

Constructing the Future of Europe: Narratives & Challenges for the European Committee of the Regions



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European Committee
of the Regions

COR Context:

- ▶ A formal EU institution
- ▶ LRA representatives/ 324/1m
- ▶ 280 regions (NUTS3)
- ▶ An Opinion Body / Holistic Thinking
- ▶ Citizen led vision giving bottom up perspectives





COR work deeply influenced by:

- ▶ **Regional disparities and disparities between cities in Member States**
- ▶ **Social cohesion / disparities and unemployment**
- ▶ **Territorial demands for infrastructure**
- ▶ **Calls for investment in broadband, innovation and skills**
- ▶ **The need for responses to Climate Change**
- ▶ **Solutions to cross border challenges**
- ▶ **Enhancing the quality of national and local and regional governments**
- ▶ **The EU Post COVID Narrative**

The Frame of the Post Crisis Europe Narrative

....Turning...

- ▶ Problems into Opportunities
- ▶ Ambition into Growth & Stability
- ▶ Integration into Added Value



The Added Value Paradigm



- ▶ Sharing of best practice & knowledge
- ▶ Borders as frontiers of ideas
- ▶ Inclusiveness & connections
- ▶ Partnership & opportunity
- ▶ Dialogue & synergy driven
- ▶ Diversity and unity
- ▶ Cross-border and Interoperability



Plugging these thoughts into cities and regions across the EU one gets a type of “acupuncture” treatment of cities and regions....

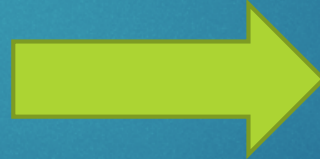
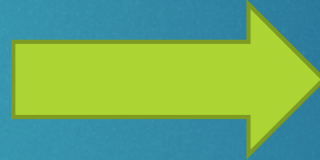
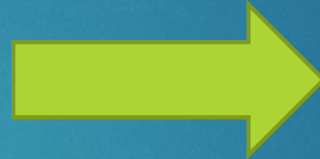
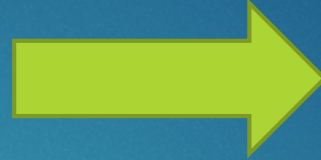
The acupuncture treatment....Re-Imagining Cities and Regions as...

- ▶ C & R as the Future of Europe
- ▶ C & R as flexible networks of growth
- ▶ C & R as nodes of place-based thinking
- ▶ C & R as laboratories
- ▶ C & R as learning platforms

- C & R as test beds
- C & R as resilient spaces
- C & R as champions of beyond GDP indicators & thinking
- C & R as innovators

Collaborative Toolkits collecting Knowledge:

- ▶ Europe 2020
- ▶ National Planning Frameworks
- ▶ ERDF
- ▶ ESF
- ▶ EIB
- ▶ ETC / Interreg
- ▶ COR & EESC Opinions
- ▶ Knowledge Exchange Platforms
- ▶ H2020/ Horizon Europe
- ▶ Espon
- ▶ Statistics
- ▶ e-government
- ▶ Urban Innovation Networks
- ▶ Eu Urban Agenda
- ▶ Covenant of Mayors



LEVERAGE

COR campaigns of recent interest (1)

- ▶ Defending Cohesion Policy
- ▶ Promoting Green Deal
- ▶ Narrowing regional disparities
- ▶ Leading the Future of Work
- ▶ Discussing new technologies
- ▶ Incubating and processing
- ▶ Unveiling Innovation 5.0
 - data, AI, Computing
- ▶ Creating Smart Cities & Regions
- ▶ Breaking silos
- ▶ Constructing Q Helixes + 1



COR campaigns of recent interest (2)



- ▶ Digital Single market
- ▶ E-commerce, e-government
- ▶ Formal and informal Education
- ▶ Social innovation
- ▶ EU Social Pillars
- ▶ Skill-building
- ▶ Migration
- ▶ Investment
- ▶ & simplification

