

# **22<sup>nd</sup> European Week of Regions and Cities 2024**

*Guide for event partners*





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## 1/ Background

The **European Week of Regions and Cities** (#EURegionsWeek) is the biggest annual Brussels-based event dedicated to regional and urban policy. **Its objective is to bring forward the place-based and territorial aspects of the Cohesion Policy.**

The #EURegionsWeek is a platform to discuss common challenges for Europe's regions and cities and examine possible solutions by bringing together a **diverse community** of speakers and participants. It aims to be an **open and collaborative event** providing neutral spaces in Brussels and all around Europe for capacity-building, learning and exchange of experience, and facilitating the cooperation and networking between regions and cities. The event offers a wide range of activities, from innovative and interactive sessions to networking activities and traditional workshops, which you implement as a partner.

The #EURegionsWeek aims to offer a memorable, impactful

and comprehensive experience for partners and attendees. The organisers are determined to continuously improve its offer to ensure that each edition is better than the last one.

The event organisers are the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) and the European Committee of the Regions (CoR).

The 22nd edition of the #EURegionsWeek will take place from **Monday 7 to Thursday 10 October 2024**.

*Partners interested in organising a session are asked to carefully read and follow this guide when applying and contributing to the event, and to comply with the indicated deadlines and requirements.*

*Selected partners will be responsible for organising their session. Subject to applicable rules and availability of resources, the event organisers may be able to sponsor/reimburse part of the travel and accommodation expenses.*



## 2/ What's new?

In line with the 2023 edition, the EURegionsWeek2024 will deliver a programme specifically designed for partners and participants to maximise their involvement. There is a deliberate and conscious decision to streamline and focus on the programme. This will inevitably reduce the number of partners' sessions. Organisers have therefore structured the event in order to enhance participation and interactivity and upgraded the significance of the *EURegionsWeek* close to you sessions (former side events) and Regional Partnerships.

The venues will also allow participants to easily move from one building to another:

- A lighter programme with around 80 high quality and engaging sessions;
- Focus on partners' capacity to work in partnership;
- EURegionsWeek close to you (former "side events") brings the EURegionsWeek all over Europe;
- Closely located event venues, which allow participants to move easily around the EU area;
- Innovative session formats in addition to the more traditional ones.



## 3/ Themes

The motto of the 22nd edition of the #EURegionsWeek is: **“Empowering communities”**.

Under this motto, the edition will focus on **four themes**:

### THEME 1 - “COMPETITIVENESS AND CONVERGENCE: TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN”

Cohesion Policy enabling the Single Market to expand and thrive



**EU’S role in harnessing competitive forces while promoting convergence for the benefit of its citizens can be read as an interlinked dynamic**

While competitiveness encourages individual or collective excellence, convergence emphasises the importance of working together and the collective benefits that come with unity, cooperation, shared goals and common ground. Through convergence, one can create something **greater than the sum of its parts**.

Sessions under this theme should therefore highlight achievements of the 20 years anniversary of the enlargement (in concrete fields) as well as how the enlargement and Cohesion Policy in general benefit all countries, including net payers who get their markets of new consumers and investments largely broadened and clearly benefitted from the expanding competitiveness and convergence.

### THEME 2 - “REGIONS STRENGTHENING EUROPEAN DEMOCRACY”

Local and regional decision-making empowering Europeans and strengthening our Union



**Challenging the one-size-fits-all approach**

The theme implies recognising the crucial role that regions play in promoting/enforcing decisions that have direct impacts on citizens. Through this theme, we acknowledge regions as strong democratic actors and instruments, as they are a more tangible level of political representation for citizens than the national or European level.

