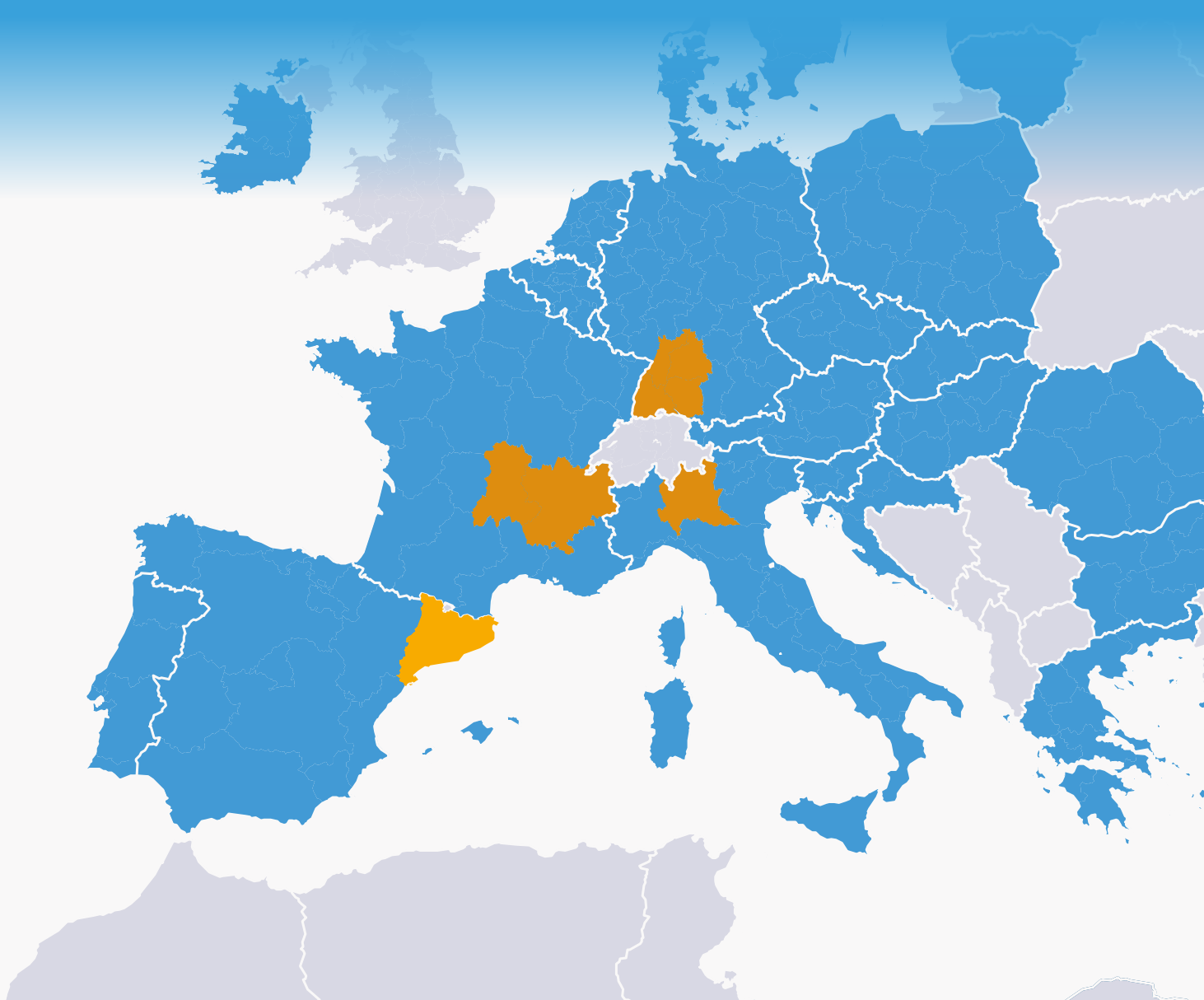

WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE CATALAN PRESIDENCY OF THE **FOUR MOTORS FOR EUROPE**

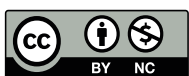
2025-2026



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Ministry for European Union and Foreign Action

April 2025

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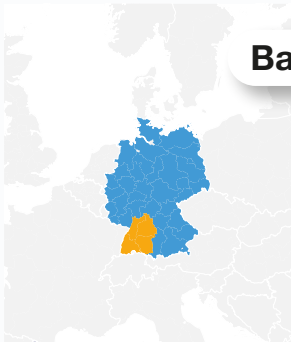
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Lombardy



Bergamo



Baden-Württemberg



Freiburg



Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes



Lyon



Catalonia



Girona

Prologue



The world as we knew it has changed in a short period of time. This is a profound and accelerated paradigm shift driven by the convergence of four major transformations: technological, environmental, economic and geopolitical.

It is in our hands to turn this context into a great opportunity to strengthen the European Union in all areas, make a major leap forward in its strategic autonomy and enhance its role as an international player.

The key factor is belief in our own capabilities, focussing our energies on what we can do and staying true to the founding values of the European Union. Catalonia aims to be fully involved in this process to promote a safer, fairer, more prosperous, more innovative and more competitive Europe, and doing so by strengthening the commitment to democracy, the environment and diversity.

It is imperative that we address the transformations needed to preserve the competitiveness and productivity of the European economy. In this respect, technological innovation, reindustrialisation and decarbonisation will be key elements.

Thus, we are in a crucial new European political cycle, at the start of debates that will mark the future of the EU and the role of the regions in the European project. In line with the objectives of the European Union's Competitiveness Compass, Catalonia aims to continue strengthening its capacities in innovation, industry and sustainability. And it seeks to do so with regional alliances that help in the construction of Europe, such as the Four Motors for Europe.

