



Assessment of the Catalan Presidency of the **Four Motors for Europe**

From 25 September 2020 to 3 December 2021



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Introduction

Catalonia took over the presidency of the Four Motors for Europe network from Lombardy on 25 September 2020 in Milan. The programme for the Catalan presidency, titled “**Strengthening the transformative resilience of our societies through the 2030 Agenda and the European Green Deal**”, was based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the 2030 Agenda and the European Green Deal, with the aim of presenting debates, events and initiatives committed to leaving no one behind in the transition towards a more sustainable society.

The Catalan presidency took place in a highly complicated world context, marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit the member regions in the network hard, forcing them to reorganise and, occasionally, redefine actions and planned activities to meet the new challenges. Furthermore, this situation meant all events, meetings and other initiatives had to be organised electronically, except for the ceremony handing over the presidency to Auvergne- Rhone-Alpes. Despite the added difficulties created by this new way of working and relating, it was also a chance to explore alternative ways of communicating and working together, if nothing else, much more sustainably.

Based on three pillars (social, environmental and economic transformative resilience), the Catalan presidency sought to promote actions that would also show the power of the regions to influence and foster undertakings within the framework of the SDGs and empower them as transforming agents for the change needed to achieve a more just and equal society. Thus, emphasis was placed on the need for regionalisation of the SDGs as an essential factor in promoting effective cooperation between different levels of government and stakeholders in civil society. The resulting proximity will facilitate more effective monitoring and subsequent assessment of the actions.

Besides this main focus, the Catalan presidency also took into consideration the programmes of the previous presidencies of the Four Motors for Europe, in line with the strategy to strengthen governance, approved on the network’s 30th anniversary. Thus, continuity was given to some of the initiatives from previous presidencies, consolidating work across working groups and boosting collaboration in the field of EU funding.

More specifically, special efforts were made to foster and strengthen collaboration within the network’s working groups, working closely on the preparation and organisation of events promoted during the Catalan presidency. The creation of a new working group (Sustainable Food Systems) was also encouraged to give shape to a pre-existing collaboration in this field, while work was also done to promote the activity and strengthen the implementation of the most recently created working groups.

Finally, specific measures were adopted to improve the communication and transparency of our network. In this regard, an article was published on the network’s website for each relevant event and meeting during the Catalan presidency and for initiatives conducted by other regions, summarising the main points discussed and resulting commitments. Two new sections were also introduced: “Joint positions” and “Presidencies”.

The three pillars of transformative resilience

1. **Social**, to combat the problem of inequality by tackling issues such as the digital divide, strengthening education to make it inclusive, giving greater value to higher education (especially in the field of research), and strengthening health systems, through such measures as integrating artificial intelligence;
2. **Environmental**, ensuring economic reconstruction is green and promotes social awareness, such as through an initiative on education for sustainability coinciding with the UNESCO Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, focusing on the energy transition, learning about climate threats and strengthening food sovereignty;
3. **Economic**, emphasising the circular, social and cooperative economy to make it more sustainable and bring it closer to people.

Responding to COVID-19 with the SDGs and the European Green Deal

In April 2020, the European Network of Advisory Councils for Sustainable Development (EEAC), of which the Advisory Council for Sustainable Development of Catalonia is a member, issued the open letter “Responding to COVID-19: building social, economic and environmental resilience with the European Green Deal”.

In this letter, written early on in the pandemic, the councils stated that COVID-19 was a tragedy and that, as with past tragedies, it was a moral obligation and responsibility for societies to learn and follow a more resilient and sustainable path. Furthermore, the letter said, literally, that we are not only stopping the COVID-19 crisis, we are building a new world.

The European Community is in a privileged position to be able to analyse and compare responses to the crisis in different EU member states and European regions and cities. This comparison could help to identify best practices and share information on how to strengthen resilience in the future. The crisis also shows the need for world regions to learn from each other and for countries to cooperate across borders. Only together can we face challenges that arise.