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Thinking of regions as the link between local, national and European policy and the lived experience of citizens also means thinking about the decentralisation of decision-making. This theme therefore invites us to consider how we help regions so they can enforce and strengthen European democracy. Through the question “what are we doing to help regions foster European democracy”, we also question how to balance local autonomy and centralisation, how to distribute funds fairly, how to reduce disparities in all the EU’s regions, how to involve citizens more, how to adapt infrastructure and services to local needs, how to promote cooperation between regions, for citizens to feel seen, heard, involved and understood in their singularity.

### THEME 3 - “SMART AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH FOR REGIONS”

AI, digitalisation and greening are changing Europe’s regions and cities



#### Strategic and sustainable approaches to regional development

“Smart growth” means planning and designing regions in ways that are efficient, innovative and eco-friendly. This theme evokes well-connected cities and regions that prioritise mixed land use, that are green, resilient, and economically sufficient. It implies the preservation of natural resources: regions that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Discussing smart and sustainable growth consequently involves discussing the optimisation of urban density and land use, the development of sustainable transportation systems, our ability to ensure affordable housing, promote environmental sustainability, stimulate economic development while enhancing resilience to climate change. It also of course implies the integration of technology into urban planning, and this comes with ensuring and establishing supportive policy and regulatory frameworks. Most importantly, it should also encompass how modern industries are shaping and will be shaping our cities and regions more than we can imagine today.

### THEME 4 - “REGIONS GOT TALENT”

Building, retaining and attracting skills and capacities



#### Each region has unique skills, capabilities and resources that can be developed and showcased

Regional talents can include the specific professional skills of a local workforce, available natural resources, cultural traditions, specialised industries and other assets specific to a given region. This theme underlines the importance of recognising and nurturing local talents to stimulate economic, cultural and social development. The emphasis should be put on the importance of education and educational exchanges of both students and teachers of all educational levels. Fostering regional talent can help build a strong local identity, promote the growth of local businesses and foster cultural diversity. It is in line with a more decentralised approach to governance and policy, where decisions are made considering the specific characteristics of each region, thus promoting more balanced and sustainable development.



## 4/ EU sessions

**Monday 7/10** – Opening session at the European Parliament Hemicycle

**Tuesday 7/10 to Thursday 10/10** - 3 thematic High-level sessions

**Wednesday 09/10** – Regiostars Awards ceremony

**Wednesday 09/10** – Megalizzi-Niedzielski prize

**Thursday 10/10** – Cohesion Alliance Event

**Thursday 10/10** – Last thematic High-level session (closing)



## 5/ Who can apply?

Applicants should be from/or have an established residence in an EU Member State or a country contributing to/participating in an EU programme.

Potential partners must fall under one of the following categories to be eligible to become an official partner of the EURegionsWeek:

### PARTNERS

- Local and regional authorities and associations thereof;
- Managing Authorities of EU funds;
- EU institutions and institutional partners;
- European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs);
- Public-private partnerships;
- Associations and institutions contributing to/participating in an EU programme.

Applications submitted by two or more partners will be given priority during the selection process (apart from the PechaKucha, Living Library and EU Regions' talk formats).

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## REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Grouping of regions, cities, towns or provinces can choose to be considered as a Regional Partnership in the application form. In order to be eligible for a Regional Partnership, the following criteria need to be met.

**A Regional Partnership** is:

- A group exclusively composed of local or regional authorities;
- The partnership must have **a minimum of four and a maximum of eight** regions or cities, towns or provinces from at least **two countries**, (one partner coming from the EU). Partners looking for a partnership can use our [Partner Search Tool](#). The request will be uploaded to the EURegionsWeek website at the beginning of March 2024;
- At least one elected member of the European Committee of the Regions and/or a local or regional political representative is required to participate as speaker.

A session organised by a Regional Partnership is hosted either at the European Committee of the Regions (subject to availability of conference rooms), or at the applicants' venues. Potential Regional Partnerships can express their preference in the application form, but the final decision on venue allocation is taken by the EURegionsWeek organisers.





## 6/ Format of sessions

All sessions will take place onsite<sup>1</sup>. Some sessions will benefit from webstreaming (except for Pechakucha, Participatory Labs, Hackathons and Living Library sessions).