Catalonia sees such collaborations with other European governments as an additional lever to continue making progress in dealing with the great challenges of the future and to contribute, through its own model of shared prosperity, to the European objectives of growth and resilience, without abandoning our values. It is imperative that the Four Motors for Europe (4ME), Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Baden-Württemberg, Lombardy and Catalonia, as leading and innovative regions, actively participate, influencing and defending our vision of Europe.

The Catalan presidency of the 4ME seeks to contribute to building a stronger Europe, one that is influential on the international stage, understood as a space for opportunities and social cohesion. A place that protects individual and collective freedoms, where citizens find a space for coexistence and solidarity. In short, a Europe which in the 21st century has become the project of hope for millions of people.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line and a vertical stroke.

Salvador Illa i Roca
President of the Government of Catalonia

General introduction of the Catalan presidency of the 4ME

Despite Europe's economic strengths, it needs to take action to regain its competitiveness and productivity, and ensure its prosperity. **What is at stake is not only its economic prosperity, but the future of the European social model.** For this reason, the work programme of the Catalan presidency of the 4ME aims to meet this need by laying the foundations for promoting a competitive economy that will position the **4ME as an economic and social benchmark in Europe.**

With this goal in mind, we propose the following central focus for the Catalan presidency: **"The Compass Motors: the contribution of the regions to the debate on the future economic and social model of Europe."**

The **Competitiveness Compass**, the European Commission's roadmap for relaunching the productivity and competitiveness of European businesses over the period 2024-2029, states that competitiveness is not the responsibility of the EU alone. EU institutions, national governments, **regional authorities** and businesses themselves must step up to meet this challenge, working together in a collective effort and raising their commitment and cooperation to a new level.

In this sense, the Catalan presidency of the 4ME wants to initiate **a series of debates and propose a number of actions aligned with the Competitiveness Compass**, the 2025 European Commission work programme and other recent strategies the Government of Catalonia has approved. These include the **Brussels Plan**, an advocacy tool aimed at increasing Catalonia's presence and influence in the European Union, and the **Catalunya Lidera (Catalonia Leads) Plan**, a strategic tool designed to consolidate Catalonia as one of Europe's regional economic motors.

Through the 4ME, we must foster **economic growth in Europe**, strengthening the competitiveness of companies and restoring industrial weight, promoting research, innovation and transfer, and improving productivity. The model and leadership we propose is based on the values that have made us great as regions: **democracy, solidarity, respect, work, inclusion and diversity**. To improve productivity it is essential to implement a **modern industrial policy** that prioritises investment in high value-added and innovative sectors, to **accelerate decarbonisation** and to strengthen **strategic autonomy** in conjunction with European institutions. **Research and innovation** are the key to developing disruptive technologies that facilitate this transformation and ensure sustainable growth. And all this without neglecting policies that promote **social cohesion, equal opportunities** and **quality jobs**, driving us towards shared and **sustainable** prosperity.

Furthermore, the debate on the next **multiannual financial framework** will be an opportunity to go further and rethink the structure and allocation of the EU budget to bolster the priorities of competitiveness, prosperity, energy sovereignty, security, resilience, cohesion, supporting the EU on the road to becoming the world's first climate neutral continent and maintaining

the highest standards in terms of rule of law and democratic values. The reports by Enrico Letta, Mario Draghi and Sauli Niinistö, as well as the Competitiveness Compass, offer a good starting point for this urgent conversation. The **4ME we will ensure that the regions have a real role to play in all phases of the process, from identifying needs to the design and implementation of policies**. In this debate, the role of the regions needs to be strengthened in the definition of the **Cohesion Policy**. From the 4ME, we will advocate for a **higher budget for the future Cohesion Policy** and fully modernised **Structural Funds**, governed by a simpler, more streamlined, efficient and effective monitoring system in which regional authorities are fully involved at all stages of the decision-making process. We will also advocate for a **Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10)** and a **post-2027 common agricultural policy (CAP)** with a budget that addresses the needs and expectations of the regions in the 4ME.

The voice of the 4ME in Europe

For all of the above reasons, one of the priority objectives of the Catalan presidency of the 4ME will be to **increase our presence and influence in European institutions** and ensure we **influence and make our voice heard** in the **debates and decision-making processes** that will define the future of Europe. To achieve this goal, an advocacy strategy **will be designed** aligned with the areas of action defined in the programme. The strategy will be implemented through the organisation of a **meeting in Brussels** in June, in which institutional representatives and working groups from the 4ME regions, representatives of European institutions and renowned experts will participate to jointly defend our positions before the EU. We will also explore the possibility of joint participation in the **European Week of Regions and Cities** taking place in October in Brussels, as in recent years.

It should be borne in mind that the regions of Baden-Württemberg, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Lombardy and Catalonia have historically claimed to be the industrial powerhouses of Europe, and we have been leaders in most of the strategic areas that have marked European priorities. Through this leadership, **we have contributed to advancing the agenda of European progress and competitiveness**, and we are convinced that in the face of the global challenges before us, the best way to defend our interests and values is through our membership and active participation in the EU, positioning ourselves at the forefront of the European agenda and asserting the strength of our welfare state and democracies.

Thus, the Catalan presidency will propose **actions aimed at influencing the European institutions** in all the proposed areas in order to contribute to the debate on **Europe's future economic and social model** from the perspective of the regions.

The internal governance of the Four Motors for Europe

In terms of coordination, **full collaboration of the formal working groups will be guaranteed**, thereby ensuring they are actively functioning. In this respect, key groups such as the Clusters Dialogue sub-group and the Electric and Hydrogen Mobility and Labour Mobility and Professional Training groups will be **reactivated**. In addition, new partnerships will be fostered in areas of strategic interest, such as health innovation, sustainable transport, cybersecurity, dual-use technologies and sustainable tourism and housing.

