

The Stockholm Region Association for European Affairs- Position paper on the future of Cohesion Policy and programme period 2028 – 2034

1. The importance of Cohesion Policy

- a. The Stockholm region believes that all regions (both less developed regions, transition regions and more developed regions) plays a pivotal role for a strong territorial cohesion in the EU.
- b. whereas there are major differences between regions in the EU in terms of innovation and growth capacity, it is important to support those regions that have a low ranking in terms of innovation capacity and growth.
- c. However, support for the lower-ranked regions should not be provided at the expense of regions acting as frontrunners but should rather harness the potential of these regions as EU accelerators of growth and innovation.
- d. It is at local and regional level that cohesion policy is implemented, and the new programming period should therefore ensure that local and regional actors are strongly involved in the design and creation of future programmes.

2. Cohesion Policy matters

- a. The Stockholm region has large urban and rural environments whose challenges such as social, economic, and environmentally sustainable development need to be addressed.
- b. The cities of the Stockholm region are addressing critical challenges concerning employment, climate and the environment, social exclusion, migration, and integration. But it is also in this environment that the solutions often can be found.
- c. Metropolitan regions are often hubs for new methods and approaches to creating employment for people far from the labour market and addressing social challenges, but also for pioneering innovative solutions that contribute to innovation and growth beyond the geography of metropolitan regions.
- d. After the years of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, the very idea of the EU's cohesion policy has entered a new reality. It is therefore important to recognize that after 2027, cohesion policy will not be able to return to where it was before this situation.
- e. It is important that cohesion policy is developed in such a way that it can strengthen Europe against external forces and become a key instrument for financing the EU's potential to create its own supply chains to avoid dependence on imports of, for example, gas, semiconductors, and microchips.
- f. The Stockholm region, being one of the prominent metropolitan regions in the EU that with its distinguished research in life science, climate and environment, a large manufacturing industry and prominent clusters of tech companies, can take lead in contributing to EU supply chains.

- g. By supporting these excellent environments in metropolitan regions, the EU can secure supply chains that have become central after the global turbulence of recent years. With EU support, excellence in research, innovation and growth can become even stronger, contributing to the EU's global competitiveness.
- h. The Stockholm region considers that part of the cohesion policy should be earmarked for strengthening growth and research and innovation in metropolitan areas. Prominent research environments with several different actors in
- i. metropolitan areas contribute to accelerating the EU's global competitiveness, but also to meeting societal challenges in areas such as social sustainability, climate, energy, and transport.