

## Strengthening recovery, resilience and democracy in regions, cities and villages

European Solidarity Centre

15-16 May 2023 | 9h00 – 13h00 | Gdańsk (PL)

### Gdańsk Declaration: Strengthening recovery, resilience and democracy in regions, cities and villages

We, EPP regional and local leaders and community representatives,

1. reiterate our commitment to a European Union that – despite spanning the area of the continent – starts in our regions, cities and villages. We recall our attachment to a strong social market economy, a competitive place-based industrial policy, well-being as a hallmark of our European way of life and establishing multi-level partnerships in the day-to-day decisions which affect our citizens, with active subsidiarity as the cornerstone;
2. emphasise that the *Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)* must meaningfully embrace multilevel governance and respond to tangible challenges faced by people, in order to truly achieve its stated objectives of European added-value;
3. appreciate the ongoing support of the European Parliament in particular, in ensuring more transparency and control for the accessing of RRF funds by local and regional authorities and real implementation, through its scrutiny dialogues with the European Commission;
4. remain committed to delivering concrete results across the RRF's pillars, through support for local economies and policies for job stimulation, but also major projects focused on climate adaptation, sustainable urban mobility and resilient healthcare systems, which drive forward economic and territorial cohesion, competitiveness and the green and digital transitions;
5. warn against populist attempts to undermine democratic values in the EU's regions, cities and villages, including the growing spread of online misinformation and hate speech, often linked to the Kremlin's war propaganda. These can erode the climate of tolerance in our societies, destabilise trust in our institutions and manipulate electoral processes, weakening our democracies and also hampering economic recovery and endangering its future development at all levels;
6. call for the participation of the regional and local levels in a coordinated EU strategy against foreign interference and misinformation and commit to debunking these through civic education, promoting citizens' media literacy, strengthening democratic practices and intensifying the dialogue with citizens at the regional and local levels to expose populists;
7. fully commit to delivering on the proposals of the Conference on the Future of Europe to strengthen democracy in the EU, paying particular attention to the proposals:
  - calling for the inclusion of EU topics in public debates via political parties not only during European, but also ahead of national, regional and local elections;
  - calling for the development of the EU decision-making process to involve representatives of the subnational level and the CoR;
  - calling for systematic application on the principles of active subsidiarity and multi-level governance and giving an enhanced role to the CoR in the EU institutional architecture if matters with territorial impact are concerned.