

ECR GROUP PRIORITIES

2025-2030 COR MANDATE

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ECR
EUROPEAN CONSERVATIVES
& REFORMISTS GROUP
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS



European Committee
of the Regions



SECURING OUR FUTURE

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A top priority for the ECR Group in this mandate is to address the lessons learned from the failures of past migration policies. We believe that the future of migration management must empower **national and local authorities** to make decisions that can respond to the distinct needs and realities of our communities.

We strongly advocate for an **EU that does less, but does better**. A more decentralised approach to policy-making is essential, ensuring that decisions are made as close to the citizens as possible, in line with the subsidiarity principle.

We believe in respecting democratically elected politicians and protecting citizens' fundamental right to **freely express their opinions**, without fear of online censorship or unjust suppression on social media.

Additionally, we call for a pragmatic approach to **EU enlargement**, focusing on supporting neighbouring countries, particularly those aspiring for EU membership. This includes assisting them in strengthening their local governance systems and implementing the necessary reforms to meet EU standards. This approach will help ensure a more secure and unified future for Europe.



A SAFER EUROPE

Security begins at the local level, where **effective law enforcement** and community engagement can **combat rising criminality**. We advocate prioritising security challenges at the EU's external borders, focusing on strong border management to control illegal immigration and protect citizens from external threats, including terrorism.

We are committed to creating safer, more secure cities for everyone. Unity in **combating antisemitism** is essential for a safe and inclusive Europe. It is equally important to fight all forms of radicalisation, which threatens to undermine our shared values and community cohesion.

We are determined to **tackle drug-related violence** by equipping our young people with the knowledge and awareness they need to steer clear of harmful behaviours. This is done by offering educational campaigns in schools for helping vulnerable minors understand the risks and protect them from falling into criminal or drug-related activities.

We are committed to building a safer future for all Europeans.



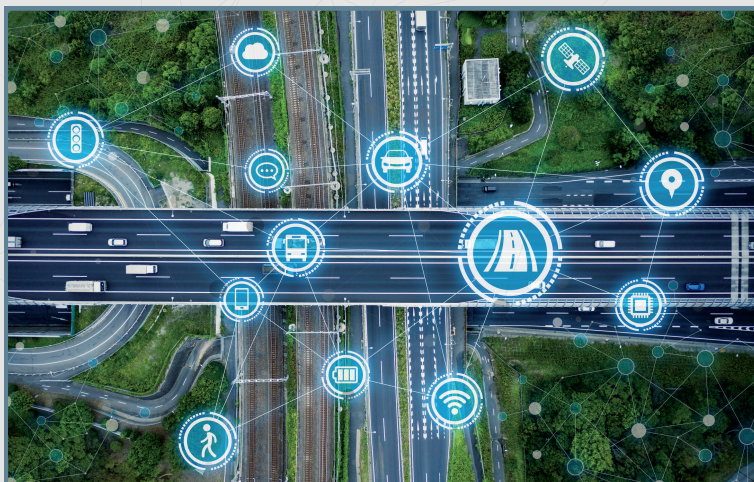
COTER

TERRITORIAL COHESION POLICY AND EU BUDGET

A key focus during this mandate will be to influence the EU budget post-2027, ensuring that it reflects the real needs at local and regional levels. We call for an **effective EU budget** that does less but better, and achieves concrete results. Instead of new own resources, we call for budget reallocations and more performance-based budgeting to improve efficiency.

We are committed to regional policy that considers regional specificities. We believe in fostering development in internal and external EU border regions through more **flexible and less bureaucratic** cross-border cooperation programmes. We would like to see the establishment of new macro-regional strategies to help address common challenges and increase the resilience of defined geographical areas.

Europe's industries and all transport sectors need a **gradual and just transition**. Technological neutrality is our guiding principle, and we are committed to supporting the European automotive industry and regions in transition, including with a call to reverse the 2035 ban on combustion engines and reducing transport costs for citizens. Air connectivity is essential to Europe's regional cohesion and inclusiveness and we call for improved conditions for regional airports to operate.



A REFORMED COHESION POLICY

An **impactful and efficient cohesion policy** post-2027 will be vital to ensure Europe's future prosperity. We believe that cohesion policy should focus on its primary objective, which is to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion and to reduce regional disparities.

At the same time, cohesion policy must be aligned with the **EU's main priorities**, most notably strengthening the EU's competitiveness and resilience. This should encompass greater support for a just transition, rural and border regions, infrastructure, research and innovation and tackling the demographic crisis in EU regions.

