Minutes of the Fit for Future Platform expert group

Brussels, 29 June 2021

Minutes
Meeting of sub-group 4 of the Fit for Future Platform [1]
25 June, Videoconference

Summary

The meeting of sub-group 4 of the Fit for Future Platform was held on 25 June, chaired by Ms Ioana Condurat (Deputy Head of Unit, Secretariat-General, Secretariat of the Platform) and Mr Rainer Steffens (Committee of the Regions (CoR), RegHub network Secretariat).

The objective of the meeting was to present the terms of reference for sub-group 4, timeline for the Platform's work in 2021, progress on the topics for which representatives of the CoR are rapporteurs (eProcurement by Mark Speich and INSPIRE by Anne Karjalainen), as well as the state of play concerning the RegHub special report on planning and permitting for infrastructure.

1   Nature of the meeting

The first sub-group 4 meeting of the Fit for Future Platform was chaired by Ioana Condurat (IC), deputy Head of Unit SG A2, unit hosting the Secretariat of the Platform. The meeting took place by videoconference via TEAMS, on 25 June 2021 from 10:00 to 12:45. The list of participants is attached at the end of the document[2]. The meeting of the Platform was not public.

2   List of points discussed

- Introduction on the state of play of the Fit for Future Platform works;
- Presentation of the terms of reference of sub-group 4 and timeline for the remainder of the Platform's work under AWP 2021, including presentation of the special report on planning and permitting for infrastructure as requested by Vice-President of the European Commission, Maroš Šefčovič;
- Presentation by the sub-group 4 of the progress made regarding the topics on eProcurement, INSPIRE and special report on planning and permitting for infrastructure.

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[1]   Published in the Register of Commission Expert Groups and Other Similar Entities, code number 3729-FIT FOR FUTURE PLATFORM

[2]   See Annex I

2.1   Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda of the meeting was adopted without comments.

2.2   Main points presented by the Secretariat of the Platform

IC presented the state of play of the works of the Fit for Future Platform. She recalled that the Annual Work Programme with its 15 topics and the rules of procedure were adopted at the plenary meeting of the Platform in March 2021 and she debriefed the sub-group on the kick-off meeting of the sub-groups 1, 2 and 3, which took place on 17 May (minutes). Following up on this meeting, the Secretariat of the Platform stepped up its support by prefilling the draft opinion templates to the maximum possible, with publically available Commission documents, including documents published by the Commission on the "Have Your Say" portal, reports, evaluations, etc. The members of the sub-group were asked to carefully analyse them, complete the information bringing in their own evidence regarding existing problems and prepare suggestions. The draft opinion templates include a section dedicated to any kind of implementing issues that can be particularly relevant to local and regional level.