This is precisely what the members of the Four Motors for Europe network did during the Catalan presidency. Over the course of one year, a highly complex one for everyone, the governments of these four regions worked to promote projects that increase the resilience of their societies and economies, inspired by the SDGs and the European Green Deal.

The work carried out by the Four Motors for Europe is also aligned with the petitions of the Advisory Council for the Sustainable Development of Catalonia in its position paper published on April 14, 2020: *One pandemic, numerous lessons and 17 goals that we must not put in lockdown*. In the paper, the Council stated that the context of the spread of COVID-19, accelerated by environmental imbalances, had had a direct impact on fundamental issues of well-being and, in this regard, the 17 SDGs in the 2030 Agenda serve as a compass to overcome the current crisis, improve our resilience as a society and help the planet.

Allow me to refer once again to the opinion expressed by the members of the EEAC Network, which I referred to at the start of this brief text. In the document, the councils stated that the COVID-19 outbreak should be seen as a warning to humanity. From this point of view, it is not only a health pandemic. It is a compound crisis: a crisis of loss of integrity of the biosphere, a crisis of human health, a crisis of lack of preparedness, a crisis of social inequalities, a crisis of the current globalisation model, and a crisis of a global economic system that has no plans or means.

In its text, the EEAC network stated that COVID-19 must serve as an opportunity to lead Europe towards the much-needed transformation in sustainability. Leaving no one behind. I fully share this opinion. In just a short time, the fight against pandemics activated essential elements such as innovation, non-profit public-private partnerships, large-scale citizen solidarity, and monumental changes in social and individual behaviour. All these elements have a critical role to play in our efforts to achieve the SDGs, thus confirming that achieving them is not only necessary, but more feasible than ever. I hope that the good work carried out this year by the Four Motors for Europe will have contributed to moving in this direction. I am sure this is the case.

Arnau Queralt-Bassa

Director of the Advisory Council for the Sustainable Development of Catalonia and President of the European Network of Advisory Councils for Sustainable Development (EEAC)

List of activities

Economic transformative resilience

Primary Focus:

- **SDG 8:** Decent work and economic growth
- **SDG 9:** Innovation and infrastructures
- **SDG 10:** Reduced inequalities
- **SDG 12:** Responsible consumption and production

Business passport of the Four Motors for Europe

[2021] [\[Link\]](#)



The Business Passport

Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Baden-Wurttemberg, Lombardy and Catalonia launched a new initiative for companies, called Four Motors for Europe Business Passport.

This tool aims to promote trade, investment and technological cooperation between companies in the four regions. As part of the Four Motors for Europe alliance, companies will be able to benefit free of charge from a number of services included in this budget. Specifically, these services include fast and privileged access to contacts in the other associated regions to identify technological or trade partners, receive advice on how to set up abroad, find out about business opportunities (market data, events and fairs, etc.), find suppliers and develop their network of contacts, among other services.

This Business Passport will enable Four Motors for Europe companies to accelerate their international development and cooperation. The initiative was tested in 2021 for the four regions as a pilot project and soon led to several trade, technology and implementation partnerships.

The Four Motors for Europe, committed to recovery

[12/10/2020] [M](#)



Institutional representatives

Virtual event “The Four Motors for Europe, committed to recovery”, as part of the 2020 European Week of Regions and Cities. The four regions in the Four Motors for Europe presented their recovery plans to tackle the coronavirus in a session chaired by the European Policy Centre analyst **Marta Pilati**, which had an audience of a hundred.

The regional councillor for the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region Cross-Border Cooperation **Astrid Baud-Roche**, presented the regional green pact and a proposal for linking recovery to the environment. The action plan focussed mainly on the following six points: energy renewal; renewable energies; hydrogen; the circular and local economy; sustainable mobility and natural resources.

The Director of International Affairs, Cross-Border Cooperation, Federal Affairs, Development Cooperation and Baden-Wurttemberg Protocol **Karin Scheifele** presented initiatives from her region to improve cross-border cooperation during the months of COVID-19 lockdown.