To provide coordination and technical follow-up for the initiatives, monthly meetings of the Coordination Committee will be organised to monitor the activity of the 4ME working groups and ensure their coherence and effectiveness.

Presentation of the 4ME active working groups. Information table

Economy	Strengthening the economic and business relations of the four regions through missions, events and strategic partnerships.
Electric and Hydrogen Mobility	Fostering cooperation in electric and hydrogen mobility to boost industry, strengthen our position within European consortia and create a value chain around enabling technologies.
Research and Higher Education	Encouraging exchange of experiences and collaboration between university managers and European project offices.
Environment	Promoting regional cooperation on environmental policies and industrial adaptation to EU guidelines to reduce emissions and optimise existing resources.
Labour Mobility and Professional Training	Promoting professional and educational mobility through the exchange of experiences, collaboration between centres and connecting with the labour market.
Sustainable Food Systems	Fostering cooperation between professionals involved in policy development throughout the agri-food chain to advance the green and digital transformation of sustainable food systems.

Lines of action

As noted in chapter “General introduction of the Catalan presidency of the 4ME”, the work programme of the Catalan presidency of the 4ME proposes a central pillar that focuses on “The Compass Motors: the contribution of the regions to the debate on the future economic and social model of Europe”. The Programme identifies four strategic blocks, each with its own specific lines of action and initiatives. The **action lines** into which each **strategic block** is divided are given below.





Leading innovation in advanced technologies

The EU must reactivate its engine for innovation. Boosting innovation is especially crucial in a context of slowing productivity growth and a necessary condition for advancing structural change. Faced with a high demand for decarbonisation, boosting innovation can enable the productive sector to grow and compete in clean technologies and industries. From the 4ME, we aim to be at the **forefront of innovation** in the technological sectors that will be important in tomorrow's economy, such as **artificial intelligence (AI)**, **semiconductor and quantum technologies**, and advanced materials, while driving innovations in the field of **health**, through biotechnological and medical solutions that contribute to improving quality of life and strengthening healthcare systems. In this sense, boosting spending on **R&D** is essential to reverse the slowdown in the growth of Catalan productivity, foster applied basic research and promote the transfer of knowledge to society and the productive sector.

The Catalan presidency of the 4ME aims to promote the following lines of action:

Fostering disruptive and emerging digital technologies

Disruptive and emerging digital technologies are creating a profound transformation in society and the economy. These technologies include areas such as artificial intelligence, the new space economy, quantum technologies and cybersecurity. The objective of this line of action is to **establish the foundations for international cooperation. This will maximise opportunities to develop and adopt innovative solutions in the ecosystems around these technologies**, while always respecting human rights, democratic values and cultural and linguistic diversity.

As an international benchmark in technological innovation, Catalonia plays a fundamental role in the creation of international networks between governors and public managers from different countries, with the aim of exchanging knowledge and best practices on the adoption and impact of emerging technologies. From the Catalan presidency we will implement actions, such as:

- **Promoting global collaboration on emerging and disruptive technologies through the DETA presidency.**

The Disruptive & Emerging Technology Alliance (DETA) is an initiative by the Government of Catalonia that seeks to bring together governments from around the world to maximise the benefits of technological innovation – focused on AI, space, quantum physics, cybersecurity and digital rights – while respecting human rights, democratic values and cultural and linguistic diversity. Catalonia holds the rotating presidency of DETA for 2024 and 2025. In this context, the annual **ministerial meeting will be organised in Brussels on 14-15 October**, where we will meet with representatives from EU institutions and major technology companies. From the



Catalan presidency we would like to **invite the 4ME partners to participate in this meeting to establish an effective collaboration framework to ensure the technological priorities of DETA members are aligned with those of the 4ME.**

- **Participation in events in the framework of the Artificial Intelligence Strategy of Catalonia (Catalonia.AI).**

In the context of this strategy, the Catalan Government promotes the organisation of various actions (such as conferences, seminars, congresses and master classes) that have a high impact on the Catalan AI ecosystem. The Catalan presidency aims to **coordinate 4ME participation in one of these initiatives in the context of Catalonia.AI**, which will help to **generate value through knowledge sharing between the ecosystems** of the four regions.

Promoting collaboration in the semiconductor industry to strengthen the European Union's strategic autonomy

The semiconductor industry is a key sector for ensuring European Union competitiveness and independence in an increasingly complex geopolitical context. The EU has identified semiconductors as an essential building block for its digital and industrial economy and is working to reduce dependence on external regions in this field. Leading regions in semiconductor production and research, such as Catalonia, have a key role to play in coordinating efforts to consolidate this industry on a European scale. It is in this context that the European Semiconductor Regions Alliance (ESRA) was created, bringing together the different European regions at the forefront of the industry. Catalonia has become one of its mainstays, and as such will hold the presidency in 2026. In this regard, the Catalan presidency, through the Economy group, will take the following action:

- **Holding a first meeting during the third quarter of 2025 to explore the possibility of creating a 4ME working group or dynamic specifically on semiconductors.**

The aim will be to collectively address future opportunities and challenges and define joint actions to promote the competitiveness, technological autonomy and the productive capacity of the respective regions in the field of microchips (including ecosystem cohesion to create a joint value chain, access to finance, infrastructure, talent generation and exchange, and technology transfer).