Joanna Berlińska presented the terms of reference (ToR) of the sub-group 4, which mirror the ToR for the sub-groups 1, 2 and 3, with some specific considerations for the character of this sub-group. They describe the operational details of the works of the sub-group. The ToR state in particular that the sub-group is chaired by the Platform's Secretariat, that the Subgroups meet twice a year, (although ad hoc meetings can be organised if needed) and that minutes of the meetings are assured by the Secretariat. On the specificities of sub-group 4, the RegHub network has a very special role to play by bringing to the opinions their expertise from the regional and local level on any topic under the Annual Work Programme and prepare reports on issues where the local and regional expertise is most relevant. Its works should be aligned as much as possible with the Platform's calendar. Rapporteurs of other groups can ask for input from sub-group 4. To make this input relevant for the rapporteurs of the other sub-groups, it has to be provided no later than 45 calendar days before the autumn plenary in which the draft opinions will be presented for discussion and adoption. The special reports need to be submitted to the Secretariat of the Platform at least one month before the plenary meeting in which the report will be discussed. The ToR will be valid for the entire mandate of the Platform.
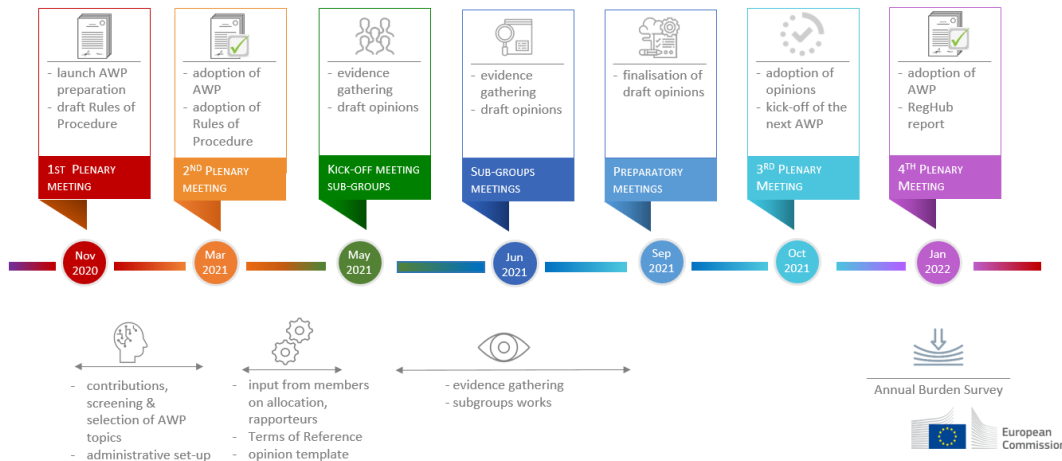
IC presented the indicative timeline, stressing that summer months will be dedicated to evidence gathering and preparation of the draft opinions. A preparatory meeting of the sub-groups is scheduled for 17 September to discuss and finalise the draft opinion before their adoption in the 3rd plenary meeting of the Platform in October. The 3rd plenary meeting will also allow to launch the discussion on the 2022 Annual Work Programme. The 4th plenary of the Platform is scheduled to take place on 28 of January 2022, to adopt the 2022 Annual Work Programme and to discuss the report on planning and permitting for infrastructure. Concerning the calendar and precise planning, Ioana Condurat informed that the dates were still provisional and would be confirmed after the meeting of sub-groups 1, 2 and 3 taking place on the 28 of June.

Mr Van Unnik (RegHub, NL) asked whether there was an option for a *fast track* procedure within the Platform's works, for the Platform to take on board urgent issues notified to

RegHub network. **IC** explained that procedurally speaking, there was no such *fast track* procedure to propose new topics to be taken by the Platform instantly but suggestions for new topics could be proposed via the portal "Have your Say: Simplify" and considered by the Platform for the upcoming annual work programmes.
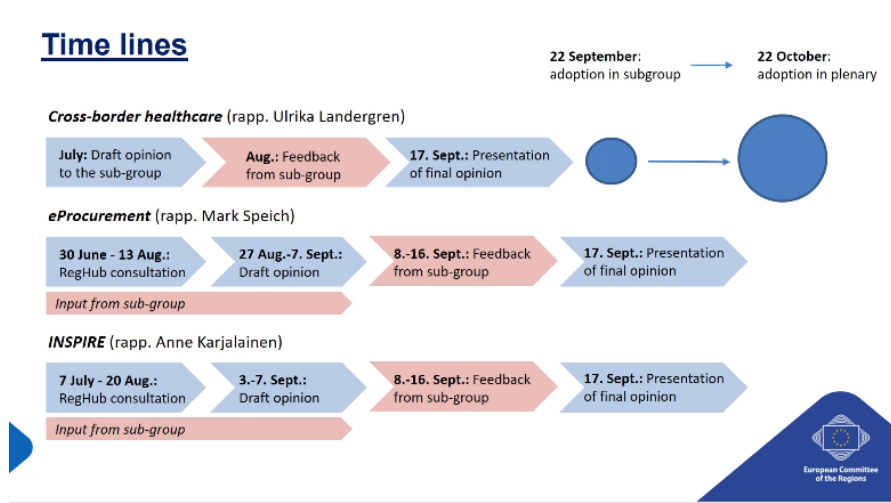

2.3   Presentation of the state of play on e-Procurement and INSPIRE opinions as well as the report on planning and permitting for infrastructure.

Mr Rainer Steffens (RS, CoR) welcomed the members of the RegHub network and explained how the work between the CoR and the RegHub network would be organised. He presented the indicative timeline for the cross-border healthcare, eProcurement and INSPIRE topics, all under the rapporteurship of the CoR:

The questionnaires for the consultation with the RegHub on eProcurement and INSPIRE will be provided shortly, to allow the topic rapporteurs to gather evidence and prepare their first draft opinions for the discussion within the sub-groups scheduled for 17 September.