The undersecretary of the Lombardy Presidency, Alan Christian Rizzi, described their infrastructure programme to revive the economy, including around 3.5 billion euros to invest over three years. The plan focusses on long-term investments rather than subsidiary measures, in order to create jobs and reactivate the economy.

The Government of Catalonia Director General for Economic Analysis **Marta Curto** explained the objectives of the Plan for Economic Reactivation and Social Protection, focusing on the details in one of its five pillars: the economy for life.

Before the contributions from all the regional representatives, the OECD Head of Decentralisation, Subnational Finance and Public Investment **Dorothee Allain-Dupre** presented the results of the study on the territorial impact of COVID-19, which showed that the crisis had a strong territorial component, as municipalities were at the front-line managing the pandemic, and that the impact had hit regions in the same country asymmetrically.

The Vice-President of the Government of Catalonia and current President **Pere Aragones** brought the conference to a close. As a result of this event, all the regions in the Four Motors for Europe joined the Regions 4 EU Recovery initiative a few months later.

Economic mission of the Four Motors for Europe

[Cancelled]

The programme of the Catalan presidency had planned the traditional economic and institutional

mission of the Four Motors for Europe in the field of the circular economy. The aim was to do it the other way around, bringing it to Catalonia, taking advantage of the Circular Economy Hotspot Catalonia (under normal conditions, the mission is always conducted in third countries/regions). However, given the pandemic and the corresponding restrictions on mobility, it was considered more appropriate to cancel the traditional economic and institutional mission of the Four Motors for Europe.

Social transformative resilience

Primary Focus:

- **SDG 1:** End poverty
- **SDG 2:** Zero hunger
- **SDG 3:** Good health and well-being
- **SDG 4:** Quality education
- **SDG 5:** Gender equality
- **SDG 7:** Affordable and clean energy
- **SDG 11:** Sustainable cities and communities
- **SDG 16:** Peace, justice and strong institutions

The main regional challenges of European higher education

[13/10/2021] [\[Link\]](#)

The role of universities in facing European challenges

Within the framework of the 2021 European Week of Regions and Cities, the Four Motors for Europe Research and Higher Education Working Group organised the remote event **The role of universities in facing European challenges**. This was a parallel event with the 19th European Week of Regions and Cities in 2021, an annual forum for regions to coordinate policies to boost European competitiveness, whose title was “Together for recovery”.

The conference aimed to strengthen interregional cooperation and exchange experiences to find solutions to the challenges that arise in the European field of higher education and research.



Internationalisation, implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and training talent were the starting points for discussions on how universities contribute to a better prepared, resilient and empowered society to collaborate in the transformation to meet the social challenges of the post-COVID period.

The lectures were given by Uwe Brandenburg, expert in internationalisation in higher education, and Anna Panagopoulou, Director of the European Research Area and Innovation at the Research and Innovation Directorate General of the European Commission, who spoke about the European Universities Initiative. The sessions addressed challenges such as internationalisation and the key, cross-cutting role of universities in promoting the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, and in contributing to competitiveness by developing people's skills and competencies. This central role was discussed by several speakers (university vice-presidents and regional experts from the Four Motors for Europe and the associated territory of Wales) from a regional perspective, while sharing ideas on strategies to tackle them.

Reflections on the experience of tackling gender-based violence during the pandemic in the regions of the Four Motors for Europe.

[28.10.2020] [\[Link\]](#)



Women speakers during the 4ME event against gender-based violence

Event on the fight against gender-based violence, within the framework of the 2nd International Congress on the Elimination of Violence against Women organised by the Catalan Women's Institute (ICD), which hosted the event on experiences in tackling gender-based violence during the pandemic in the Four Motors for Europe regions.

A number of experts from the four regions took part: **Nuria Ramon**, Director of the ICD; **Andrea Bosch**, from the Coordination Office of the Working Group of Autonomous Women's Shelters in Baden-Wurttemberg; Professor **Anna Lorenzetti**, representative of Lombardy, and **Cecile Langeois**, Regional Deputy Director for Women's Rights and Equality in Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes.

