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COVER NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 as regards the introduction of specific measures for addressing the COVID-19 crisis - Position Paper of the Committee of the Regions

Delegations will find attached a Position Paper by the Committee of the Regions on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)/COVID-19 Crisis



**European Committee
of the Regions**

The President

Brussels, 8 April 2020 D382
PCAB/COTER/MB/rccs (2020) D546

Mrs Andreja Metelko-Zgombić
State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Croatia
Chair of the General Affairs Council (GAC)
Council of the European Union
Rue de la Loi 175
1040 Brussels

Dear Chair,

I would like to thank you for your consultation request dated 8 April 2020 to the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) regarding the following dossier:

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 as regards the introduction of specific measures for addressing the COVID-19 crisis (COM(2020) 141 final)

Due to the urgent nature and the proposed timescale of the consultation, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) is not able to deliver an opinion in the requested timeframe. Nevertheless, please allow me to underline several points of great importance for European local and regional authorities.

The CoR considers the new package of measures intended to further increase the flexibility of the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), in order to respond to the challenges faced by public authorities and partner organisations in the implementation of the FEAD during the COVID-19 outbreak as fully warranted in light of the profound impact that the crisis has on our local communities.

The CoR welcomes all the measures to be put in place by the legal proposal, in particular a temporary possibility for a co-financing rate of 100%, as well as clarity on the eligibility of expenditure affected by the measures put in place as a response to the health crisis. The alleviation of some requirements for Member

States where these create administrative burdens that could delay the implementation of measures to respond to the crisis is also very welcome. The CoR furthermore underlines that while it supports the possibility that personal protective materials and equipment can be purchased for the volunteers, this lowers the already very limited financial scope of the FEAD even further. For the future, a better budgetary equipment of the FEAD should therefore be guaranteed, so that help for the most vulnerable can be ensured.

However, the CoR warns against the potential overuse of the temporary exemption of certain FEAD support measures from the Commission's approval, as this could prove counter effective in addressing the needs of regions and cities, as the latter experience a different impact of COVID-19 on their citizens across their territories. The CoR therefore welcomes the Commission's intention to limit the duration of the proposed action to 30 June 2021.

The CoR finally considers that, whilst these measures are justified in view of the COVID-19 crisis, they should be revised within the framework of the negotiations on the European Social Fund Plus for the period of 2021-2027.

The CoR's COTER secretariat remains at your disposal should you require additional information (Mr Marek Bobis, marek.bobis@cor.europa.eu).

Yours sincerely,



Apostolos Tzitzikostas