A number of members raised some concerns regarding the tight timeline, underlining that consultations in the middle of the summer are difficult to organise while it is necessary to reach out to the relevant stakeholders and experts.

Ms Kossyvaki Effrosyni (CoR) presented the state of play of the eProcurement topic. She recalled that the RegHub network in 2019 reported on the implementation of the 2014 Directive on public procurement at regional level. This report pointed to some challenges for business, SMEs and public authorities. The ongoing consultation will only focus on the eProcurement dimension. The stakeholders to be consulted are public procurement departments in public administration and departments dealing with digitalisation of public services and business (especially SMEs). Mr Rainer Steffens (CoR) indicated that a translated questionnaire will be sent to the RegHub network by the end of June.

Ms Ana Francine Enguidanos Weyler (Community of Valencia, ES) stressed the general importance of translated questionnaires as a guarantee for quality answers from the respondents.

Mr Caldeira Igor (CoR) presented the state of play of the INSPIRE initiative. He recalled that the goal of INSPIRE is to create a EU wide digital environment for sharing spatial data for environment protection, including in particular: metadata, data specifications, network services; data and service sharing; spatial data services, etc. The questionnaire for the consultation with the RegHub network will be available shortly. It will focus in particular on data inter-operationality, use of data, application to non-environmental uses and transposition. The relevant stakeholders for this consultation are in particular data providers, responsible for legislation implementation and users (public and private). Mr Rainer Steffens (CoR) indicated that if RegHub network members wish so, they can provide suggestions to improve the questionnaires.

In this context, **Ms Sarah Jaekel (Land Brandenburg, DE)** raised the importance of including in the questionnaires some introduction to explain why the particular topics and the specific questions are important for the contributors, allowing the stakeholders to understand exactly the purpose of the consultation.

Mr Rafael Mondelaers (CoR) presented the state of play of the report on planning and permitting in infrastructure. He recalled that it is a special RegHub report (it is not an opinion) that does not have to be adopted by the subgroups. It was requested by Vice-President of the European Commission, Maroš Šefčovič. The first phase consultation already took place between 30 April to 4 of June, gathering about 30 valuable contributions. The consultation allowed to identify the type of infrastructures projects that are considered important for municipalities/regions and which kind of EU laws are affecting most considerably the planning and permitting for infrastructures. The consultation showed that most policy areas mentioned were linked to environment rules, transport and new technologies. The types of infrastructures projects related mostly to transport, (green) energy, broadband and housing. The replies are being analysed by the CoR. An in-depth consultation based on a questionnaire will take place in September / October. The report will be presented at the plenary meeting of

the Platform scheduled for 28 January 2022. The report will focus mainly on solutions to make procedures more easily implementable.

RS stressed the report will need to focus on a limited number of policy areas to be manageable.

Mr Colin Lustenhouwer (EESC) stressed that the EESC could bring its expertise for the preparation of the report on planning and permitting, in particular from the SMEs angle.

Thomas Wobben (CoR) welcomed the work presented by the sub-group but stressed that the engagement of the CoR depends on the impact of its work on the Platform's activity and how the CoR contribution is then taken up by the Commission. He also stated that is cross-cutting reports, such as the ones concerning lessons learnt from the COVID pandemics, are organised in the future, it would be helpful to include the CoR to increase the visibility and feedback function of the RegHub network.

2.4   Concluding remarks

IC appreciated the work done so far by the sub-group. She acknowledged that the year 2021 is particularly challenging in terms of timeline. Half of the year has been dedicated to set-up technical and procedural aspects of the Platform and to adopt the annual work programme. She recalled that regarding the report on permitting and planning for infrastructure is very important for the Vice-President Šefčovič, and that the report will be presented at the plenary meeting of the Platform next January. Finally, Ioana Condurat informed that the next Annual Burden Survey will include a dedicated section with the main achievements of the Platform.