The difficulties in working to prevent gender-based violence during the pandemic were highlighted, stressing that proactive collaboration in the four regions was vital to develop protection programmes for women affected by gender-based violence, and that the spaces for the exchange of experiences should facilitate understanding other realities and other solutions. The chance to participate in shared learning spaces was considered a highly positive experience.

Emergency management and cross-border challenges during the pandemic

[5.11.2020] [\[Link\]](#)



Speakers at the event on the management of emergencies and cross-border challenges

Event on the management of emergencies and cross-border challenges during the pandemic with the aim of analysing management of the coronavirus pandemic in the different regions of the Four Motors for Europe. At the conference, co-organised by the Catalonia Ministry for Foreign Action and Open Government and Ministry of Home Affairs, the heads of civil protection for the Generalitat de Catalunya and the regions of Baden-Wurtemberg, Lombardy and Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes described their experiences.

The participants were Sergio Delgado, Deputy Director for Civil Protection at the Catalan Ministry of Home Affairs; Nina Grozinger, from the Department of Civil Protection and Crisis Management of the Baden Wurttemberg Ministry of the Interior; and Andrea Zaccone, head of the Lombardy Civil Protection Unit. Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes apologised for their absence, as they do not have powers in this matter.

The blockage following national and regional movement restrictions was described, a situation that had forced authorities in cross-border areas to address a number of critical problems affecting the local populations, such as movement, employment and health, among others. All the regions of the Four Motors for Europe share borders with other European states and had to find a balance between civil protection and maintaining cross-border life.

The conference helped identify lessons learned and good practices by the civil protection organisations in the four regions and apply them to the second wave.

Four Motors for Europe in dialogue with citizens

[25.11.2020]



Speakers in dialogue between the 4ME and citizens

Discussion of the **Four Motors for Europe in a dialogue with citizens** to highlight the growing need to create a network that uses existing tools and allows citizen participation and open government.

The event was attended by **Ismael Pena-Lopez**, Director General for Citizen Participation and Electoral Processes; **Anna Gasquet**, manager of the European information centre, Europe Direct Drome Ardeche; **Timo Peters**, representing Baden-Wurttemberg, and **Susanna Minghetti**, Head of EU Youth and Programming Policies at the Directorate General for Sport and Youth of Lombardy.

During the debate, all the participants presented the citizen participation initiatives in their respective regions and exchanged different strategies and policies.

Also participating in the session was **Declan McDonnell**, member of the Committee of the Regions and rapporteur of the study Local and Regional Authorities in the Permanent Dialogue with Citizens, who presented the study, stating it was a mistake to limit democracy to voting and that citizens must be heard when and where they consider it necessary and on whatever topic they consider relevant.

Collaboration in the field of culture

[17.03.2021] [\[Link\]](#)



Technical meeting among cultural sector representatives

Technical meeting of the Four Motors for Europe cultural sector representatives, at the initiative of the Catalan presidency of the Four Motors for Europe. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the strategies, programmes and policies in the four regions to reactivate cultural activity during the COVID-19 crisis.

Participants shared relevant information from the regions they represent on the devastating

impact of the crisis on the sector and measures that have helped alleviate it. They also discussed recovery plans and strategies to resume cultural activities and emerge from the crisis, along with a number of proposals for cooperation within the framework of the Four Motors for Europe.

The meeting was continued at the next one on 23 November that same year. At this second meeting, the latest reports on the impact of the pandemic on the culture sector in the network's regions was discussed in greater depth and, in terms of aid policies for the sector, a degree of similarity in competencies was detected among the Four Motors for Europe. The participants also discussed strategies for returning to full post-pandemic activity and managing the EU Next Generation funds.