COR Flagship Programmes



- ▶ Knowledge Exchange platforms
- ▶ Green Deal local programmes
- ▶ EGTCs
- ▶ Science Meets Regions
- ▶ I-Capital award
- ▶ European Capitals of...Culture, Sport, Green, Youth Volunteering, Gastronomy Region)
- ▶ Urban Agenda for the EU
- ▶ E-Government
- ▶ Intelligent (Digital) Cities Challenge
- ▶ EER Award
- ▶ SME
- ▶ Rural peripheries (Cork 2.0, CAP Reform)
- ▶ SDG & globalisation
- ▶ EWCRs
- ▶ Communicating Europe

More Specific Exchanges

- ▶ Bioeconomy
- ▶ Environment
- ▶ Energy
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Circular economy
- ▶ Broadband
- ▶ Advanced manufacturing
- ▶ Waste
- ▶ Maritime



COR & The Urban Agenda:



Partnerships

- ▶ **Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees (2016)**
- ▶ **Housing (2016)**
- ▶ **Air Quality (2016)**
- ▶ **Urban Poverty (2016)**
- ▶ **Circular Economy (2017)**
- ▶ **Digital Transition (2017)**
- ▶ **Urban Mobility (2017)**
- ▶ **Jobs and Skills in the local economy (2017)**
- ▶ **Energy Transition (2017)**
- ▶ **Climate Adaptation (2017)**
- ▶ **Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-based Solutions (2017)**
- ▶ **Innovative and Responsible Public Procurement (2017)**

COR RESPONSES....

Multi-level Governance

supports the Urban Agenda's approach and its multi-level governance working method across 12 broad policy priority themes as identified in the Pact of Amsterdam

and the need to rethink approaches to the design of existing rules and regulations, enhancing the user-friendliness of the range of available urban

focussed funding resources and improve knowledge exchange and cooperation on urban issues among different stakeholders.

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I'm interested in



Action Plans



Monitoring of Actions



Culture/Cultural Heritage



POPULAR

Grenoble, Gabrovo &
Lappeenranta win
EGCA2022 & EGLA2021



Today more than two thirds of Europeans live in towns and cities. Urban areas concentrate most of the environmental challenges facing our society but also bring together commitment and innovation to resolve them. The European Green Capital Award has been conceived to promote and reward these efforts.

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European Committee
of the Regions

