



# RUP Employment Network

Newsletter number 7

## NEWS

### Towards a new strategy for the EU Outermost Regions

The European Commission has agreed with the ideas expressed by the President of the Canary Islands Government, Ángel Víctor Torres, on the need to renew the EU's strategy towards its outermost regions (ORs). The Commissioner for Cohesion Policy, Elisa Ferreira, has undertaken to pass on this demand to the EU Council in order to take action on the matter and begin preparing the foundations for the new relationship between Brussels and its outermost territories. Following the institutional steps of the European policy-making process, the renewal of this strategy was discussed in the European Parliament on 25 May.



Specifically, the first step in the bureaucratic framework goes through the REGI Committee, dedicated to regional policy. French MEP Stephane Bijoux, who was born in Réunion, argued that "it is necessary to place the ORs at the centre of European public policies". In line with this idea, the new strategy will seek to go a step further in the relationship between the ORs and the EU in order to address the specific characteristics of these territories from an integrated perspective. In other words, to broaden the focus and abandon the overemphasis on the structural development of the ORs to include as a central and transversal element the reconciliation of the economy and the environment in a framework of post-COVID economic recovery. The Director General for European Affairs of the Canary Islands Government, Julián Zafra Díaz, intervened in this session, stressing that the new orientation should cover all the conditions of the ORs as regulatory issues. In other words, the ORs must be guaranteed that their specific characteristics are taken into account in European legislation in order to guarantee equality between European territories.

To this end, the new strategy should include the following key elements: The specific role of the outermost regions in the framework of the European Green Pact. The ORs, especially the island regions, depend on air transport to stay connected to the mainland. Moreover, this geographical situation means that the energy systems of these regions are isolated from the central energy matrix. This is why one of the fundamental points of this strategy is the recognition of these circumstances in order to ensure that, in the implementation of the transition to a neutral economy, the ORs will have measures adapted to their reality. Managing the consequences of the pandemic. On the one hand, the Director General for European Affairs stressed the need to strengthen coordination in the field of tourism at European level, with the creation of a European strategy for sustainable tourism.

In turn, José Manuel Bolieiro, President of the Government of the Azores, pointed out how the flexibility in the use of ERDF funds during the pandemic has had a very positive impact, suggesting the possibility of maintaining this flexibility over time. The migration issue represents one of the greatest challenges that some ORs have to face. The Canary Islands Government reiterated that the proposal of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum is not an effective response. In particular, the need to provide the European authorities with specific funds to enable quality care for foreign minors arriving on the Canary Islands' coasts, and who are under the guardianship of the regional government, has been conveyed to the European authorities. In conclusion, the new strategy will comprehensively take into account the needs and particularities of the outermost regions, adapting to the new reality of the European Green Pact and the economic and social consequences of the pandemic. Parliament's opinion on the new strategy for the outermost regions will be put to the vote at the plenary session on 13 September. Thereafter, taking into account the general orientations of the Commission and the conclusions of the EU Council, the new perspective for the ORs will start to materialise.

### **The Committee of Regions 'Statement of the Açores'**

On 28 May 2021, the Committee of the Regions adopted the "Azores Declaration" entitled "Tackling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through a strategic partnership with local and regional authorities", on the occasion of the Political Bureau held virtually in the Autonomous Region of the Azores. During his speech, the President of the Government of the Azores and President of the Conference of Presidents of the Outermost Regions, José Manuel Bolieiro, said: "This meeting, symbolically organised in the Azores, is taking place at a particularly difficult time in the lives of Europeans. Reactivate Europe.



To fight the pandemic with all the tools available. And to connect this reactivation, through the Recovery and Resilience Mechanism, with the future we want to design. A green and digital future, forged in political partnership under the principle of subsidiarity. I hope that the EU institutions and our Member States will take this Azores Declaration into account, thus strengthening the voice of the Outermost Regions and local and regional authorities in the decisions that will determine the future of our communities".

Key ideas of the "Azores Declaration": It advocates the need to combat the effects of the pandemic through a strategic partnership with local and regional authorities. Stresses the need to give particular attention to the Outermost Regions in the EU strategy to cope with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to start recovery. Stresses that the European Union's strategy to tackle the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic must take into account the needs of all regions, starting with the most fragile and those most affected by the crisis. Therefore, in order to ensure sustainable recovery in the EU and to demonstrate that cohesion is a fundamental value of the Union, it is essential to pay particular attention to the Outermost Regions. Welcomes the recent announcement by the European Commission that it will follow the CoR's recommendation to adapt the EU strategy for the Outermost Regions in the light of the severe consequences of the pandemic and invites national and regional authorities to use the recovery plans as an opportunity to revive their economies through a smart and sustainable approach. Calls on the European Commission to be extremely vigilant, especially in ensuring that Member States fully involve local and regional authorities in the implementation of national recovery and resilience plans, following the preparation and submission phases.

