Constructing the Urban Future of Europe: Narratives & Challenges for the European Committee of the Regions

European Committee of the Regions

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COR Context

- A formal EU institution
- LRA representatives/ 350
- An Opinion Body / Holistic Thinking
- Citizen led vision giving bottom up perspectives

COR work deeply influenced by:

- Regional disparities and disparities between cities in Member States
- Social cohesion / disparities and unemployment
- Territorial demands for infrastructure
- Calls for investment in broadband, innovation and skills
- The need for responses to Climate Change
- Solutions to cross border challenges
- Enhancing the quality of national, local & regional governments
- The EU Post Crisis Narrative

The Frame of the Post Crisis Europe Narrative

….Turning…

- Problems into Opportunities
- Ambition into Growth & Stability
- Integration into Added Value

The Added Value Paradigm

- Sharing of best practice & knowledge
- Frontiers of ideas
- Inclusiveness & connections
- Partnership & opportunity

- Dialogue & synergy driven
- Diversity and unity
- Cross-border and Interoperability

Plugging these thoughts into cities and regions across the EU one gets a type of “acupuncture” treatment of cities and regions….

The acupuncture treatment….Re-Imagining Cities and Regions as…

- C & R as the Future of Europe
- C & R as flexible networks of growth
- C & R as nodes of place-based thinking
- C & R as laboratories
- C & R as learning platforms

- C & R as test beds
- C & R as resilient spaces
- C & R as champions of beyond GDP indicators & thinking
- C & R as innovators

Many toolkits collecting Knowledge:

- Europe 2020
- National Planning Frameworks
- ERDF
- ESF
- EIB
- ETC / Interreg
- COR & EESC Opinions
- H2020/ Horizon Europe
- Urbact
- Knowledge Exchange Platforms
- Espon
- Statistics
- e-government
- Covenant of Mayors

LEVERAGE

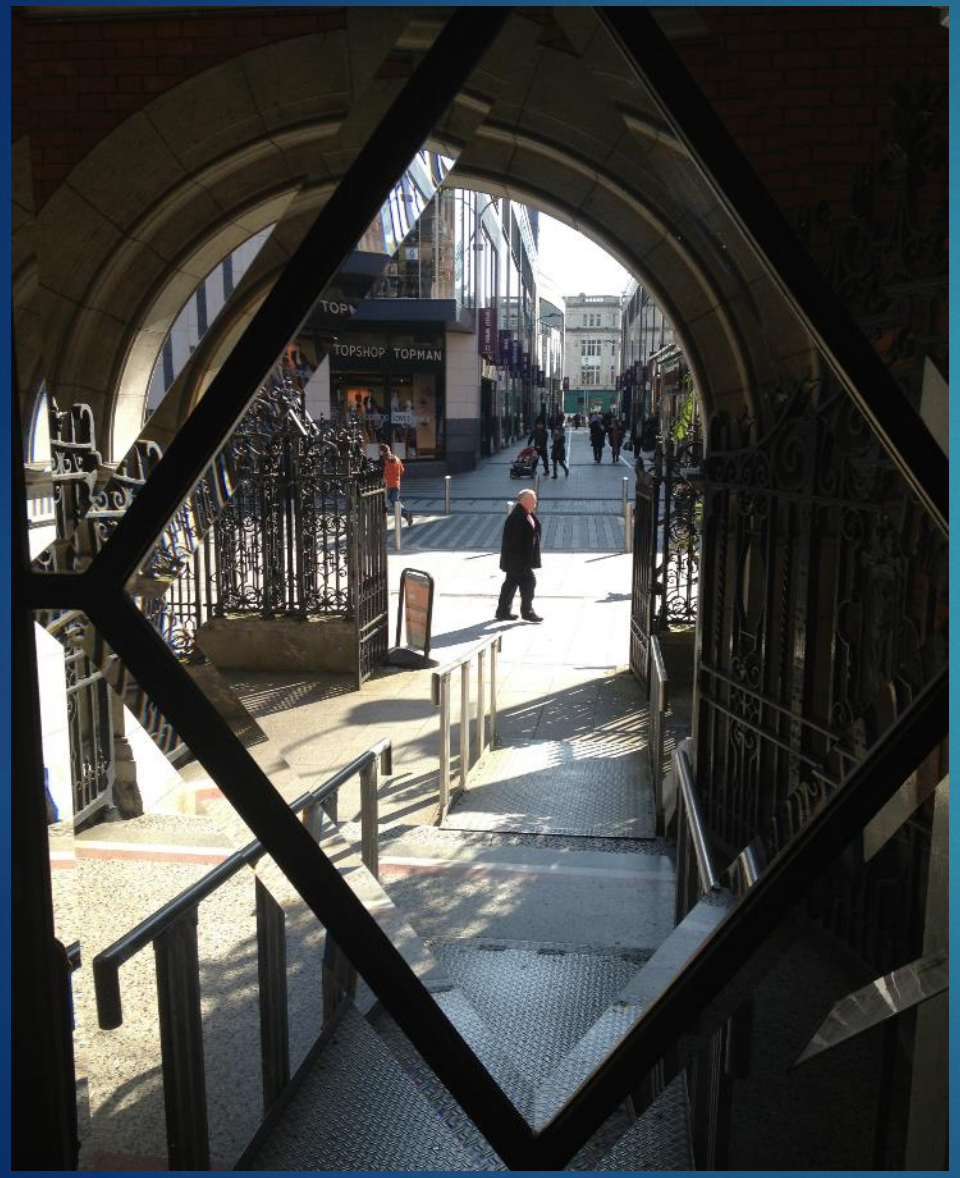
COR campaigns of recent interest (1)