REFLECTING on Europe

How Europe is perceived
by people in regions and cities



Executive summary

“Reflecting on Europe” – a listening exercise

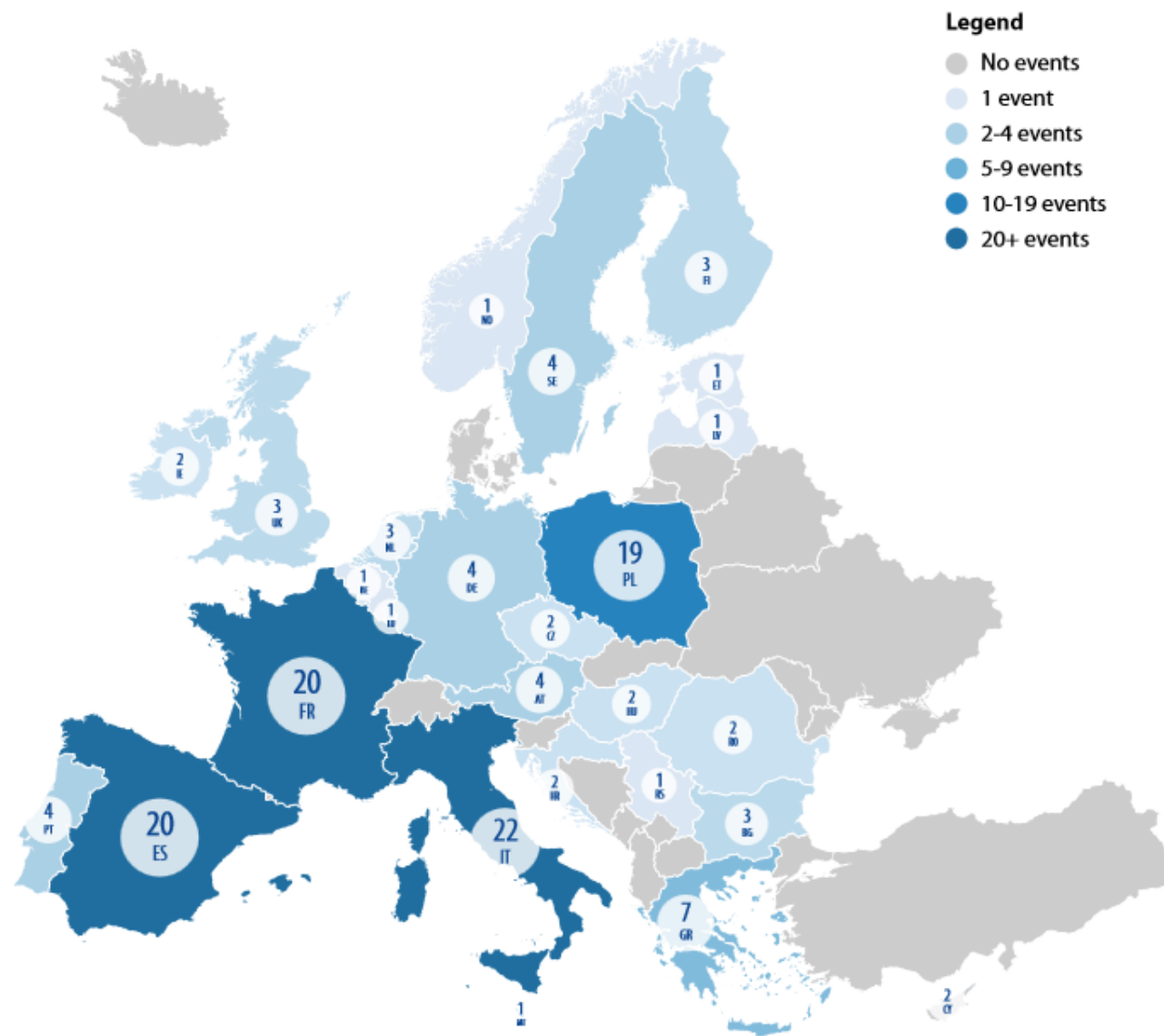
Since March 2016, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has been listening to about 30,000 citizens in 81 regions and 114 cities and municipalities in 25 European countries. This exercise branded “Reflecting on Europe” was given a strong boost in November 2016, when the President of the European Council asked the CoR to engage citizens in a debate on the future of Europe.

At the heart of the exercise, there have been active members of the CoR, who initiated dialogues with citizens in town halls, regional parliaments, local councils, schools and universities. By their very nature, these dialogues were usually not held in capital cities and they were not meant to talk at people but with them instead. By April 2018, 156 CoR members, have been engaged in 133 local dialogues involving about 14,000 participants.

In parallel, the CoR also asked “citizens to have their say on Europe” and to share their views and concerns via an online survey and a mobile app, which was made available in the 24 official languages of the EU since autumn 2017. So far, around 15,000 people took part in this unique exercise, which delivers some interesting insights into the way people want to see the EU developing.

Preliminary results of the exercise are presented in this report, which covers the period from March 2016 to March 2018. Final conclusions will feed into the related CoR opinion due for adoption on 9 October 2018. In view of the European elections in May 2019, the CoR will continue its citizens’ dialogues and support locally the awareness campaign for the elections of the European Parliament and the other EU institutions. In short, despite differences in the age, gender and geographical origin of respondents, the current results can be summarised as follows:

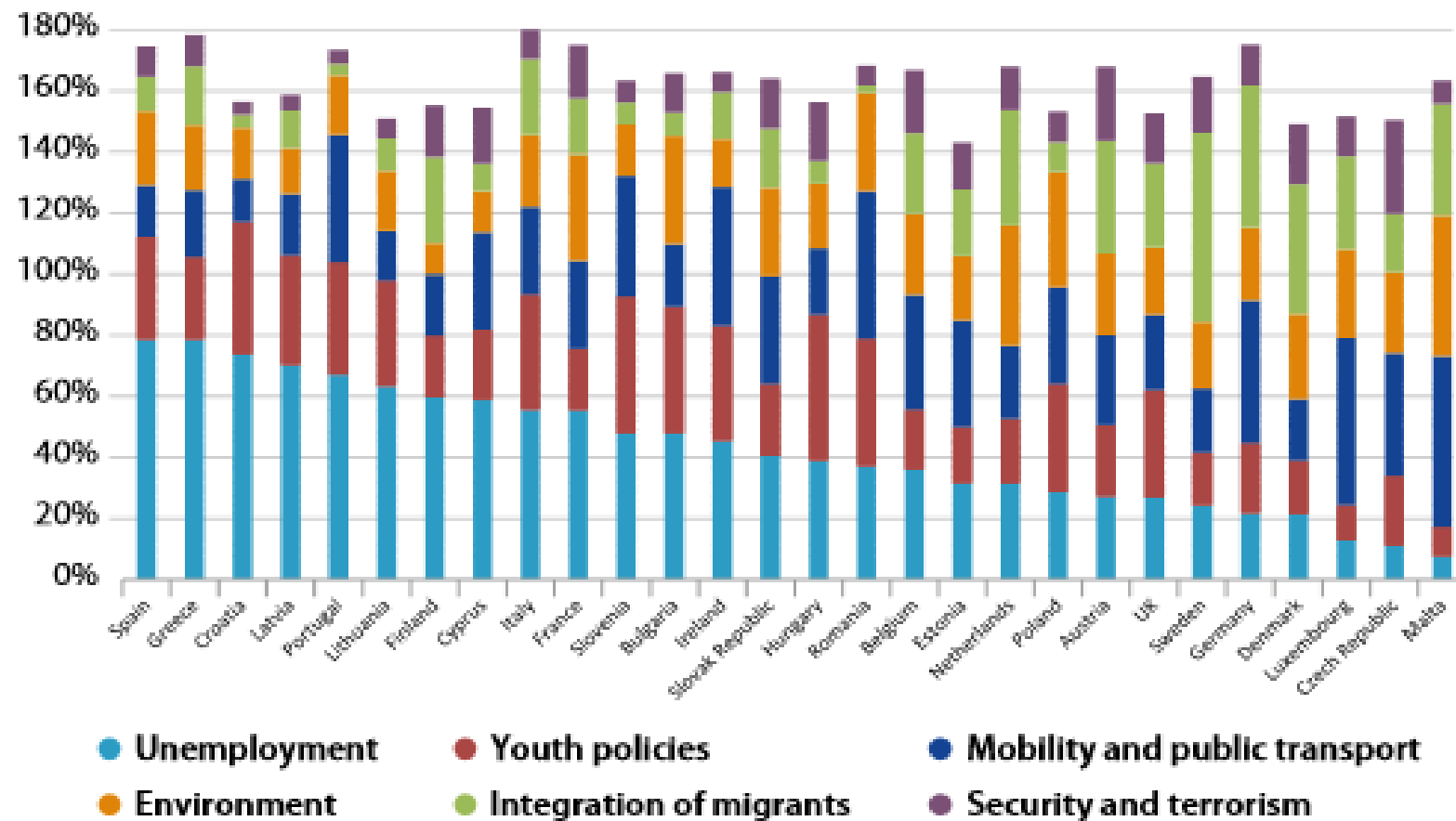
Local events held since mid-March 2016 until 11 April 2018