Real World Data Analytics

[19.04.2021] [\[Link\]](#)



Webinar on data analysis

Technical representatives from the four regions in the Four Motors for Europe participated in the webinar “**Real-world data analysis to support decision-making and public policy evaluation**”, organised by the Agency for Health Quality and Assessment of Catalonia, AQUAS, and the Catalan Ministry of Health. The main purpose of the event was to identify opportunities for collaboration between the regions in the field of reusing records from public services. The webinar also provided an opportunity to relaunch the activity of the **Health and Digital Care Working Group**.

Taking part in the event were **Maria Vivanco**, Head of the AquAS Health Technology Assessment and Healthcare Service Quality Unit; **Thomas Heine** and **Daniel Buhr** from Baden-Bürttemberg, and **Olivia Leoni** and **Marcello Melagra** as representatives of Lombardy.

During the debate, the participants compared the different policies and legal frameworks from their respective regions in terms of use of public data for further analyses and the different organisations involved, fields of action, platforms used and the main challenges they faced.

A cycle of experience exchanges among representatives of the Digital Health Working Group

[Spring 2021]

From April 20 to June 30, a series of online meetings was held between members of the Digital Health Working Group to exchange experiences regarding competencies and working methodology at each unit. Specifically, the representatives of the four government authorities presented their policies on personalised medicine, citizen empowerment and digital health literacy, and support for informal caregivers in remote work situations, among others.

From these sessions it was agreed to organise jointly a cycle of three public events on the issues, involving at least two regions per session, scheduled to take place during the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes presidency.

The experiences of the Four Motors for Europe in the field of career guidance and vocational discovery

[21.10.2021] [\[Link\]](#)



Speakers and their presentations

Online meeting between the Four Motors for Europe on **strengthening systems for professional guidance and vocational discovery**. The event was aimed at public and private figures involved in vocational training and guidance, such as: local, county and provincial government, employment offices, youth offices, youth information points, trade unions and employers' organisations, chambers of commerce and other directly related stakeholders. As well as providing an opportunity to share good practices and knowledge among the four delegations, the event served to strengthen cooperation, reinforce relations and exchange good practices among the different regions.

Alexia Malivern, Technical Advisor to the Public Agency for Vocational Training and Qualification of Catalonia, presented the vocational training systems related to career guidance and vocational discovery. **Marie-Laure Gironde**, Head of Orientation and Regional Animation, and **Philippe Laumond**, Director of Public Support and Access to Employment at the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Public Orientation Department, presented the "Le bus de l'Orientation" initiative. **Karsten Altenburg**, Head of the Vocational Training Unit at the Baden-Württemberg Ministry for Economic Affairs, Employment and Tourism, shared with the public the initiative to create vocational training ambassadors. **Brunella Reverberi**, Head of the Dual Training System and Vocational Training Development Unit of the Directorate-General for Training and

Employment, presented the "IT'S 4 future" project. Catalonia also shared its strategies and best practices in relation to vocational guidance in relation to the FPCAT fair model, presented by **Maria Pascual**, teaching advisor at the Ministry of Education Directorate General for Vocational Training; **Marta Masague**, Head of the Care and Support Services for Young People in the Youth Employment Area of Catalonia, and **Pili Carballo**, technical advisor to the Public Agency for Professional Training and Qualification of Catalonia.

Webinar on gender policies in rural and maritime areas

[25.10.2021] [\[Link\]](#)



Gender policies in rural and maritime areas

Representatives from Catalonia and Baden-Wurtemberg explained the main strategies applied in each region and provided data on the situation of women in their rural and maritime areas. The webinar was also attended by representatives from Lombardy and Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes, as well as other interested parties from all the regions.

Environmental transformative resilience

Primary Focus:

- **SDG 6:** Clean water and sanitation
- **SDG 13:** Climate action
- **SDG 14:** Life below water
- **SDG 15:** Life on land

Networking meeting on the implementation of the From Farm to Fork strategy

[27.05.2021] [\[Link\]](#)



Meeting on the implementation of the “From Farm to Fork” strategy

Working meeting with the representatives from the food sector of the government authorities in the Four Motors for Europe regions, to present their experiences in tackling implementations of the From Farm to Fork strategy and their actions to achieve their goals. The event was organised by the Catalan Government Ministry of Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda.