- Defending Cohesion Policy
- Narrowing regional disparities
- Leading the Future of Work
- Discussing new technologies
- Incubating and processing
- Unveiling Innovation 5.0
  - – data, AI, Computing
- Creating Smart Cities & Regions
- Breaking silos
- Constructing Q Helixes + 1

COR campaigns of recent interest (2)

- Digital Single market
- E-commerce, e-government
- Formal and informal Education
- Social innovation
- EU Social Pillars
- Skill-building
- Migration
- Investment
- & simplification

COR Innovation Flagship Programmes



- Knowledge Exchange platforms
- EGTCs
- Science Meets Regions
- I-Capital award
- European Capitals of…Culture, Sport, Green, Youth Volunteering, Gastronomy Region)
- Urban Agenda for the EU
- E-Government
- Digital Cities Challenge
- EER Award
- SME
- Rural peripheries (Cork 2.0, CAP Reform)
- SDG & globalisation
- EWCRs
- Communicating Europe

More Specific Exchanges

- Bioeconomy
- Environment
- Energy
- Transport
- Circular economy
- Broadband
- Advanced manufacturing
- Waste
- Maritime

European Committee of the Regions

REFLECTING on Europe

How Europe is perceived by people in regions and cities

Executive summary

"Reflecting on Europe" – a listening exercise

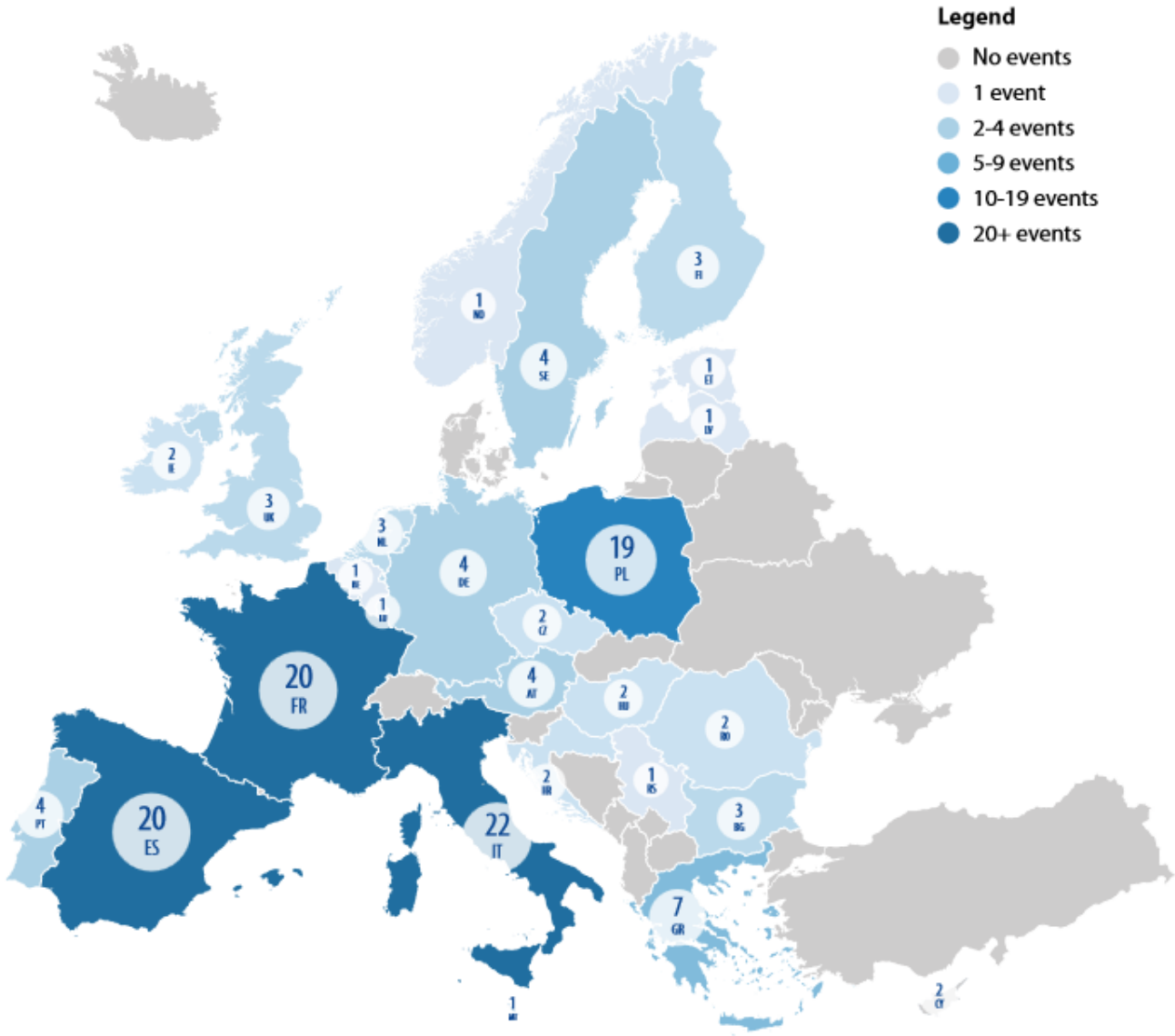
Since March 2016, the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) has been listening to about 30,000 citizens in 81 regions and 114 cities and municipalities in 25 European countries. This exercise branded "Reflecting on Europe" was given a strong boost in November 2016, when the President of the European Council asked the CoR to engage citizens in a debate on the future of Europe.

At the heart of the exercise, there have been active members of the CoR, who initiated dialogues with citizens in town halls, regional parliaments, local councils, schools and universities. By their very nature, these dialogues were usually not held in capital cities and they were not meant to talk at people but with them instead. By April 2018, 156 CoR members, have been engaged in 133 local dialogues involving about 14,000 participants.

In parallel, the CoR also asked "citizens to have their say on Europe" and to share their views and concerns via an online survey and a mobile app, which was made available in the 24 official languages of the EU since autumn 2017. So far, around 15,000 people took part in this unique exercise, which delivers some interesting insights into the way people want to see the EU developing.

Preliminary results of the exercise are presented in this report, which covers the period from March 2016 to March 2018. Final conclusions will feed into the related CoR opinion due for adoption on 9 October 2018. In view of the European elections in May 2019, the CoR will continue its citizens' dialogues and support locally the awareness campaign for the elections of the European Parliament and the other EU institutions. In short, despite differences in the age, gender and geographical origin of respondents, the current results can be summarised as follows:

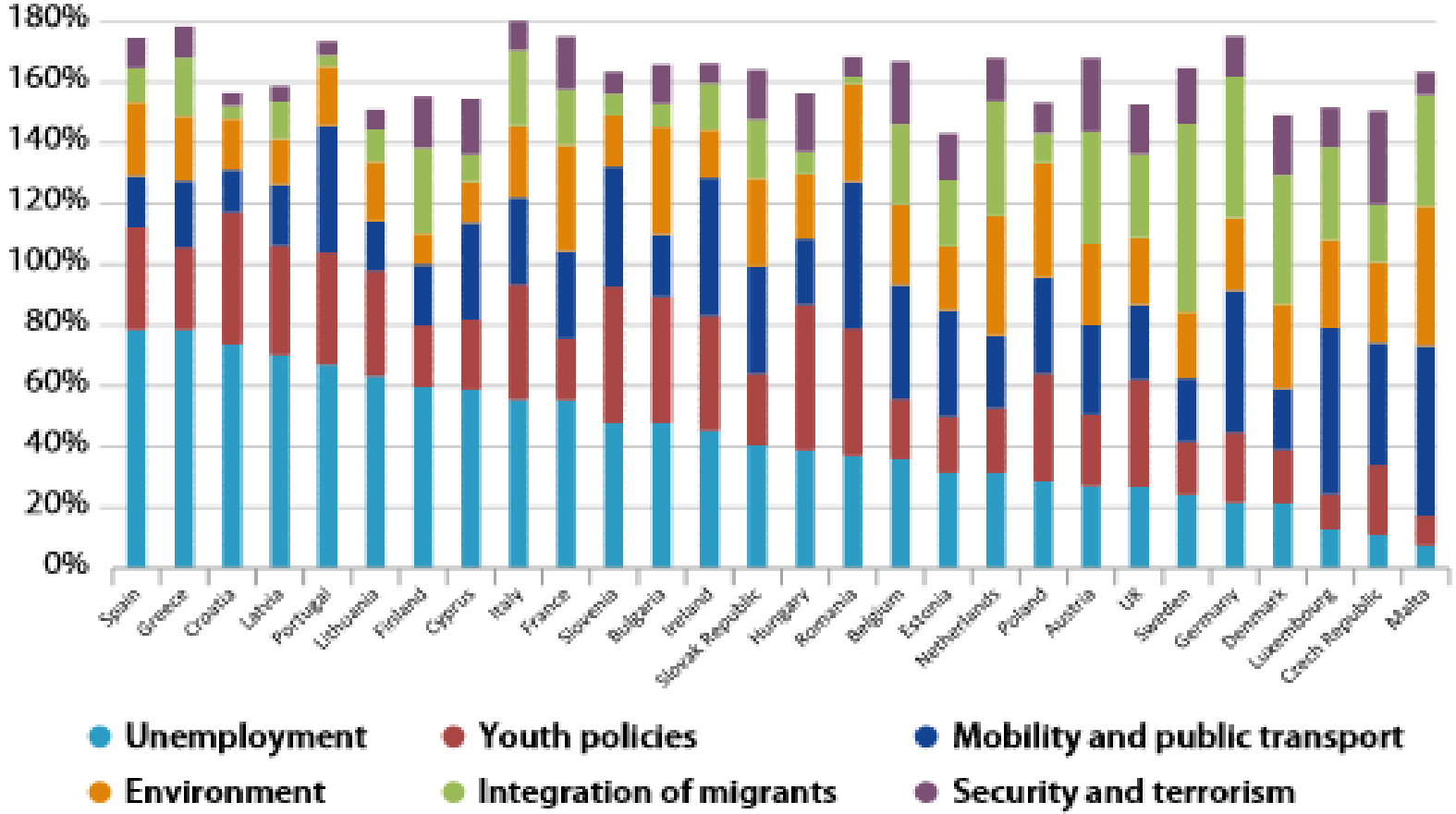
Local events held since mid-March 2016 until 11 April 2018



