



ECR
EUROPEAN CONSERVATIVES
& REFORMISTS GROUP
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

THE ABC GUIDE

*for
ECR
Local
&
Regional
Leaders*



We, European Conservatives

believe that Europe's strength has always been rooted in its regions, its communities, and in the leaders who serve them with dedication, pragmatism and a clear vision for a better Europe. As new challenges reshape our continent, the role of local and regional leaders has never been more decisive.

The ECR Group in the European Committee of the Regions brings together those who stand for a Europe that empowers its territories, respects subsidiarity, and delivers concrete results for its citizens.

This brochure is designed as a practical guide for conservative leaders. It offers an introduction to our core policy priorities and the principles that underpin our work—from strengthening cohesion and competitiveness, to defending national identities and ensuring that Europe remains close to its citizens.

As you embark on your political journey, we hope this guide will not only inform, but inspire. The future of Europe will be shaped in its regions and in its territories, by leaders ready to stand in defence of the interest of their local communities.

*A***GRI-FOOD**

A strong **agri-food sector** is crucial for ensuring Europe's food security, supporting rural economies and preserving local production. We advocate for policies that protect our farmers from unfair competition. We support farmers who are the real guardians of our land.

*B***ORDERS**

Strong external **borders** are essential for Europe's security, stability and free movement within the EU.

We support stronger border protection, effective cooperation against illegal migration and policies that prioritise the safety and security of our citizens.

*C***OHESION**

Economic, social and territorial **cohesion** is fundamental to preserving Europe's prosperity and strengthening the single market. We call for a modern, efficient cohesion policy that reduces regional disparities while boosting competitiveness, resilience and growth across all regions.

*D*EFENCE

Strengthening Europe's **defence** is essential in response to growing hybrid, cyber and conventional threats. We call for increased investment in European defence industry, capabilities, preparedness and military mobility, alongside closer cooperation in procurement and regulation, fully aligned with NATO and transatlantic security.

*E*NERGY INDEPENDENCE

Energy independence is key to strengthening Europe's resilience, stabilising costs for citizens and businesses and reducing strategic vulnerabilities. Energy independence gives our nations greater control over their future, reduces exposure to hostile regimes and strengthens Europe's sovereignty in an increasingly unstable world.

*F*AMILY

Strong families are the foundation of strong communities. We support policies that protect **family** life and values, respect parental responsibility and address Europe's demographic crisis with determination and ambition.

G*ROWTH*

Europe's weak economic growth undermines jobs, living standards and long-term investment capacity. We call for pro-growth policies that empower entrepreneurs, create jobs and strengthen Europe's economic dynamism, productivity and prosperity.

H*ERITAGE*

Heritage is the living memory of our communities and Europe's nations. By protecting it, we strengthen identity, continuity and a responsible patriotism that binds generations together.

I*NNOVATION*

Innovation and development, rather than overregulation, should be the driving force behind Europe's competitiveness. We call for investing in cutting-edge technologies such as AI, cutting red tape and ensuring that European innovations can scale up and reach global markets.

***J**UST TRANSITION*

Europe's industries and regions need a gradual and **just transition** toward decarbonisation. We call for revising the most burdensome and ideological climate policies and timelines, ensuring that they follow market developments, protect competitiveness and limit strategic dependencies on foreign raw materials and technologies.

***K**NOW-HOW*

Maintaining and developing Europe's know-how is key for innovation, industrial strength and **regional competitiveness**. We call for investment in skills, research and local expertise so that knowledge development remains strongly linked to the needs of Member States.

***L**OCAL LEADERSHIP*

Local leadership goes hand-in-hand with effective place-based decision-making taking account of territorial realities and challenges. We call for greater respect for subsidiarity, empowering local and regional authorities and avoiding a one-size-fits-all approach.

*M*INIMAL REGULATION

Over the past decades, the EU has adopted a large volume of legislation, contributing to an increasingly complex and fragmented regulatory framework, with significant compliance burdens and obstacles to business and innovation. **We call for less but better** EU action, focused on decisive simplification and proportionate, minimal regulation.

*N*ATION

A sense of nation is important for preserving cultural identity, fostering a sense of belonging and ensuring effective governance. We stand for nations as the primary democratic communities in which citizens share roots, values and responsibility for their common future.

*O*PPORTUNITY

Creating **job opportunities** is vital to boosting growth, expanding prospects for individuals and businesses and unlocking the potential of our regions. We call for policies that encourage entrepreneurship and simplify rules for **local businesses**.

***P**ATRIOTISM*

Patriotism means a love of home, loyalty to our heritage and a shared sense of belonging that binds citizens across generations. We stand for a patriotism rooted in civic responsibility and the sovereign right of people to protect the places, traditions and institutions they call their own.

***Q**UALITY GOVERNANCE*

Clear rules, proportionality and respect for local realities are essential to ensure that policies can be effectively implemented on the ground. This approach defines our commitment to better regulation and **quality governance**.

***R**IGHT TO STAY*

The **right to stay** means giving people the opportunity to live, work and build their future in place they call home. We **call** for policies that strengthen competitiveness, connectivity and essential services, so that leaving is a conscious choice, not a necessity.

SUBSIDIARITY

Trust in Europe depends on taking the right decisions at the right level and **as close to citizens as possible**. We stand for a Europe that respects national, regional and local competences.

TECHNOLOGICAL NEUTRALITY

Technological neutrality must guide EU policy, as one-size-fits-all solutions cannot address Europe's diverse regional needs. We call for an open, innovation-friendly framework that enables all viable technologies to contribute to competitiveness, decarbonisation and strategic autonomy – from nuclear technologies to synthetic and biofuels for cars.

UNITED IN DIVERSITY

United in diversity means a Europe of nations, regions and communities working together on the basis of mutual respect. We stand for a Union that recognises national identities, constitutional traditions and equality between Member States.

V VALUES

A clear vision for Europe should be grounded in **conservative values**: Eurorealism, common sense, a spirit of patriotism and Christian values. We call for policies that respect national identities and deliver concrete results rather than pursuing overly ideological or centralised approaches.

W WESTERN CIVILISATION

A recognition of **Western civilisation** is important as a foundation of Europe's cultural heritage, intellectual traditions and shared values. **We call** for policies that preserve this heritage that are respectful of Member States' identities and responsibilities.

E X CELLENCE

We champion systems that reward talent, hard work and competence, where individuals are empowered to achieve their highest potential. Such systems ensure that effort is rewarded and **excellence** is encouraged.

YOUTH

Today's **young people are tomorrow's leaders** — and we actively promote their engagement. By investing in their skills, confidence and civic responsibility, we give them the tools to serve, lead and secure the future of our communities.

ZERO TOLERANCE

There can be **no compromise with terrorism, violent extremism or antisemitism**. We stand for strong security cooperation, effective prevention and decisive action against those who threaten the safety of our citizens.



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