Main findings of the survey

Graph 1

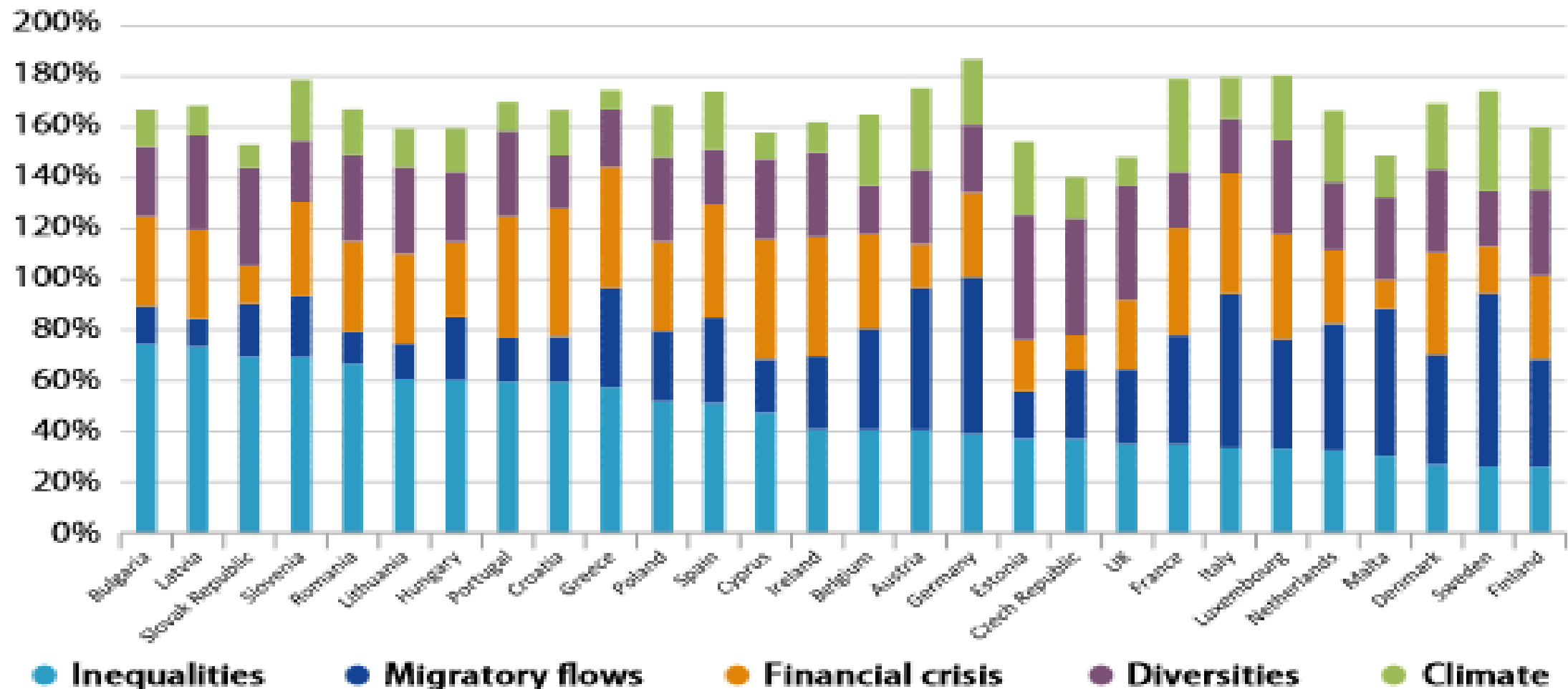
Two main problems facing regions and cities, by country



Bars' values are exceeding 100% because respondents could select more than one answer.

