capacity building and the exchange of experience and good practice among partners and participants. It should also involve political representatives and partners from the public, business and/or financial sectors and/or academia – and/or foster exchanges on public-private partnerships in the field of regional and local development.

Partners are responsible for the organisation of their session and its logistics, but they must comply with the subject priorities, timeslots and quality standards set by the organisers.

The organisers reserve the right to exclude partners at any moment should they fail to abide by the rules and obligations or should the required tasks not be completed on time.

12. What is on offer in the 2021 programme?

The highlights of the European Week of Regions and Cities 2021 are:

11/10 - Political Opening

11/10 - Citizens' Dialogue

12/10 - Megalizzi-Niedzielski prize

14/10 - Political Closing

11-14/10- High-level debates and online partner sessions



13. Session formats

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the related health and safety measures, the working sessions (workshops; information sessions; participatory labs; EURegionsTalks) will be fully digital with remote participation.

A limited in-person participation of speakers and moderators will be evaluated subject to the health and safety measures in force. The working sessions will be supported by digital platforms provided by the organisers and tutorials will be available for each virtual format.

Please note that interpreting will only be provided for a limited number of sessions, subject to availability, and with a maximum of two interpreted languages + English (the session being in English by default).

Workshops:

- focus on sharing political strategies, experience and good practice, and facilitating cooperation and networking, including contributions from the audience;
- a maximum of four speakers and one moderator is allowed. The moderator should be tasked with stimulating the discussion, while ensuring that speakers keep to the allotted time and that the session runs smoothly.

New feature: partners can include up to four three-minute videos as "video testimonials" to balance out the speakers and avoid monotony.

The short videos should present specific examples of projects or good practices, sharing experiences from the ground and presenting key messages (no speeches or statements). Partners are responsible for producing, editing and sharing the videos, following the technical specifications provided by the organisers. Videos should be delivered with a URL (can be hosted on Youtube, Vimeo, etc.). They can be recorded in any EU official language if partners provide subtitles. Language: English or other EU language with subtitles;

- every effort should be made to ensure gender-balanced contributions;
- maximum of 90 minutes (at least 30 minutes for debating with participants)
- digital sessions (credentials for platform provided by organisers);
- video on demand available after the session (possible live streaming in some cases).

EU Regions talks:

- delivered without notes, but scripted and rehearsed;
- professionally illustrated with slides (pictures only), videos, animations or props on stage;
- concise, brief and highlighting key messages (from 10 to 30 minutes);
- one single speaker;
- maximum of 30 minutes;
- digital format session or pre-recorded digital session (technical requirements for the video recording will be provided at a later stage);



- video on demand after the session;
- possible live streaming in some cases.

Information sessions (followed by Q&A):

- 3 speakers maximum on a specific topic;
- main goal of the sessions in 2021 would be to share clear and specific information on EU policies and programmes;
- 1 moderator;
- maximum of 60 minutes (30 minutes of interventions + 30 minutes Q&A);
- video on demand available after the session – possible live streaming in some cases.

Participatory labs (e.g. "world café"):

- eliciting opinions, exchanging knowledge and solving problems by using interactive techniques;
- collaborative and creative environment, facilitated tables of active participants wishing to share experience;
- design of the session to be defined according to the expected outcomes;
- a maximum of four storytellers and one moderator;
- maximum of 90 minutes;
- digital sessions;
- video on demand available after the session – only for plenary sessions.

Virtual Exhibition

- showcasing a single flagship product from a region or city: art, technology, etc.;
- project-oriented;
- creative ways of exhibiting: avoiding "traditional" stands, creating a new experience for visitors;
- innovative and interactive audience approach.

Exhibitor's pitch

- exhibitors can request an **exhibitor's pitch or presentation** to be delivered by 2 speakers, either online with a Q&A session format or pre-recorded (technical requirements of the recordings will be provided at a later stage);
- maximum of 60 minutes;
- video on demand after the session.