Fostering innovation in health as a driver for competitiveness and shared prosperity

The new competitiveness framework promoted by EU institutions follows on from the recognition of two major realities: productivity has been lagging behind other major economies over the last 20 years; and the EU is disproportionately more specialised in less complex technologies compared to other global regions, highlighting the undeniable relevance given to the most disruptive technologies applied to health and the biomanufacturing sector. Times of great significance and change lie ahead for the sector. Thus, the Competitiveness Compass involves **the review of policies, regulations and legislation** of primary importance to the research and health ecosystems of the 4ME. Therefore, the proposal of the Catalan presidency of the 4ME in the field of health will focus on the following actions:

- **Developing a position on the role of the 4ME in restoring Europe's competitiveness based on this key sector** (in Catalonia it represents 7.6% of GDP and lies in 3rd place in terms of added value and employment in the Catalan economy). Specifically, we will focus on two main aspects:



- **Digitisation of health:** we will analyse transferable technological capabilities, strategies and practices, such as the AI/Health programme, the PASS programme for the adoption of technologies, the level of digitisation in the Catalan health system, and Catalonia's preparedness for the European Health Data Space (EHDS).
- **Biomanufacturing:** we will analyse the 4ME's capacities and assets in the field of biotechnology and bioproduction, a key sector for the reindustrialisation of Europe.
- **Monitoring European health regulatory processes.**

Actions will be encouraged to monitor processes driven by the Competitiveness Compass, such as the implementation of the EU omnibus law, pharmaceutical legislation, medical device regulations, biotechnology law, the EHDS regulation, the AI Act and other initiatives related to biotechnology and health sciences. This action will help in the formulation of joint positions and proposals for action for the 4ME arising from it. In this regard, the following actions will be carried out:

 - **Meetings with experts,** innovation policymakers and representatives of European institutions to discuss opportunities in this new competitiveness framework.
 - **Preparation of quarterly briefing reports** on how the regions' assets and capabilities enable us to take leading positions within the new competitiveness framework defined by the European Commission. One of the objectives is to highlight the need to involve the 4ME for the recovery of the Union based on innovation in health.

Promoting research, innovation and knowledge transfer

Higher education and research and innovation (R&I) are fundamental pillars for cooperation between the four regions in the 4ME, and a key driver for their economic and social development. Such transnational collaboration helps to address common challenges and promote excellence in strategic areas such as AI, hydrogen, health and semiconductors, all of which are based on strong innovation capabilities. All four regions have a long track record in managing European R&I projects with highly qualified professionals, but challenges still remain in accessing and implementing these programmes.

Therefore, under the Catalan 4ME presidency, the **Research and Higher Education working group will create a space for the exchange of experiences and good practices between university and research centre managers, while fostering collaboration between the European project offices in each region.** We will also work to implement initiatives that facilitate **working visits** between 4ME bodies, thus reinforcing cooperation and mutual learning. The planned actions are:

- **Drawing up a position paper on the future Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2028-2031 (FP10).**

One of the main goals of the Catalan presidency will be to **reinforce the influence of the 4ME** in European R&I policies. To this end, work will be carried out on **preparing a joint position document** that gathers the four regions' priorities and needs in relation to the **future 10th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation of the EU (FP10)**. This document will build on previous experiences with Horizon Europe and highlight critical aspects, such as the structure and funding of the programme. Once **ready, it will be presented to the European institutions** to ensure that the priorities of the **4ME** are reflected in the design of FP10, through a meeting with the European Commission and other key actors in Brussels.



- **Sharing experiences and good practices in the management of European R&I projects.**

The four regions have a wealth of experience in managing European R&I projects with highly skilled managers but still face challenges in accessing and implementing projects. A space will be **created for university and research centre managers to exchange experiences and good practices**. This action will **foster collaboration between European project offices in the regions**, facilitating knowledge sharing and mutual learning. Work will also be carried out on an initiative that facilitates working visits between organisations in the 4ME.

Decarbonisation to compete

Decarbonisation is one of the major challenges for the European economy in the coming decades and a key element in achieving an effective green transition, ensuring a green, fair and sustainable future and boosting competitiveness. With the European Climate Law, Europe has put in place an ambitious framework for becoming a climate-neutral society by 2050. At the same time, the recent approval of the Clean Industrial Deal by the European Commission is a sign of the relevance of decarbonisation as a factor for growth.

The Government of Catalonia wants to move towards a decarbonised, clean and sustainable economic model, leading the fight against climate change through effective policies that reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and increase the resilience of the territory to the effects of the climate crisis.

To achieve these objectives, we will first work to boost renewable energies and research into green/blue hydrogen for the energy transition. In industry, we will work to increase the competitiveness of the sector in the current context of ecological transition through research, innovation and the development of key technologies. Finally, for the decarbonisation of the transport sector, we will expand sustainable mobility through public transport and electric and green hydrogen vehicles. The lines of action proposed by the presidency in this area are:

Promoting renewable hydrogen for energy transition and industrial decarbonisation

Green/blue hydrogen is essential to accelerating the transition to a more sustainable energy model and reducing dependence on fossil fuels. Green/blue hydrogen plays a key role in decarbonising the energy system, as well as in storing renewable energy and reducing emissions in particularly complex sectors such as heavy transport and industry. Committing to research, innovation and transfer in this field not only boosts new economic opportunities and job creation, but also strengthens the leadership of the major clean technology regions.

Through the 4ME, we will promote the development of this sector as a strategic area for the energy transition, leveraging the strength of the four regions involved, all of which are benchmarks in this field. All four regions have major leadership potential in innovation, research and development in key technologies in the production and use of hydrogen. By joining forces in these areas, we will accelerate industrial competitiveness and consolidate our territories and Europe as a global leader in hydrogen. For this reason, this year the Catalan presidency proposes:



- **Carrying out a reverse mission on hydrogen as part of Hydrogen Week, which will be held in Catalonia during the last quarter of 2025.**

It will be attended by researchers, companies, organisations and policymakers from the 4ME. The aim will be to **show the potential of the Catalan hydrogen ecosystem and foster mutual knowledge and partnerships in this field. Opportunities will be promoted for participation in joint projects** in the framework of European funding programmes (such as Horizon Europe and the Clean Hydrogen Partnership) to accelerate the development and application of hydrogen technologies in industry and sustainable mobility. The mission can also include **visits to key infrastructures in Catalonia**, such as research centres, pilot plants and hydrogen innovation hubs.