MAX 90 MINUTES FORMATS	
<p><b>COR POLITICAL/POLICY WORKSHOP</b></p> <p><b>Focuses on</b> exchanging ideas and receiving feedback, sharing experience, good practices and/or political strategies. This workshop is specially designed for political leaders, local and regional authorities, policy makers to delve into the intricacies of cohesion policy and enhance it within the communities. This format is ideal for applications hosting at least three partners.</p> <p>Partners can arrange a maximum of two two-minute video testimonials to balance out the speakers. Videos should present projects, good practices, sharing experiences and presenting key messages. Videos should be in English or another EU language with subtitles in EN. The organisers do not offer any support for the video production.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Participation of the audience:</b> at least 30 minutes</li> <li>• <b>Venue:</b> Albert Borschette Conference Centre or CoR</li> <li>• <b>Speakers:</b> max 4 (excluding moderator), at least one speaker should be a politically elected representative</li> <li>• <b>One moderator</b></li> <li>• <b>Type of content presented:</b> newsworthy announcements</li> </ul>
<p><b>PARTICIPATORY LAB / HACKATHON</b></p> <p><b>Participatory Lab:</b> focuses on sharing experience, good practices and looking jointly for best solutions to concrete challenges of European communities and territories. It also aims to facilitate cooperation and networking. In a collaborative and creative environment, active participants in facilitated tables will share experiences and solutions to common issues. This format is ideal for applications with at least two partners.</p> <p><b>Hackathon:</b> focuses on getting problem solvers in a room to collaborate intensively or strategise on creative projects and a way to solve common issues. The aim is to design, build and present the most innovative solution to a problem, and then pitch a final concept, prototype or presentation to the stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Contribution of the audience:</b> at least 45 minutes</li> <li>• <b>Venue:</b> Albert Borschette Conference Centre or CoR</li> <li>• <b>Storytellers:</b> max 4 (excluding moderator/facilitator)</li> <li>• <b>One moderator/facilitator</b></li> <li>• <b>Type of content presented:</b> innovative solution to a certain issue</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Sessions of The EURegionsWeek close to you! programme (former side event) can take place onsite, online or in a hybrid mode. Partners are fully responsible for the format of their session. For further information, please consult p. 9 (point 14) of this guide.

## MAX 60 MINUTES FORMATS

### WORKSHOP/PANEL DISCUSSION

**Workshop:** focuses on sharing experience, good practices and/or political strategies, as well as facilitating cooperation and networking while keeping the participants engaged.

**Panel discussion:** includes **experts** such as policymakers, regional & policy practitioners as well as other stakeholders that have an expertise in one of the themes and can discuss/highlight some of its aspects in an inspiring way.

- **Participation of the audience:** at least 15 minutes
- **Venue:** Albert Borschette Conference Centre or CoR
- **Speakers:** max 3 (excluding moderator)
- **One moderator**
- **Type of content presented:** newsworthy announcements

## MAX 15 MINUTES FORMATS

### PECHAKUCHA / LIVING LIBRARY / EU REGIONS' TALK

**Pechakucha:** In only **6 minutes and 40 seconds one** speaker delivers 20 slides, each displayed for 20 seconds, resulting in dynamic, concise and impactful talk. Speakers focus on ideas and stories in a fast-paced and visually appealing manner. Whenever possible, the event organisers may group proposals with a common theme together, one after the other. This format is ideal for applications with only one partner. A partner can submit more than one Pechakucha proposal or follow up its Pechakucha with a Q&A session.

**Living library:** Attendees have real-time conversations with “human books” – volunteers who share their expertise and experiences on various topics. This is an interactive way to foster knowledge exchange and meaningful connections among participants.

**EU Regions' talk:** focuses on short and concise speeches delivered with an inspiring project, idea or best practise. Aims to spark interesting questions, exchanges and networking opportunities after the topic presentation.

