New European Innovation Agenda sets increased focus on promoting territorial cohesion

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Partnerships for Regional Innovation pilot project paves the ground for "regional innovation valleys"

By creating “regional innovation valleys”, the European Commission wants to strengthen and better connect innovation players through Europe, including in regions lagging behind. The aim is to bring together less and more innovative regions with a view to addressing the most burning challenges facing the EU, such as reducing the reliance on fossil fuels, increasing global food security, mastering the digital transformation, improving healthcare and achieving circularity. The initiative will be launched by the end of 2023 and identify up to 100 regions committed to enhance the coordination and directionality of their R&I investment and policies at regional level. It will build on the Partnerships for Regional Innovation pilot project, which was launched in May by the European Committee of the Regions and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC).

Vasco Alves Cordeiro, President of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and member of the Regional Parliament of the Azores, said: "Innovation is crucial to foster economic growth, maintain jobs and face the challenges of the green and digital transitions. We welcome the new European Innovation Agenda and recognise its potential to help cities and regions address these transformations, by promoting territorial cohesion and supporting innovation ecosystems. We are particularly happy for the recognition in it of the Partnerships for Regional Innovation, a project by the European Committee of the Regions and the Commission, that demonstrates how a place-based approach can be the key to successful innovation for the benefit of all citizens and our economies. We are keen to help flagship projects like this grow in the context of the Innovation Agenda."

Anne Karjalainen, Chair of the CoR's SEDEC Commission, added: "The European Committee of the Regions warmly welcomes the

much-needed new European Innovation Agenda, which pays this time due attention to territorial cohesion. We are keen in this respect to contribute to the creation of regional innovation valleys and we underline the need for effective multi-level governance in order to successfully bridge the innovation divide across the EU."

A total of 74 EU territories, including 4 Member States, 63 regions, 7 cities and 6 networks, are part of the Partnerships for Regional Innovation (PRI) pilot initiative that will co-develop and test new tools and governance mechanisms to integrate initiatives and investment in strategic areas and link placed-based opportunities and challenges to EU priorities. In the first PRI pilot plenary meeting this week, the participants will examine the new policy context of the New European Innovation Agenda, discuss a roadmap proposal for the Pilot and deepen on the tools and governance mechanisms included in the JRC's PRI Playbook.

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