As part of the mission, the conference to launch the **New Talent Generation for the Future of Hydrogen Research and Innovation in Catalonia and Baden-Württemberg** (Talent H2 CAT-BW) project will be organised, with high-level representatives from Baden-Württemberg, the European Commission and bodies such as Hydrogen Europe and Hydrogen Research Europe attending.

A **brokerage event** on green hydrogen-based mobility will also be organised among participating organisations from the other regions and Catalan organisations with the aim of promoting collaboration and consortium participation in European programmes to support innovation in this field.

As part of the mission, the Environment group will organise a **European conference on carbon capture and storage technology** to discuss the most innovative solutions and establish a support plan for the regions to develop joint projects.

Transition to a decarbonised automotive sector: electric and hydrogen-based vehicles

The automotive sector is fundamental to the Catalan economy, representing 7.9% of industrial GVA and 9.3% of turnover, creating around 33,000 direct jobs. To achieve the European Green Deal's objective of decarbonising transport, the transition to electric vehicles and green hydrogen-based mobility will be essential. In this transformation, Catalan industry needs to broaden the value chain with new technologies, such as batteries, electric motors, fuel cells and power electronics. To facilitate this change, the Government of Catalonia has launched the 2025-2030 Electric Vehicle Promotion Plan for Catalonia, based on rolling out infrastructure, stimulating demand and promoting investment and innovation in the industry.

The **4ME Electric and Hydrogen Mobility group**, focused on electric and green hydrogen-based mobility, works to minimise the impact of the transition to new technologies and exploit opportunities in the new industry value chain by sharing experiences and policies for industry support, joint positioning and cross-industry participation in European consortia. With this vision, the specific actions planned during the Catalan 4ME presidency are:

- **Participation in the HANNOVER MESSE (April 2025 - to be confirmed).**

At the HANNOVER MESSE fair, a programme of visits by Catalan companies to exhibiting companies from the 4ME member regions will be organised. It will focus on the fields of electric vehicles, batteries, fuel cells and automotive-related production systems, among other fields. This will allow participants **to explore opportunities for collaboration and innovation**, strengthening the competitiveness of our sectors.



- **Joint participation in the Battery Show Europe (Stuttgart, June 2025).**

Joint and cross-participation of the 4ME member regions is proposed. This initiative aims to **promote collaboration and exchange of experience in the areas of battery technology**. Shared sessions and guided tours will be organised, in which participants will be able to explore the latest innovations in the sector, meet exhibitors from each of the regions and establish strategic collaborations. This action will favour **the consolidation of value chains** and strengthen the competitiveness of the regions involved, positioning them as global leaders in this emerging sector.

Promoting climate neutrality and industrial competitiveness through decarbonisation

The interest of this year's 4ME presidency in the field of the environment lies in the importance of sharing policies and actions on climate change, as well as accompanying industry in adapting production processes to EU guidelines on the reduction of GHG emissions, pollutant emissions and efficient use of resources. These guidelines, derived from European policies in sectors such as energy, waste, air quality, the circular economy and decarbonisation, have a direct impact on industry in our regions. Therefore, adapting to European requirements is essential to meet the Competitiveness Compass targets.

From the Catalan presidency of the 4ME, we aim to align ourselves with the new EU roadmap on meeting **climate goals and the decarbonisation** of the economy as a strategy to increase the **competitiveness of the EU** and improve **environmental**, territorial, economic and social resilience to the effects of climate change. We also aim to carry out a series of actions, such as:

- **Organising a regional forum on decarbonisation as a motor for competitiveness.**

The 4ME regions will be able to share their **industrial decarbonisation strategies** to **identify opportunities for collaboration in the transition to a green economy**. The presidency will also suggest the creation of a European funding mechanism and support for transition in the most affected industries, such as metallurgy and the chemical industry, with the aim of boosting adoption of hydrogen and electrification, as well as carbon storage and actions and projects to offset and mitigate GHG emissions.

- **Reactivating the Clusters Dialogue sub-group through a seminar on shared value.**

The 4ME regions will be invited to a seminar organised for the end of the year on **the theme of shared value**, an increasingly important concept that puts aspects such as talent management, responsible consumption and sustainability at the heart of business strategy. The seminar is part of the **European Accelerate GDT project**, which aims to **accelerate green and digital transitions through cluster policies** and which will promote the exchange of good practices in this field, fostering competitiveness by incorporating social and environmental variables as drivers.

- **Organising a joint working community with the 4ME.**

The aim will be to define common criteria and measures to achieve the pollution targets in each region, aligned with the new **European Air Quality Directive**. This will involve **sharing experiences** in high-precision sensor systems and instant alerts, measures to promote low emissions and electric mobility, and research and development in innovative solutions. The **EU's best available techniques (BATs)** will also be highlighted to adapt them to the requirements laid down in European directives on industrial emissions and air quality.

- **Promoting advocacy actions to influence the future law on the circular economy.**

The aim is to establish concrete measures to encourage the reuse and recycling of materials in business and industrial production and in the role of regional governments. We will also



propose the creation of a space for collaboration and exchange of experiences between the different regions in the 4ME. A good starting point will be exchanging knowledge on energy recovery from waste and the generation of renewable fuels, and contacting different companies in each region. Similarly, in Catalonia we will expand our tool for industrial symbiosis and buying and selling industrial by-products (so they can be used as products and/or raw materials and, therefore, accessible to industry in the 4ME) and we will work so that collaborations or common projects can be carried out in this area in the four regions of the 4ME.

