EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 for Cities and Regions



DOI reference: 10.1080/13673882.2018.00001032

By Eduardo Oliveira (Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium), Michael Taster (University of Sheffield, UK) and Julie Tian Miao (University of Melborne, Australia)

Around mid-May, the European Union Commission (EC) presented to the Council its proposals for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the years 2021 to 2027 (EU budget), and ministers had a first round of discussions. This presentation has kicked off negotiations on the next MFF, a vital building block for the EU's future long-term development.

Completing work on the future framework and the spending programs in time to

allow their full implementation by 1 January 2021 will be challenging, but it is achievable – provided that the European Council and other EU institutions lead the way. Several institutions are reframing their programs to align objectives and strategies in favour of a more cohesive EU territory. It was with this in mind that we decided to organize this issue themed around the EU budget.

In this issue of Regions eZine we have assembled a number of contributions reflecting the challenges and implications of the MFF 2021-2017 for the governance of cities and regions. In the **Regional Insights** section, we present a selection of approaches taken to embrace the challenges posed to lagging regions, cross-border areas and the pros and cons of a EU Territorial Policy. For example, in the article *Smart specialisation and the complex nature of governance: Perspectives from Portuguese regions for the Post-2020 Period*, Manuel Laranja, John Edwards and Hugo Pinto outline the challenges in the implementation of the the Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) in Portuguese regions, emphasizing amongst other issues, the difficulties in mobilizing and engaging local actors. Sebastien Bourdin explores the possible contributions of the EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 to addressing territorial inequalities, discussing the need for a place-sensitive policy, aiming at maximising the development potential of each territory regarding their real regional specificities.

Magdalena Sapała from the European Parliamentary Research Service complements Bourdin's debate and provides some reflections on how much funding could be allocated to EU Cohesion Policy in the upcoming MFF. Since May 2018, both the European Parliament and the Council have been examining the Commission's proposals. As far as the budget and the rules for cohesion policy are concerned, the Parliament already adopted its position and was ready for the negotiations. Ricardo Ferreira, Nathalie Verschelde and Valeria Cenacchi argue that supporting cross-border interactions is thus a necessary condition to allow those territories to reach their full potential and trying to overcome those border effects. The team from the European Commission DG REGIO – Cross-Border Cooperation Unit examine European Commission's support to Cross-Border territories. In their piece, they highlight that the Article 174 of the *Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* recognises the challenges faced by border regions providing the legal framework for addressing them. Peter Mehlbye, Kai Böhme, Derek Martin and Peter Schön reflect on the overall future of the EU

territory in times when divisions are becoming once again stronger and more visible. They argue that the long-term aspirations for the 'EU territory of tomorrow' need to be thoroughly debated by European leaders, the next European Parliament, the next EU Commission, the upcoming Croatian, Finnish and German EU Presidencies and, above all by regions and cities. The team from the Territorial Thinkers, an independent platform of experts, highly experienced in European, national, regional and local policy development with a territorial dimension, propose that six ingredients for a consolidated and updated EU policy for the entire territory need to be in place. Finally, Xabier Gainza, as part of his Regional Studies Association Membership Research Grant, debates the electoral bias in the distribution of investment in Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Colombia, and its implications for territorial cohesion.

This issues' **Research Frontline** section features new research by Arnault Morisson on the the *Concept of the Entrepreneurial Region* and from Igor Calzada on how the algorithmic, Artificial Intelligence-driven, and post General Data Protection Regulation affects European citizens. Arnault Morisson reflects on the works of Mariana Mazzucato and her seminal book *The Entrepreneurial State* and the application of this approach in the Global South. Specifically, he raises the issue of cities and city-regions in the Global South having the capabilities (either institutional, financial, or technological) to invest to support the next wave of disruptive technological innovations. Despite the shortcomings of the application of the entrepreneurial state principles in the Global South, Morisson develops a conceptual framework for the entrepreneurial region by taking the Colombian city of Medellín as a case study; a city that has followed a post-Washington consensus approach to local economic development. The purpose of Igor Calzada's article is to delineate a pervasive transitional momentum in Europe to protect citizens' digital rights through data ownership in the aftermath of algorithmic disruption. He contends that the algorithmic disruption has profound implications for cities and regions around the globe, raising concerns regarding the hidden power of big data evil geniuses. Drawing on evidence from previous publications, and particularly stemming from the case study of Barcelona, he builds upon a rationale through which citizens, at least in European cities and regions—unlike in the U.S. and China—are increasingly being considered decision-makers rather than mere passive data providers. In addition, the use of information and communication technologies in the emerging global urban system and also cross-sectorial cooperation have been shaping new forms or territorial governance.

This issue's **Spotlight** article features a contribution by Yasmine Willi and Marco Pütz on regional governance models in support of regional development processes. These authors, based at the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research WSL, give particular attention to how regional development agencies in Switzerland formulate and implement development plans.

This fourth issue continues presenting senior academic reflections on day-to-day life within academia. In the section **Research Hacks,** Raul Pacheco-Vega shares his personal reflection on how to get through the academic maze- from our neurons to the tips of our fingers, to our word processors, all the way up to generating publications. Rhiannon Pugh, editor of the Early Career Papers Section of the journal Regional Studies Regional Science (RSRS), highlight the advantageous of the submission process this section of RSRS offers to early career researchers.

The **Must Read** section, which in this issue features interviews with Ulrich Hilpert about the book *Diversities of Innovation*, and with Iryna Kristensen on *Strategic Approaches to Regional Development is Smart Experimentation in Less-Favoured Regions*, a book she edited together with Alexandre Dubois and Jukka Teräs. This issue also reports on various Regional Studies Association events in **RSA Highlights**.

It is our hope that you find in each issue of Regions eZine inspiration and ideas relevant to your work. We would also be very happy in working with you towards a contribution.

The forthcoming Issue 5 will be themed around the territorial implications of Brexit and will include a special edited Regional Insights section.