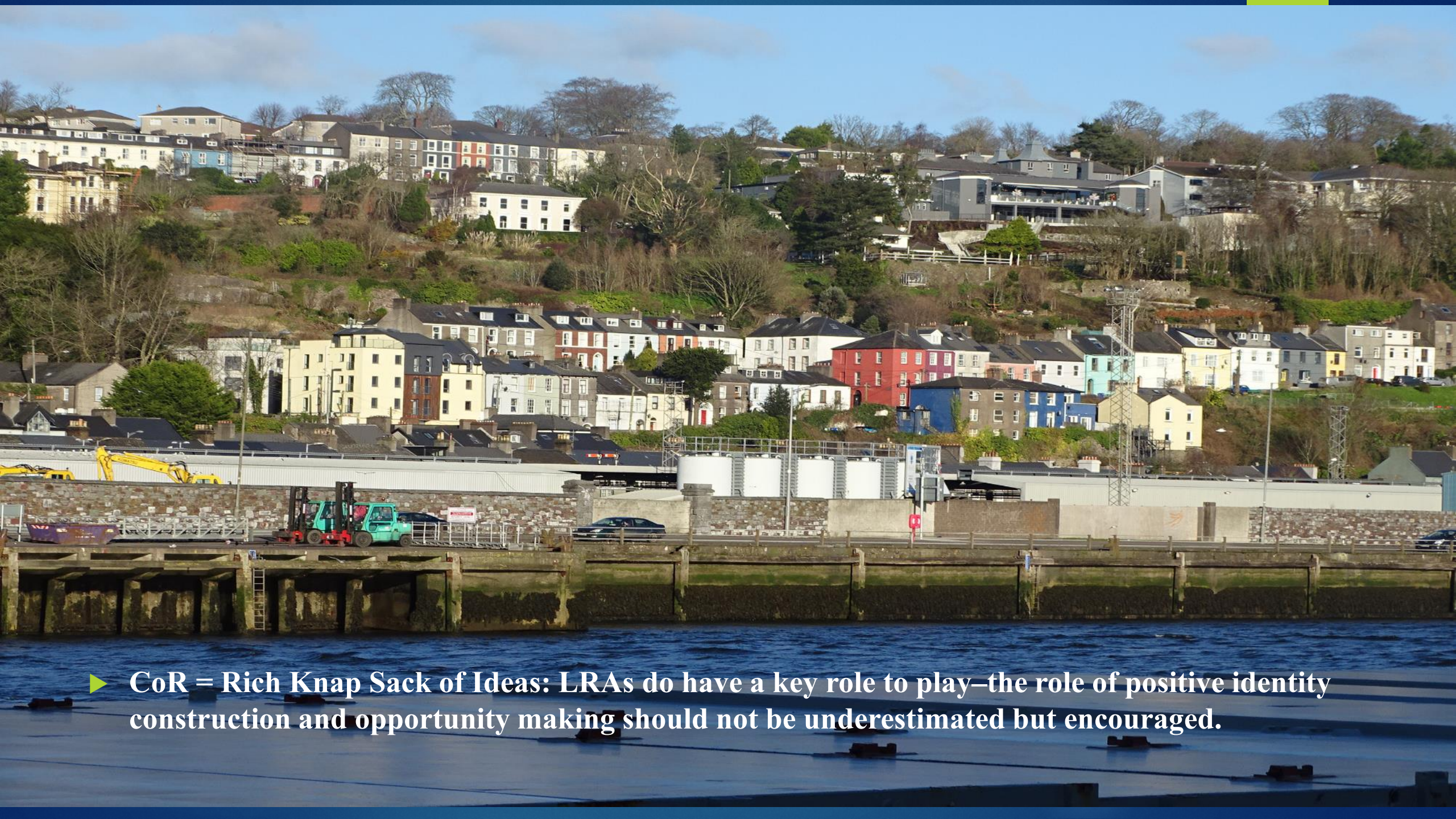
Graph 7

Issues needing more solidarity between EU countries, by country



Bars' values are exceeding 100% because respondents could select more than one answer.

- People are enthusiastic about the EU but they also feel disconnected at the same time, a feeling that does not only concern their perception of the EU but politics in general.
- People trust their local and regional politicians more than they trust EU or national politicians. In many dialogues with citizens, these levels have been presented together and it has often been the combination of local, national and EU politics, which made it possible to present the different levels of responsibility in a coherent way.
- Still, many people continue to highlight their distance to EU politics and institutions and even frustration about the direction the EU is taking.
- People demand higher levels of transparency and ownership and more active ways to become involved while they confirm at the same time a lack of knowledge about the EU and how it works.
- Compared to the EU, "Europe" still has a positive image for most people, in particular when it comes to the values and benefits that the young generation associates with it.
- In addition to freedom, prosperity, mobility people also ask a more active Europe in the area of education, environment, security and tourism.
- Finally, the most significant issue, which has been mentioned both during the debates and in the online survey is, however, "solidarity": about 80% of the respondents say that they expect more solidarity between rich and poor members states and regions of the EU in order to guarantee better living and working conditions for people regardless of their place of origin. This points to the crucial role inherited in policies with a strong territorial dimension such as cohesion policy.



- **CoR = Rich Knap Sack of Ideas: LRAs do have a key role to play—the role of positive identity construction and opportunity making should not be underestimated but encouraged.**

A swan is swimming in a body of water during sunset. The water is dark with bright, shimmering reflections of the low sun. A semi-transparent blue rectangular box is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the image, containing white text. The swan is in the lower left, facing right.

Call for ore for all of us to engage with the EU

EU as a Sonder Paradigm

“the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own—populated with their own ambitions, friends, routines, worries and inherited craziness—an epic story that continues invisibly around you like an anthill sprawling deep underground, with elaborate passageways to thousands of other lives that you’ll never know existed, in which you might appear only once, as an extra sipping coffee in the background, as a blur of traffic passing on the highway, as a lighted window at dusk”.