- **Initiating a joint line of work to define and manage the liquid fraction from digestion in biogas plants that treat manure, as well as dried solid digestate that can be used as an organic amendment.**

From the Catalan presidency of the 4ME, we would like to explore possibilities for partners to create a line to commercialise this digestate.

Promoting sustainable rail transport for decarbonised and competitive mobility

The role of rail transport in decarbonisation must be a fundamental and indisputable cornerstone. Rail transport is particularly important due to its high energy efficiency, low carbon footprint and capacity to reduce road congestion and air pollution. For these reasons, it is essential its share in the modal distribution of passenger and freight transport be increased, promoting policies and investments that encourage its expansion and modernisation. This is the only way to move towards a more sustainable mobility model aligned with climate objectives.

Although the 4ME do not currently have a formal working group in this area, the Catalan presidency will propose one be created to work together in different areas through the following action:

- **Organising a series of meetings to share experiences and good practices in the field of transport.** Specifically, we will propose a series of debates and actions on:
 - **Railway connectivity in the framework of the TEN-T network.** We propose carrying out a **shared diagnosis** to analyse how rail connections between the four European regions are being improved and to assess the impact of the development of the TEN-T network on rail transport. We will also propose a **seminar** in December 2025 to present the **first results**, which should serve as a basis for defining future investment strategies, establishing a joint roadmap and promoting shared initiatives to strengthen rail interconnection between the regions.
 - **Promoting collaboration in the railway sector.** We will propose the development of a **joint strategy** to promote the execution of projects that improve important cross-border links in the four regions, e.g. Lyon-Turin and Montpellier-Perpignan. Furthermore, we consider it essential to study sleeper trains as a tool to promote more sustainable and efficient mobility between regions, thus favouring connections between medium and long-distance cities and reducing congestion on high-speed routes during the day.
 - **Fostering the exchange of good practices and shared knowledge on the management of rail services and their governance**, in the context of opening the national rail passenger service market and Regulation (EC) no. 1370/2007.

Gaining strategic autonomy, security and resilience

Strategic autonomy has become a priority objective for Europe in an increasingly uncertain global context. Recent geopolitical developments have made it clear that European security must be protected to ensure peace, stability and prosperity for our economies and society, while also revealing the need to strengthen our capacity to respond to cross-border and multidimensional threats.

One priority of the Catalan presidency of the 4ME is to promote collaboration between member regions to strengthen their resilience in the face of various challenges, such as **adapting to climate change**, autonomy of the **agri-food sector**, the development of **dual-use technologies** that can be used for both civilian and defence applications, and the **protection of democratic processes** through cybersecurity and the fight against disinformation. Through knowledge sharing and the implementation of joint projects, we seek to consolidate strategic autonomy and ensure a more effective response to crises affecting our security and well-being.

Adaptation to climate change: the 4ME and European governance

The 4ME regions have been pioneers in adapting to the effects of climate change. This adaptation depends not only on national or European policies, but also on joint action between regions with common objectives. As the effects of climate change become increasingly evident across Europe, the need for a coordinated and integrated response is more urgent than ever.

At the European level, the climate change adaptation strategy emphasises diversification of energy sources, protection of coastal zones, water management and the development of resilient cities and strengthening the agri-food system to increase levels of food autonomy. The Just Transition Fund has become one of the key tools for funding projects that, although region-specific, are part of a broader European adaptation and resilience plan.

EU National Adaptation Plans will provide the roadmap for each Member State, while the regions will be able to complement these strategies with more specific and local actions. Fostering resilience in the regions will demonstrate that the most efficient solutions arise out of collaboration and knowledge sharing.

With firm commitment and effective cooperation, the 4ME regions can lead the response to climate change. By acting together, sharing knowledge, exchanging best practices and creating a mutual support network, we will not only reduce our vulnerability, but also **open the door to a more robust and resilient regional governance model** to face of the global challenges of climate change.



To this end, we will carry out the following action:

- **Organising a side-event at COP30 on adaptation to climate change.**

The aim will be to share best practices in terms of **adaptation to the climate crisis** and the **advances of the Global Adaptation Indicator (GIA)**, developed by the Catalan Climate Change Office. Catalonia is a pioneer in Europe on this issue, even ahead of the Member States, approving one of the first adaptation strategies (2012-2020). We have already moved on to the second planning cycle (2020-2030) and we can act as a driving force for the rest of the regions. We will also discuss the **Just Transition Fund and regional climate change adaptation strategies and plans**. Subsequently, we will propose the preparation of a **joint report on funding initiatives and modifying climate adaptation plans**.

Promoting sustainable food systems

The European Union is promoting strategic autonomy in the agri-food sector through the “Vision for Agriculture and Food”, which aims to create more sustainable and resilient agri-food systems to ensure the long-term competitiveness of the sector. This vision includes decarbonisation of the sector as a key element in meeting the EU climate targets. In addition, a number of actions are proposed, such as revising the rules on unfair trade practices and simplifying the common agricultural policy (CAP), with the aim of bolstering resilience to geopolitical and climatic change.

From the Catalan presidency of the 4ME, we believe it is essential that the **Sustainable Food Systems** working group promote a space for cooperation to maintain permanent contact with professionals involved in the development of policies throughout the agri-food chain and collaborate in the green and digital transformation of the sector. This year, we will be working in various areas, leveraging the recognition of **Catalonia as a World Gastronomy Region 2025**. The actions we will carry out include:

- **Preparing a 4ME position on the Vision for Agriculture and Food and the CAP post-2027.**

This will involve participating in the debates on the various key European strategies and initiatives for the agri-food sector and rural development with the aim of presenting a joint position defending the interests and priorities of the 4ME.