- **Venue:** Albert Borschette Conference Centre or CoR
- **Speakers:** 1
- **Type of content presented:** best practices, expert knowledge, innovative projects.

## NETWORKING FORMATS

### TASTINGS

**Focus:** Stands presenting the gastronomy of European regions. Logistics will be provided by the event organisers (stand facilities, table, stools, sockets, etc.)

- **Duration:** 90 minutes
- **Venue:** Albert Borschette Conference Centre or other EC premises
- **Exhibitors:** up to 5
- **Type of content presented:** 1 region per stand

### STANDS

**Focus:** achievements of specific EU projects, current funding opportunities (2021-2027 programmes, etc.), tools and knowledge from territorial expert organisations. Logistics will be provided by the event organisers (stand facilities, table, stools, sockets, etc.)

- **Duration:** ALL event duration
- **Venue:** Albert Borschette Conference Centre or other EC premises
- **Exhibitors:** up to 5 per stand
- **Type of content presented:** 1 project per stand

Sessions are in English by default. **Interpretation** will only be provided for a limited number of sessions, subject to availability. Interpretation must be requested in the application and within the deadlines (late requests will not be accommodated):

- For sessions taking place at the European Committee of the Regions, a maximum of two interpreted languages + English can be requested.
- Possibility of interpretation for more EU languages may be granted in the Albert Borschette Conference Centre and will be assessed in May/June.



## 7/ How to apply

Deadline for submission is **Tuesday 2 April 2024** (Brussels midday time).

Proposals are to be sent via the official application form available on the [event website](#).



## 8/ Selection criteria

A title of the proposed session, a short description, the format, the thematic priority and keywords, list of potential speakers, moderator/facilitator and a communication plan should be provided in the application together with the details of the applicants behind the application.

At the selection stage, priority will be given to applications whose session description:

- Provides newsworthy content which fits consistently within one or more of the four leading themes as well as within the motto focusing on place-based approach.
- Provides content that prompts debate, networking, capacity building and the exchange of experience and good practice.
- Gives participants the opportunity to discover and interact directly with experts about the latest developments on specific topics.
- Shows the capacity to work in partnership.

Applications not submitted by the deadline will be excluded.



## 9/ Inclusiveness

The European Week of Regions and Cities is an open and participatory forum, where each voice can be heard. Particular attention will be paid to inclusiveness and representation. Venues managed by the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions will be accessible for people with disabilities.

Session organisers are required to pay particular attention to the following elements:

- Ensuring gender, age and geographical balance in all sessions (same-gender panels will be refused – the moderator/facilitator do not count);
- Engaging with young people is highly recommended;
- Paying particular attention to the balance of sector representation when choosing their speakers, including public and private sectors, civil society organisations and experts from the field.



## 10/ Selection outcome

The results of the selection procedure will be announced by end of April and selected partners will be invited to the partners meeting in the second half of May.

If selected, the final title and a detailed programme of the session must be updated at the latest by the 31st of May. The final list of confirmed speakers, along with the moderator/facilitator, must be updated on the event's platform at the latest by the 31st of August.

The event organisers reserve the right to **propose merges** to potential partners if their session proposals are similar in terms of topics, goals and setting. Merges will be designed in the interest of the overall programme, boosting cooperation between partners, and will constitute a condition to retain the application concerned.

Organisers reserve the **right to cancel a session**, should any of the principles described in this guide fail to be respected or should the number of **registered participants fail to reach 50 by the end of September 2024** (excluding PechaKucha, EU Regions' Talk and Living Library).