From Farm to Fork is a European Commission strategy that aims to build a food chain for consumers, the production sector, climate change and the environment and proposes a series of objectives to achieve sustainable food production.

The Catalan representatives, **Juan Godia** and **Isaac Salvatierra**, presented the Strategic Food Plan for Catalonia. Salvatierra explained how the Catalonia brand had been promoted in this sector, taking into account all its stakeholders and sustainability factors.

Several speakers intervened on behalf of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes: **Marie-Pierre Piel**, **Pauline Gonnet** and **Quentin Charbonnier**, as well as **Jean-Yves Couderc** on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. They all presented the French national law called EGalim, which seeks to guarantee a decent income for farmers, improve the health and environmental conditions of production, and promote safe and healthy food. They stressed that the objective of the “La Région du gout” brand is to support local agriculture and promote a sense of belonging among citizens in their region.

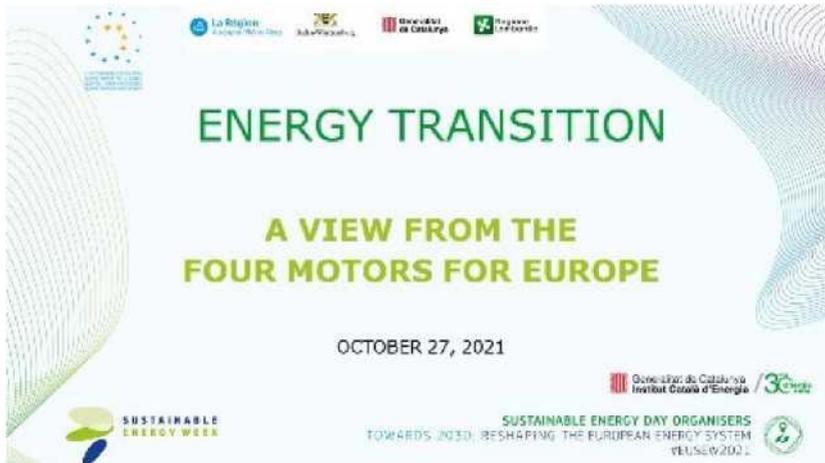
The representative from Baden-Württemberg, **Bruno Krieglstein**, presented the regional scheme on the issue, based on three main areas: regional quality, sustainability goals and the objectives of promoting EU markets. He also explained a pilot scheme aimed at digitising the process for achieving these goals.

Lucia Silvestri, representative of Lombardy, highlighted the wide diversity of high-quality regional products from Lombardy, numbering over 262. There is also a special category of mountain products that currently covers 51 varieties. As part of the From Farm to Fork strategy, Lombardy has invested in organic farming and short supply chains.

Given the synergies identified, the food sector is a field with great potential for cooperation among the Four Motors for Europe.

Sustainable Energy Day, within the framework of the EU Sustainable Energy Week under the theme “Towards 2030: Reshaping the European energy system”

[27.10.2021] [\[Link\]](#)



Event on the energy transition between the Four Motors for Europe

The event was part of the EU Sustainable Energy Week. Its main aim was to establish roadmaps for the energy transition in the Four Motors for Europe regions and to involve private companies to facilitate possible partnerships focused on the energy transition. In achieving this aim, apart from presentations of the regional energy agencies and private companies, companies in the Four Motors for Europe were invited to participate in a business meeting organised as part of the 8th Smart City Business Meeting event, from 16 to 18 November 2021.

The European Green Deal has made the goal of climate neutrality by 2050 imperative in the Four Motors for Europe regions. The Four Motors for Europe, as economic driving forces, thus expressed their full commitment to achieving these goals. The member regions have integrated the energy transition goal into their roadmaps, which were designed in line with the geostrategic, social and economic conditions of each region.