## EVENTS

### **The value of interregional cooperation for EU outermost regions**

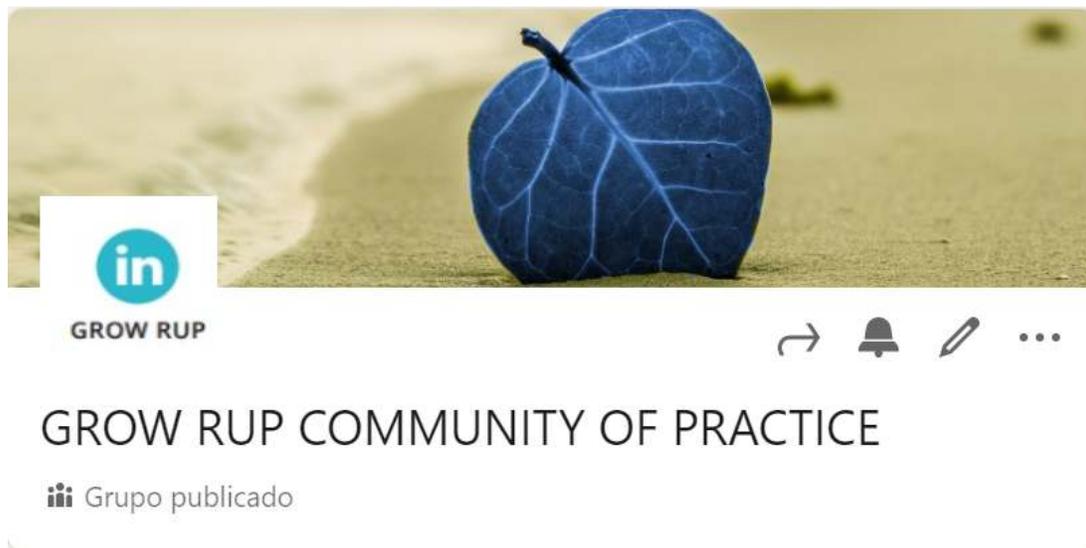
Interreg Europe via its Policy Learning Platform will organise an online event especially conceived for EU outermost regions on Thursday 17 June 2021, 14:30 – 16:30 (CET). The purpose of this event is to present to the audience the possibilities and benefits of interregional cooperation. Participants will hear from the programme representatives what the future holds, but equally everything about the policy learning possibilities that are always open and easy to access.



This event is part of the '**Policy Learning Platform on the road**' initiative and will bring together the EU Outermost regions: French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, Reunion Island and Saint-Martin (France), Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain). It will be an opportunity to learn about the Interreg Europe programme and how outermost regions can benefit from interregional cooperation already now and in the future. You will be able to get to know other organisations sharing similar interests and policy challenges, and network with them. Finally, the event will offer plenty of opportunities to ask questions and to network with other participants. At the end of the event and in the following day, you have the opportunity to book a 10-minute slot to discuss policy challenges and needs, to learn more about the Policy Learning Platform or the programme. LINK FOR REGISTRATION: <https://bit.ly/3wXcs7E>

### **GROW RUP Community of Practice on LinkedIn**

As a result of the cooperation between partners of the INTERREG GROW RUP Project, this Community of Practice is created with the goal of keeping alive the cooperation between the project partners and also with interested professionals in capacity building policies for business and jobs creation in the EU Outermost Regions (RUP) in the fields of Blue, Green & Circular economy. It will be a multilingual group and every contribution and findings will be welcome: [Grow RUP Community of Practice](#)



### **Take part in the conference on the Future of Europe..**

A new platform is open for all citizens from across Europe to share their views on topics that matter for the future of the EU. The platform serves as a [digital hub of the Conference on the Future of Europe](#).



Make your voice heard © Photo by Juliane Liebermann on Unsplash

### **Challenges for the coordination of social security and free movement in times of pandemic and Brexit.**

11/6/2021 The EC-funded MoveS network (Free movement and social security coordination) will organise a seminar in Prague, Czechia on 27 May 2021. MoveS is a network of independent experts from 32 European countries coordinated by Eftheia and Deloitte. The challenges for the coordination of social security and free movement in times of pandemic and Brexit will be discussed. The seminar will reflect on the following topics:

- Brexit and the application of the agreements with the UK
- Healthcare in times of Covid-19
- Covid-19 and teleworking and other new forms of work
- Free movement of persons and restrictions due to public health – focus on cross-border workers.

More information on the event: [More information on the event](#)

### **Building lifelong learning systems: skills for green and inclusive societies in the digital era**

21/6/2021 This online conference, jointly organised by the European training foundation (ETF) and UNESCO, in collaboration with UNICEF, will discuss system change for lifelong learning: How can education and training systems adapt to the challenges of global change and green and digital futures and guarantee the right to education for all? It will bring together actors at all levels in the development of education and training systems. The conference has a twin objective: to create a forum for joint reflection on national and international experiences in transforming education and training systems into lifelong learning systems to confirm priorities for future cooperation in the area of human capital development. [More information on the event](#)

### **EU Strategy on voluntary return and reintegration**

the Commission is adopting the first [EU Strategy on voluntary return and reintegration](#). The Strategy promotes voluntary return and reintegration as an integral part of a common EU system for returns, a key objective under the New Pact on Migration and Asylum.

# RED EMPLEO RUP, RESEAU EMPLOI RUP, REDE EMPREGO RUP, OR'S EMPLOYMENT NETWORK

## Partners



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