## 11/ Event Partner's commitments

- **Lead partner:** each applicant must appoint a **lead partner** who is fully responsible for the content, preparation and follow-up of the session. The lead partner will be the only contact person for the EURegionsWeek organisers. The lead partner must share all relevant information related to the process and preparation of the session with the other partners. The lead partner is responsible for briefing the speakers and the moderator and providing them with the necessary support. The moderator should make sure that each contribution keeps to the allotted time and that the floor is passed smoothly from speaker to speaker. The moderator/facilitator should help participants to understand their common objective and plan how to achieve these objectives during the Hackathon and Participatory Lab sessions. The facilitator remains neutral.
- **Participants cannot be charged a fee for any session.** The event partners are not allowed to conduct commercial activities during the sessions.
- **EURegionsWeek data protection policy:** event partners commit to comply with the EU general data protection rules (GDPR) pursuant to the data protection notice on the EURegionsWeek, as well as to comply with the [EU copyright rules](#). Notably, when using images or pictures, express consent and authorisation must be given in writing by the copyright owner of the material and appropriate credit must be attributed.
- **Applicants of the EURegionsWeek close to you sessions** and, if selected, coordinators are entirely responsible for the organisation of their sessions outside the premises of the CoR and EC, including participants' management and processing of personal data. By applying to organise an EURegionsWeek close to you session, applicants and coordinators commit themselves to comply with the GDPR rules in place within the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA). In case these sessions are organised in other countries outside the EU, applicants and coordinators commit themselves to comply with the GDPR rules, if the processing of personal data concerns data subjects who are in the Union. Otherwise, they should comply with data protection rules in place in the country where the event takes place and inform the participants accordingly.
- **Regional partnerships at their own venues:** coordinators will have access to the list of registered participants to their sessions on the EURegionsWeek platform. Coordinators commit themselves to process the personal data of the registered participants on behalf of the EURegionsWeek organisers (European Commission, ([European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy](#) and the [European Committee of the Regions](#)) only for the purpose of the EURegionsWeek event and to delete any copy of the list of registered participants as soon as their EURegionsWeek session is over.

By applying for the EURegionsWeek, partners agree to give feedback on the scope and content of their session to the #EURegionsWeek organisers (attendance, profile of participants and feedback on content) via the EURegionsWeek platform.



## 12/ Promotion, media relations and branding





By applying, event partners commit to **high communication standards** before, during and after their session. In line with their commitment to ensuring optimal visibility for the event, the selected partners agree to adopt a common branding, including the EU logo. For this purpose, branding guidelines will be made available on the event website.

The main communication platform for all the latest information on the European Week of Regions and Cities is the event website – [europa.eu/regions-and-cities](https://europa.eu/regions-and-cities) – and the hashtag to be used on social media is **#EURegionsWeek**.

The language of the event is English. To attract media, the event organisers will provide regular newsfeeds on the event via press releases and social media posts.

Event partners are encouraged to coordinate their media-related activities with the event organisers, to ensure consistency of messages.

### Social media channels:

	EU_CoR	CoR
	EUinmyRegion	DG REGIO
	European Committee of the Regions	CoR
	EUinmyregion	DG REGIO
	eu_regions_cities	CoR
	euinmyregion	DG REGIO
	European Committee of the Regions	CoR
	European Commission EU-Funds	DG REGIO



## 13/ Greening our event

More than ever, the EURegionsWeek 2024 aims to be as sustainable and carbon-neutral as possible. We count on the participants and event partners to help make this happen.

The EURegionsWeek will be as paperless and as plastic free as possible.

Only sustainable certified venues and catering options will be envisaged by the European Commission and the European Committee of the Regions. Event organisers will apply the Reduce, Reuse and Recycle principle with furniture and promotional material, and commit to offsetting the environmental impact of the event.

By applying, event partners commit to minimising the environmental impact of their session, as well as to respecting the paperless and plastic-free guidance received from the event organiser.