14. Timeslots of the sessions

The sessions run between 11 and 14 October 2021, starting at 9.30 a.m. and ending at 6 p.m. Sessions must fit into the following timeslots:

Timeslots

09:30 – 11:00
11:30 – 13:00
14:30 – 16:00
16.30- 18.00

Session formats and duration:

| | |
|----------------------|------------|
| Workshops | 90 minutes |
| EU Regions talks | 30 minutes |
| Information sessions | 60 minutes |
| Participatory labs | 90 minutes |
| Exhibitor's pitch | 60 minutes |

15. Digital only event

Due to the pandemic situation, the organisers have opted for a digital-only event, with very limited in-person possibilities for high level sessions.

16. Publicity, promotion, media relations and branding

In line with their commitment to ensuring optimal visibility for the event, the selected partners agree to adopt a common branding, including the EU logo (according to the branding guidelines), available on the event website.

In their application, partners must define a communication strategy that aims to maximise the visibility of their session. If selected, partners are responsible for promoting their event to maximise attendance. They must clearly define, for instance, what they would consider as success for their event and put forward and share the Key Performance Indicators they will use to assess their performance (e.g. number of participants registered for the session, average social media engagement rate per post related to the session etc.).

The main communication platform for all the latest information on the European Week of Regions and Cities is the event website – europa.eu/regions-and-cities – and the hashtag to be used on social media is #EURegionsWeek.



The administrative language for the event is English. The event's promotion and publicity campaign will be run both online (via event website, social media, electronic newsletter, etc.) and using traditional tools. To attract media attention, the organisers will provide regular newsfeeds on the event via press releases and social media posts, and on the website. All partners are asked to follow the event website and to promote their sessions. Partners are also encouraged to coordinate their media-related activities with the organisers to ensure consistency of message.

The European Commission will tweet about the event from the @EUinmyRegion account and the European Committee of the Regions from the @EU_CoR account.

New feature:

Partners are invited to promote the event and their sessions widely, committing to high communication standards before, during and after their session.

17. How can event partners apply and what is the deadline?

Partners should submit their event proposal [via the online form](#) available on the event website: https://europa.eu/regions-cities/partner_en. The **deadline for submission is 15 March 2021.**

APPLICATION IS CLOSED

18. Selection procedure and status notification

The results of the selection procedure will be announced by **mid May 2021**.

If selected, the final title and a detailed programme for the session (in English) must be updated by **10 June 2021**. The final list of confirmed speakers, along with the chair/moderator, must be updated on the event's platform by **20 August 2021**.

Events for which details have not been submitted by the deadline will be excluded from the European Week of Regions and Cities' programme.

19. Registration

Registration for the European Week of Regions and Cities will open during summer 2021 via the [event website](#)

Registration for all events at the European Week of Regions and Cities in Brussels is free of charge and available exclusively via the event website, using the EU login.

The event is managed in accordance with the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions privacy statement and disclaimer, published on the event website. In compliance with current legislation on the use of personal data, none of the participants' data may under any circumstances be stored after the event or used for purposes other than identifying event participants. Lists of participants may not be given to third parties.



20. Side events

Side events/local events may take place in conjunction with the European Week of Regions and Cities 2021, on the basis of their theme, timeframe and format. This is however not part of the official programme of the event. See dedicated section on the event website for more information.

21. Key dates

| | |
|---|---------------|
| 1st partners meeting | 28 January |
| Deadline for applications | 26 March |
| Communication of selection results | 12 May |
| 2nd partners meeting | 21 May |
| Partners to update session content (title & descriptions) | 10 June |
| Communication of time slots | End June |
| Side event application open | 28 June |
| Online programme, registration open | Summer |
| Session content update (names of speakers & moderators) | 20 August |
| Deadline for submitting side event applications | 3 September |
| Registration close | October |
| 19th European Week of Regions and Cities | 11-14 October |
| Deadline for submitting e-reports | 12 November |

22. Info & contacts

- Event website:
<https://europa.eu/regions-and-cities/>
- European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO):
EURegionsWeek@ec.europa.eu
- European Committee of the Regions (CoR):
EURegionsWeek@cor.europa.eu
- Event secretariat
partners@euregionsweek.eu