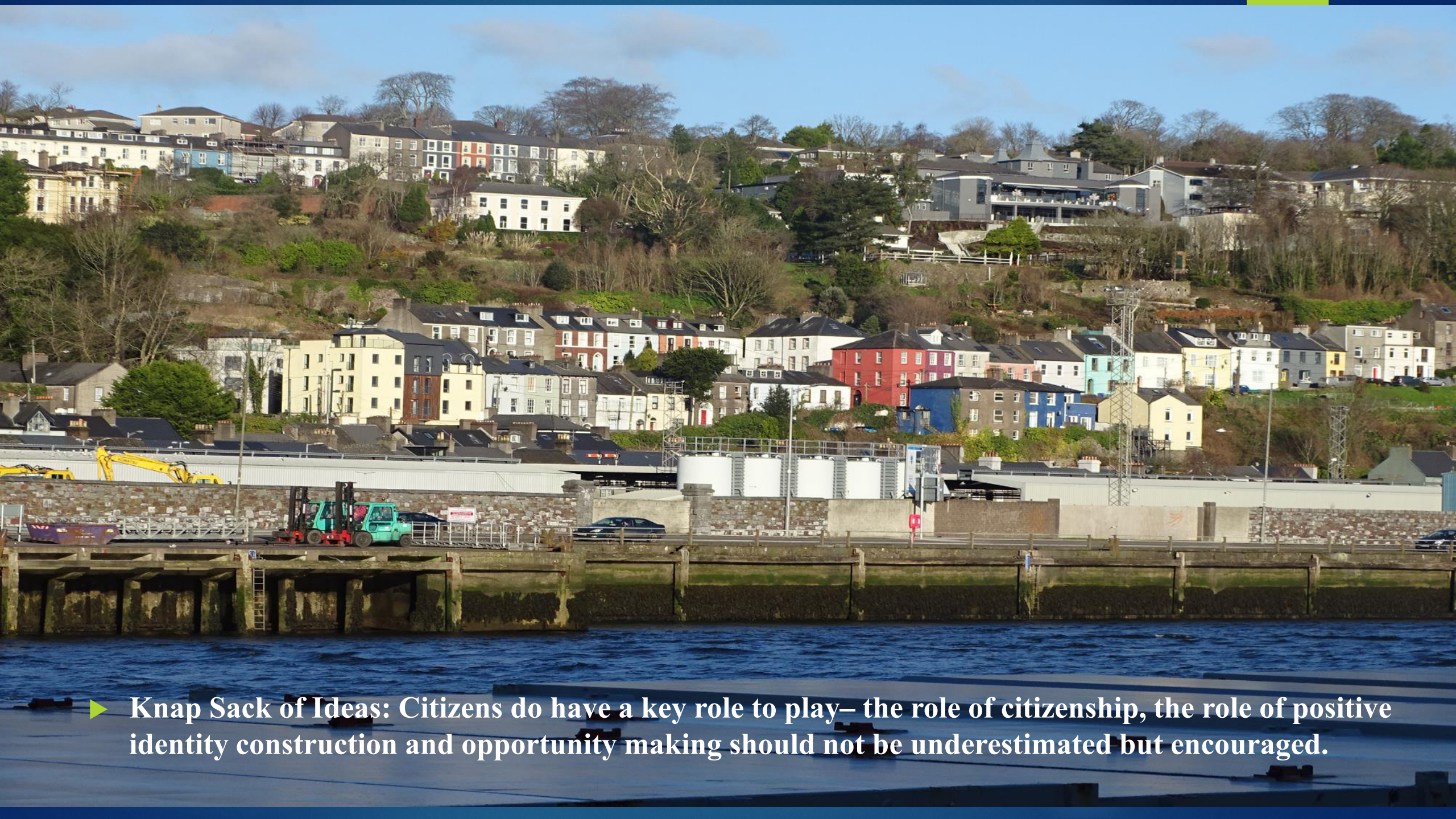
Main findings of the survey

Graph 1

Two main problems facing regions and cities, by country



Bars' values are exceeding 100% because respondents could select more than one answer.



- **Knap Sack of Ideas: Citizens do have a key role to play– the role of citizenship, the role of positive identity construction and opportunity making should not be underestimated but encouraged.**

Call for all of us to engage with the EU

EU as a Sonder Paradigm

“the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own—populated with their own ambitions, friends, routines, worries and inherited craziness—an epic story that continues invisibly around you like an anthill sprawling deep underground, with elaborate passageways to thousands of other lives that you’ll never know existed, in which you might appear only once, as an extra sipping coffee in the background, as a blur of traffic passing on the highway, as a lighted window at dusk”.