## 14/ The EURegionsWeek close to you

As a novelty of the 2024 edition, the sessions previously known as side events are now referred to as EURegionsWeek close to you and benefit from enhanced visibility. **EURegionsWeek close to you sessions can take place all over Europe between 7 October and 30 November 2024 and have to be thematically linked to the EURegionsWeek2024.**

Organisers are entirely responsible for the content, organisation, management of their event (i.e. the online platform if any and participants registration, processing of personal data, the agenda and invitation of speakers and moderator, etc.) and promotional actions (via social media, press, and web). The #EURegionsWeek organisers may in no way be considered responsible for any organisational, logistical or content-related aspects of the EURegionsWeek close to you sessions.

**Application is open from 28 February until 2 April.**

For more information, see [dedicated section on the event website](#).

### SUMMARY: 10 STEPS FOR SMOOTH ORGANISATION

- 1. 22 February – kick-off meeting.** Do not miss the opportunity to ask the event organisers everything you need to know! The Q&A section on the event website will be updated on a regular basis following the kick-off meeting.
- 2. March:** Gather all the necessary information to submit your session application: are you applying as an individual partner or in a partnership? If applying as a partnership, make sure you collect the necessary details of all partners. Which format are you applying for? Think about the content and the most relevant speakers for your session. We strongly suggest to pre-check the availability of your speakers.
- 3. 2 April:** Make sure you submit a clear, newsworthy and interactive proposal by the deadline.
- 4. 22 May:** Save the date for the selected partners meeting. Important updates will be presented.
- 5. By 31 May:** Should the title and short description of your application need to be updated make sure you meet the deadline to do so. If you requested interpretation, do not forget to confirm the languages.
- 6. 15 June:** Alert your VIPs or anyone in your network to make sure they register to reserve their onsite spot. Pre-registration is available only for two weeks before the official opening of the registration. Onsite places will be assigned on a first-registered first-served basis. No extra seats can be assigned once the room capacity has been reached.
- 7. 31 August:** All speakers should be confirmed by now, as they are important in order to attract participants to register to your session
- 8. 30 June – 30 September:** Promote your session: use all the communication tools you have at hand including the hashtag and branding of the #EURegionsWeek.
- 9. September:** Make sure all multimedia content of your session is uploaded to the events platform: speakers' presentations, videos, photos, completed profiles of organisations, speakers, moderator. The items/food for the stands and tastings should be planned. Do not forget to have a rehearsal of your session to make sure everything will run as expected.
- 10. October:** Enjoy the work done with a full room in a vibrant and interactive session as planned. Following the event, do not forget to fill in the report to leave testimony of the key points of your session.

## KEY DATES





## USEFUL LINKS

Event website:

<https://europa.eu/regions-and-cities/>

European Commission’s Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO):  
[EURegionsWeek@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EURegionsWeek@ec.europa.eu)

European Committee of the Regions (CoR):  
[EURegionsWeek@cor.europa.eu](mailto:EURegionsWeek@cor.europa.eu)

Official social media profiles

@EUinmyRegion and @EU\_CoR

#EURegionsWeek

## GLOSSARY

<p><b>Event organisers</b></p>	<p>Event organisers are the two institutional co-organisers - <a href="#">European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy</a> and the <a href="#">European Committee of the Regions</a>, who are developing the event framework and coordinate closely in preparation of all aspects of the event, including selection of and communication to event partners. Synonyms: Organisers</p>
<p><b>Event partners</b></p>	<p>Event partners have applied and have been selected by the event organisers to be part of the programme of the event. Partners can apply individually or as a partnership. Synonyms: session organisers, partners</p>
<p><b>Lead partner</b></p>	<p>The lead partner is the single contact person for the event organisers and the secretariat communicating on their behalf. Synonyms: Coordinator, responsible, main contact person/organisation</p>
<p><b>Regional Partnerships</b></p>	<p>A specific type of partnership that can only include Local and Regional authorities (LRAs) as group of partners.</p>
<p><b>Session</b></p>	<p>The programme of the event comprises sessions organised by the event partners and sessions organised by the two event organisers. The sessions have to address one of the themes of the event. Synonyms: application, content</p>