We are committed to making cohesion policy **more simplified and flexible** and reducing its administrative burden. To improve the effectiveness of cohesion policy, we call for better synergies between the EU, national and local and regional strategic objectives and sources of funding.

Cohesion policy could be made more impactful by reinforcing links between investments and reforms and making it more **performance-based** while preserving its core principles of a place-based approach, multi-level governance and partnership.



ECON

ECONOMIC POLICY

Supporting businesses and SMEs is essential for driving economic growth and innovation. Reducing red tape and creating a less burdensome legal framework would enable companies to focus on building their businesses, rather than navigating complex regulations. By fostering a stable regulatory environment, we can enable SMEs to thrive, create jobs and strengthen Europe's economic resilience.

Europe's economic performance could be further enhanced by strengthening the Single Market. We would like to see the remaining barriers to the free movement of goods and services removed, ensuring a **level playing field** for all businesses within the EU. A stronger Single Market is essential for driving growth, increasing resilience and empowering businesses to compete globally.

We must tap into the transformative power of **digitalisation** to boost productivity and build a future-proof economy. More investment should be made in cutting-edge technologies, digital infrastructure and skills to help businesses, workers and the public sector in our cities and regions adapt to the rapidly evolving world.

We must seek to increase trade based on the principle of open **strategic autonomy**, therefore maintaining Europe's openness to international business and investment while protecting our strategic industries and critical assets.



COMPETITIVENESS

We are concerned by how much the EU is lagging behind its main international competitors in GDP growth, innovation and the development of new marketable technologies. Enhancing Europe's competitiveness must be one of the EU's main priorities during this mandate to ensure our continued prosperity. We are committed to revitalising the EU economy by deepening the Single Market, protecting Europe's businesses and industry from costly regulations and **investing in SMEs and innovation**.

We believe in empowering Member States, cities and regions to take ownership of their future, enact policies that correspond to their **local realities** and thrive on their unique strengths.

To minimise growth-hindering regulations, we are dedicated to truly implementing the principles of **better regulation**. We will advocate for the 'think small first' principle, as well as for ensuring that SME and competitiveness checks become the norm in EU policy-making.

We call for future competitiveness initiatives, including the new Competitiveness Fund and the Single Market Strategy, to contribute to **place-based growth** in our regions and cities while respecting the subsidiarity principle.



ENVE ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

A major focus in this mandate will be on the implementation of climate policies on the ground, which should emphasize economic growth and energy security, while **safeguarding Europe's global competitiveness**. The ECR Group maintains that climate policies require a pragmatic approach rather than ideological goals that hinder the EU's development.

We strongly call for the EU to adopt a **technology neutrality approach** that allows Member States to choose the best energy solutions for their needs. While the EU's goal is to reach climate neutrality as a block by 2050, we firmly believe that Member States, cities and regions must retain the freedom and flexibility to adopt policies that fit their unique circumstances.

Europe's energy strategy should include reliable, low-carbon solutions that will ensure the stability of our energy supply while reducing emissions. Further investments in nuclear fusion research are essential as it could help to play a vital role in securing Europe's energy independence as an affordable and safe energy solution guaranteeing that the energy transition remains economically viable for all regions of Europe.

The energy transition must be driven by realistic and economically sound principles that **prioritise the future of our industries** and protect our jobs.



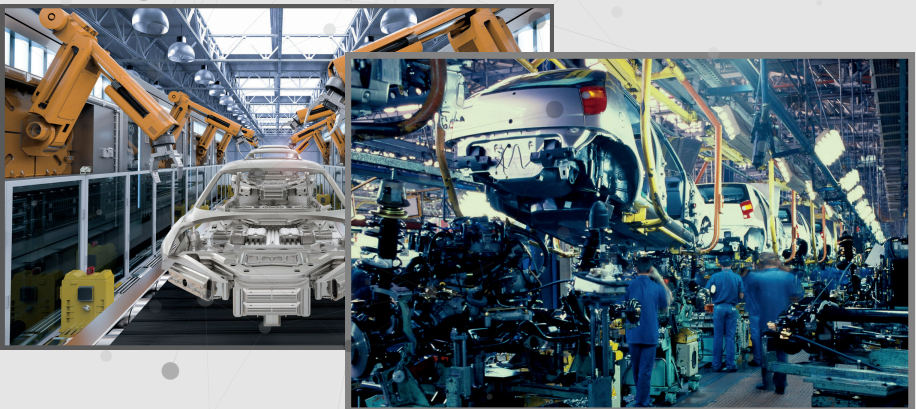
A JUST TRANSITION

The energy transition requires a balanced energy mix that includes renewable energy sources and other clean sources such as nuclear. This would help to balance environmental goals with the freedom of each country to determine the most appropriate energy mix to reach their climate objectives. In doing so, energy security and independence can be achieved whilst also emphasising that **the transition must be just and gradual** to protect vulnerable workers and those sectors or businesses who will be most severely impacted by the energy transition.