3   Annexes

3.1   Annex I

Attendance list

3.1.1   RegHub members

#	Name	Attendance
1	Angeliki Veneti (Thessaly, EL) ΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΗ ΒΕΝΕΤΗ	Yes
2	Krunoslav Srpak (Vukovar-Srijem County, HR)	Yes
3	Eva Fenyvesi (Timiș County, RO)	Yes
4	Aude Korfer (Bretagne, FR)	Yes
5	Andreas Thaler (Regionalplaner und Europareferent bei Kreis Pinneberg / Metropolregion Hamburg, DE)	Yes
6	Marisa Monforte (Madrid, ES)	Yes
7	Piotr Sieradz (Mazowieckie Voivodeship, PL)	Yes
8	Tanja Haupt (Baden-Württemberg, DE)	Yes
9	Luka Dragojevic (Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, HR)	Yes
10	Maria Wilhelm-Robertson (Staatsministerium Baden-Württemberg, DE)	Yes
11	Ana Francine Enguidanos Weyler (Community of Valencia, ES)	Yes
12	Sarah Jaekel (Land Brandenburg, DE)	Yes
13	Miguel Angel Muñoz Martinez (Community of Madrid, ES)	Yes
14	Anne Diraison (Hauts-de-France, FR)	Yes
15	Olivia Paton Santiago (Barcelona Provincial Council, ES)	Yes
16	C. Vetrone (Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta, IT)	Yes
17	Martina Buechel-Germann (Bodensee RegHub, DE, AT, LI)	Yes
18	Verena Augschoell (Provinz Bozen-Südtirol, IT)	Yes
19	so.domaine (Regione Autonoma Valle d'Aosta, IT)	Yes
20	Oriol Valles Freixas (Diputació de Barcelona, ES)	Yes
21	Nerea Pérez Adriano (Eurocity Chaves-Verín hub, ES)	Yes
21	Pablo Rivera (Eurocity Chaves-Verín hub, ES)	Yes
22	William Sultana (Gozo, MT)	Yes
23	Brendan Mooney (Northern and Western Region, IE)	Yes
24	Narcis Mir Sala (Catalonia, ES)	Yes
25	Flavia Duarte (Alentejo Region, PT)	Yes
26	Cecilia Odone (Umbria, Veneto , IT)	Yes
27	Lenka Kozarova (Kosice Self-governing Region, SK)	Yes
29	Luka Vidak (Dubrovnik-Neretva, HR)	Yes
30	Maurizio Ricciardelli (Region of Emilia-Romagna, IT)	Yes
31	Gianmarco Minardi (Region of Emilia Romagna, IT)	Yes
32	M. Remedios Viviente Rodriguez (Region of Murcia, ES)	Yes
33	Jop van Unnik (Nederlandse Provincies, NL)	Yes

#	Name	Attendance
34	Toszek Bartlomiej (Uniwersytet Szczeci´nski, PL)	Yes
35	Winfried Schroder (Baden-Württemberg, DE)	Yes
36	Angelo Paulon (Regione Autonoma Friuli Venezia Giulia, IT)	Yes
37	Elena Moenning (Landtag Brandenburg, DE)	Yes
38	Thomas Haeringer (Baden-Württemberg, DE)	Yes
39	Dora Lo Giudice (Autonomous Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, IT)	Yes
40	Ionica Baicoianu (Harghita, Ialomita, RO)	Yes

3.1.2 Other participants

#	Name	Attendance
	CoR secretariat	
41	Rafael Mondelaers (CoR)	Yes
42	Teresa Geyer (CoR)	Yes
43	Rainer Steffens (CoR)	Yes
44	Galina Samaras (CoR)	Yes
45	Caldeira Igor (CoR)	Yes
46	Effrosyni Kossyvaki (CoR)	Yes
	EESC secretariat	
47	Colin Lustenhouwer (EESC Gr. I)	Yes
48	Muriel Carrasco Raul (EESC)	Yes
49	Pierluigi Brombo (EESC)	Yes
50	Anais Manchon Canitrot (EESC)	Yes
51	Laura Ernsteina (EESC)	Yes
	SG secretariat	
52	Ioana Condurat (SG)	Yes
53	Joanna Berlinska (SG)	Yes
54	Victor Guerreiro (SG)	Yes
55	Corinna Fuerst (SG)	Yes
56	Maria Gerolymatou (SG)	Yes
57	Julie Guermonprez (SG)	Yes