- **Presenting to the 4ME the recognition of Catalonia as a World Gastronomy Region.**

This presentation will highlight the quality of food production, the innovation and talent in its cuisine and the unique quality of Catalonia as a leading gastronomic destination.

- **Preparing a 4ME conference in Catalonia to present sustainable agricultural production (SAP).**

With the aim of **increasing the visibility and adoption of sustainable** agricultural practices in Europe, promoting the integration of SAP in public policies, an action will be proposed that includes the presentation of the SAP project, visits in Catalonia to see farms that apply SAP and establishing synergies between the regional partners.

- **Exchanging knowledge between regions in the following areas:**

- Food education programmes.
- Public food procurement.
- Reduction of food losses and food waste.
- Agri-food innovation.

Cybersecurity, democracy and disinformation

Cybersecurity has become an essential pillar for the protection of digital infrastructures, the defence of democratic institutions and the fight against growing threats from disinformation. In an increasingly interconnected global context, the ability of European territories to respond effectively to cybersecurity-related challenges is crucial to safeguard not only their digital networks, but also public confidence in their democratic processes. Moreover, misinformation has become one of the main threats to modern democracy, affecting both trust in the media and in political institutions. Cyberattacks and disinformation campaigns are often linked and seek to undermine democratic foundations.

Against this backdrop, we propose a series of actions to promote cooperation among the 4ME territories, with the aim of tackling both cybersecurity and disinformation, fostering collaboration in the defence of European democratic values.

- **Participating in the sixth Barcelona Cybersecurity Congress (BCC).**
The 4ME territories will be invited to participate in a joint working session at the BCC (13-15 May, Barcelona), with **the aim of exploring avenues for collaboration**. This session will focus on common cybersecurity-related threats, ICT governance and coordinated response to international incidents. The aim is to encourage the territories to participate in strategic initiatives for which European funding is available, such as the “CyberAcademy”, a project that promotes talent in this field. The ultimate goal is to **improve transnational coordination in the prevention of and response to cyber threats**, as well as **strengthening cooperation between institutions in the 4ME territories**.
- **Inviting the 4ME regions to a seminar organised as part of an international alliance of regional governments in defence of democratic values.**
In the current context of discrediting democratic institutions, fuelled by disinformation, we in Catalonia seek to promote the defence of democratic values through an **international alliance of regional governments** that share these values. In this regard, we plan to organise a seminar this year to bring these regions together to discuss these issues. We would like to leverage the Catalan presidency to **invite 4ME partners to participate and exchange good practices in the fight against disinformation**.

Fostering technological sovereignty in the EU by promoting dual-use technologies in the regions

In line with its goal of strategic autonomy, the EU is determined to move towards technological sovereignty, so that it is not dependent on third countries to develop its own emerging technologies. In this context, the European Commission and the Council of the EU are increasingly emphasising the need to foster innovation that delivers dual-use technological advances, i.e. serving both a civilian and, potentially, defence purpose. Upcoming European programmes and funds will be along these lines and European innovation ecosystems, primarily regional, will have to adapt accordingly. This approach is novel for sub-state governments, which, as in the case of the Government of Catalonia, have always focused support on developing technologies for civilian use. Catalonia, like all other EU regional governments, must **consider how they can help their innovation ecosystem adapt to this new challenge**. With this objective, we will consider:

- **Organising a virtual meeting with those responsible for digital and technological, innovation and research policies in the 4ME.**
The aim is to address how regions can **help strengthen EU technological sovereignty** and leverage the Community’s new approach focused on dual use of technology.



Promoting sustainable tourism as a pillar for economic resilience and sector diversification

Tourism is a strategic sector for boosting economic resilience and productive diversification in our economies. Its reorientation towards a sustainable and regenerative model is essential to ensuring a balance between economic development, environmental protection and social cohesion. The new model aims not only to minimise the negative impact of tourism, but also to generate long-term benefits for local communities.

This year, under the Catalan presidency of the 4ME, we are proposing the creation of the Tourism working group to share good practices in sustainable and regenerative tourism. These would focus on leveraging the diversity of the respective production models to promote a model that prioritises the transversal impact and legacy that activity of the visitor economy can leave in the different communities. In this regard, the following action will be proposed, among others:

- **Holding an initial meeting of 4ME representatives** in this field to reach a consensus on the objectives and areas of work, create the corresponding sub-groups and then defining the main actions for each of the three proposed areas of activity:
 - **Climate action.** This should help **boost implementation of the respective Climate Action Plans** in response to the commitments on environmental sustainability adopted by signing the UN Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism.
 - **Segmentation.** Focused on the following projects:
 - **“Meetings and Mobility”** to position the four territories, all with a strong automotive and mobility industry, as ideal venues to host events oriented towards reflection on the transformation of this industry.
 - **“Meetings and Sports”**, with the same objective as above, leveraging the leading position of the four regions in the world of sport.
 - **Social sustainability.** This is a priority objective to ensure that the visitor economy provides overall well-being to the whole community, thereby making the slogan “Better places to live, better places to visit” a reality.
- **Holding the first meeting of the 4ME Tourism working group at the CMT trade show in Stuttgart (16 January 2026).**

Towards an inclusive economy: talent, decent work and equal opportunities

Economic progress must go hand in hand with social cohesion and equal opportunities, ensuring the benefits of growth are accessible to all. An inclusive approach is essential to strengthening the economic foundations and improving the distribution of its fruits. Ensuring people's well-being, protecting fundamental rights and promoting equality are fundamental objectives, especially in a context of accelerated economic, social and environmental change. The European Commission stresses the importance of maintaining and protecting the European social model, promoting fairness in a changing economy, seizing the opportunities of the green and digital transitions. Guaranteeing **decent housing**, access to **quality work** and strengthening **professional training** are essential pillars for building a cohesive and resilient society.