We are committed to protecting Europe's workers and industries from unrealistic climate policies, and we will work to ensure that the regions undergoing structural transformation are not left behind, and that they will receive the **necessary support** to maintain their competitiveness.

We call for a just transition based on **science, innovation and the adoption of new technologies**; and not one based on regulation, bans and excessive taxpayer subsidies.

It is important to view **Europe's emissions in a global context** otherwise the implications of the EU's ambitions to transition to a climate-neutral economy on our workers and society in general will be severe.



NAT

NATURAL RESOURCES

Our Group will continue to advocate for the protection of one of our most strategic sectors - agriculture. The **viability and competitiveness of the European agri-food sector** is of utmost importance but the administrative burdens and environmental requirements for farmers who receive EU subsidies from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) budget have been putting our farmers under too much strain.

We need a simplified CAP that **empowers our farmers** and rewards them for their efforts. Innovation will be key to enable European agriculture to transition to a more sustainable, economically viable form of farming that ensures food affordability and security.

Local and regional authorities are at the frontline of disaster risk management. We will therefore continue our efforts in the field of ensuring we build **resilient communities** so that we are better prepared for disasters and crises at all levels. Disasters know no borders and an essential building block is local-level resilience.

Tourism is another strategic sector we will prioritise in this mandate. Our Group will call for tourism policies that can reconcile market needs with sustainability policies whilst most importantly responding to the phenomenon of over tourism.



FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

While the importance of transitioning to a sustainable food system should not be underestimated, the Green Deal in its current form is not compatible with ensuring **food security** for Europeans and at the same time a profitable existence for farmers, in particular in the current context of the outbreak of Russia's war in Ukraine.

We must safeguard the competitiveness of our farmers and ensure fair trade that guarantees reciprocity or **mirror clauses** when it comes to production standards. Europe's farmers are overburdened with rising production costs and environmental obligations.

The ECR Group reiterates the importance of **generation renewal** in the agricultural sector, which is often seen as an undesirable profession. The establishment of young people in rural areas with access to services and leisure and employment opportunities is key to preserving agriculture across the EU and thereby contributing to our food sovereignty.

We remain opposed to any food standardisation, imitation of our top-quality products, and any misleading labelling systems, such as the Nutri-Score system, which would damage our **culinary heritage**. We recognise the need for sustainable agriculture policy but one that is also compatible with production activities and maintaining the sector as a strategic asset.



We consider families to be the **cornerstone of society** and are committed to ensuring that EU policies are as family-friendly as possible. Our objective is to support Member States in implementing effective policies that encourage and enable Europeans to have larger families, fostering a sustainable demographic future for the Union. Through collaboration and the sharing of best practices, we aim to create an environment where family life is valued, supported, and nurtured across Europe.

We recognise the critical need for education and training systems across our regions to better align with the evolving demands of the future labour market. Our vision is to cultivate a **culture of innovation**, ensuring that Europe becomes a global leader in breakthrough technologies. By equipping young Europeans with the skills needed for emerging industries, we will reduce youth unemployment and attract the brightest minds to remain in our communities and contribute to Europe's prosperity.

Our continent's **cultural diversity** is a unique and valuable resource. As globalisation and technological advancements reshape our societies, it becomes increasingly important to preserve our historic heritage.

By empowering regions to take a leading role in promoting Europe's cultural essence, we aim to ensure a deeper appreciation and respect for the **diverse traditions** that define us.



RIGHT TO REMAIN

The **right to remain** must be a central priority in addressing Europe's demographic challenges, as reversing negative population trends is vital for securing the continent's future stability and prosperity.

The ongoing **demographic crisis**, including low birth rates, aging populations, and workforce shortages, threatens the sustainability of social systems, economic growth, and cultural continuity.

We advocate for policies that **empower individuals and families** to remain in their communities, ensuring they have access to quality education, efficient healthcare, and stable employment. This includes fostering strong digital and transport connectivity, which can bridge gaps between urban and rural areas, making it easier for people to remain in their home regions.

Focusing on policies that can help to boost and encourage birth rates and strengthen the family unit will provide citizens across the EU with an environment where they can thrive and feel secure about their future.

By inspiring a new wave of **demographic vitality** supported by intergenerational solidarity, we are committed to ensuring that all citizens across the EU have the right to remain.





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