The Catalan presidency of the 4ME seeks to promote **shared prosperity** that permits an equitable distribution of economic benefits among the member territories.

Promoting labour and training mobility as a motor for European growth

Europe's competitiveness is based on its citizens. Strengthening vocational and lifelong learning is essential for coping with major global transitions – digital, energy and demographic – and ensuring a more skilled and adaptable workforce. This challenge requires training that meets the needs of the productive sectors, a more flexible and modular system, and measures to support work-life balance and promote active participation in lifelong learning.

The Catalan presidency of the 4ME is firmly committed to reactivating the Labour Mobility and Professional Training working group, whose main objective is the exchange of experiences and knowledge among young people and professionals, as well as the promotion of mobility in professional training. To promote professional and training mobility in the 4ME, the following actions will be carried out:

- **Organising an international NO-Mad: Migrants, Expats, Digital Natives Conference (end of year).**

The aim is to position Barcelona and Catalonia as a benchmark in attracting and retaining capabilities and talent in the field of global labour mobility and to discuss common challenges faced by today's societies regarding mobility and migration. The 4ME partners will be invited to participate. This action will include a proposed photo report on individuals in mobility with different experiences, webinars and two days of conferences with round table discussions involving experts. The results will be compiled for a book. The expected results are establishing a **collaborative network among the 4ME regions in this field** and fostering a **consensus** in public policy on issues such as **reception, housing, digital nomadism and mobility rights**.



- **Carrying out study visits to academic research and professional training centres in the 4ME territories.**

Their aim is to share experiences and innovative methodologies in the field of dual training, matching professional training and the needs of the labour market, and training workers. Given that all four territories have a powerful automotive sector in their industry, it is envisaged that the visits will be made to professional training centres, companies and other organisations linked to professional training at the forefront of this sector and who can offer innovative and interesting content.

- **Holding meetings to exchange good practices among experts from the four territories**, to establish debates on the following topics:

- **Professional training and innovation in the fields of innovation and the careers of the future**; dual training; lifelong learning; retraining and recognition of competencies; and other current challenges in the field shared by the four territories.
- **Promotion of labour and training mobility in strategic sectors**, such as digitisation, sustainability and green technologies. Inclusion and equity in international mobility.
- **Internationalisation of training centres**. The aim is to strengthen the European dimension of centres offering professional training, as an opportunity to continuously improve the quality of training and professionals in this field, retain talent in the territory and strengthen access to the labour market.

These meetings will take place online, and the content and conclusions can be further worked on in a **face-to-face session** as part of the **study visit agenda**. The aim is to create an **ongoing dialogue** among the territories on the challenges currently facing us and to make full use of a network of shared knowledge and experiences.

Promoting access to affordable housing as a key element for economic security and social cohesion

Finally, no economic strategy can be disconnected from the housing situation, since without affordable access to housing, economic security cannot be guaranteed. Imbalances in this sector exacerbate inequalities, hinder labour mobility and negatively affect productivity. Access to housing has moved to the top of both the EU and Catalan agendas, due to the difficulties many people face in accessing decent housing. For the first time, a European Commissioner holds the Housing portfolio and the European Commission plans to develop an Affordable Housing Plan and European Strategy for Housing, among other proposed policies in this area. In this context, the Catalan presidency proposes an initial action aimed at promoting a series of debates on this issue.

- **Organising an initial meeting of the 4ME regions to share their housing policies.**

The aim of this first meeting will be to define objectives, identify the key people in each region, establish the work methodologies and specify actions in priority areas. The following work areas are proposed as a first step:

- New public and private financing instruments for the production of affordable rental housing.
- Industrialisation of affordable housing production.
- Strategies to promote the large-scale energy refurbishment of private housing stock.

Contributions to the work programme of the Catalan presidency of the Four Motors for Europe (2025-2026)

Coordinating team

Catalan Ministry for European Union and Foreign Action

Secretariat for European and Multilateral Affairs and Development Cooperation

Directorate General for European Union Affairs

Government Delegation to the European Union

4ME working groups

Research and Higher Education	Catalan Ministry of Research and Universities Directorate General of Knowledge Transfer and Society
Economy Clusters Dialogue sub-group	ACCIÓ, Catalan Ministry of Business and Labour
Electric and Hydrogen Mobility	ACCIÓ, Catalan Ministry of Business and Labour Óptima, public office for the transformation of the automotive sector and mobility of the Directorate General of Industry
Environment	Catalan Ministry of Territory, Housing and Ecological Transition Directorate General of Climate Change and Environmental Quality Technical Office
Sustainable Food Systems	Catalan Ministry of Territory, Housing and Ecological Transition Directorate General of Climate Change and Environmental Quality Technical Office
Labour Mobility and Professional Training	Catalan Ministry of Business and Labour International Programme Area of the Catalan Public Employment Service (SOC) Catalan Ministry of Education and Vocational Training Directorate General of Vocational Training

Other areas of sector-based collaboration

Disruptive and Advanced Technologies (DETA)	Catalan Ministry for European Union and Foreign Action Delegation to the European Union
Artificial Intelligence	Catalan Ministry of Business and Labour Secretariat of Digital Policies
Cybersecurity	Catalan Ministry of the Presidency Cybersecurity Agency of Catalonia
Innovation in Health	Catalan Ministry of Health Biocat
Transport	Catalan Ministry of Territory, Housing and Ecological Transition Directorate General of Mobility Infrastructure Directorate General of Transport and Mobility
Tourism	Catalan Ministry of Business and Labour Catalan Tourist Board
Housing	Catalan Ministry of Territory, Housing and Ecological Transition Secretariat of Housing



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