Catalonia was represented at the event by the Catalan Minister for Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda **Teresa Jorda**; the Catalan Government Secretary for Foreign Action **Gerard Figueras**; **Marta Morera**, Director of the Catalan Energy Institute (ICAEN), and the President of PIMEC **Joan Villa**. Also attending the event was **Helmfried Meinel**, Director General at the Ministry of the Environment, Climate Protection and the Energy Sector, representing Baden-Württemberg. From Lombardy, **Catherine Azzopardi**, Director of the Department of Environment and Energy, and **Gian Luca Gurrieri**, Head of the Climate and Air Quality Main Office of the Directorate General for Environment and Climate, also took part. Taking part on behalf of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes was **Ulrich Maurer**, Head of the Energy Sector and Climate Protection Department at the Ministry of the Environment.

In the discussion, which revolved around the way the regions in the Four Motors for Europe promote the energy transition, the directors of the agencies and public bodies responsible for promoting the transition presented their strategies and several companies presented their specific projects.

Business meeting on the energy transition

[03.06.2021] [\[Link\]](#)

Business meeting on energy, organised by the Catalan Institute for Research and Energy (IREC) and ACCIO, with the main aim of expanding the international network and creating consortia for the 2021 Horizon Europe subsidy applications linked to the energy transition.

The event, designed for companies, research centres and universities from the regions in the Four Motors for Europe and the associated regions of Flanders and Wales, was attended by 83 organisations, giving rise to more than 50 bilateral meetings. These followed the presentation session, during which 12 academic and private organisations presented their energy-related ideas for Horizon Europe projects.



Business meeting on energy

Forest management

[22.10.2021] [\[Link\]](#)

At the virtual event on **forest management in the regions of the Four Motors for Europe**, representatives of the environmental and agricultural sectors of the government authorities in the regions presented the new objectives in the European Strategic Plan for forest management after the expiry of the 2014-2020 Plan. Thus, the new Plan adapts to and considers new challenges produced by the effects of climate change. Some of the factors that will be taken into account at this new stage are extreme temperatures, the use of pesticides in woodland areas and the increased risk of fires.

Participation of representatives from the different regions highlighted the need to create a new plan adapted to the characteristics of forests in each region.



Different presentations during the event about forest management

It was agreed that the common general objectives for the new plan should be: making forests more sustainable spaces, preserving their biodiversity and improving opportunities for families that have a direct relationship with them.

The event provided a good opportunity for the Four Motors for Europe to exchange knowledge. Participating in it were **Enric Vadell**, the Government of Catalonia's Deputy Director General for Forests; on behalf of Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes, **Mathieu Rousset**, Unit Manager, Clermont-Ferrand Site, and **Loic Casset**, General Coordinator of the Organisation. The spokespersons for the Baden-Wurttemberg region were Dr **Hartebrodt**, Dr **Carolin Maier** and Dr **Yvonne Hengst-Ehrhart**. Participating from Lombardy were **Patrizia Digiovinazzo** and **Gherardo Fracassi**, technical experts from the region's agroforestry sector.

Each region had the opportunity to share their initiatives, political progress and lessons learned on the management and prevention of forest degradation, biodiversity conservation and rural development. In addition, the Four Motors for Europe presented the most value-added forest products that each region had recently developed and also specified where more European funds for forest conservation would be allocated in each region.

Primary Focus:

- **SDG 17:** Partnerships for the goals

Alliances

Central event of the Catalan presidency on the 2030 Agenda and the European Green Deal

[04.12.2020] [\[Link\]](#)

Central event of the Catalan presidency of the Four Motors for Europe, organised by the Government of Catalonia and the CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs): **Four Motors for Europe: how to strengthen their role in achieving the 2030 Agenda and the European Green Deal**



Institutional participants

Representatives and political leaders from the four territories in the Four Motors for Europe participated in the conference: **Alan Christian Rizzi**, Undersecretary of the Presidency of the Lombardy Region; **Yannick Neuder**, Vice-president for Higher Education, Research, Innovation and European Funds of the Government of Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes; **Theresa Schopper**, State Minister, responsible for the Political Coordination of the Government of Baden-Wurtemberg; the Government of Catalonia Minister for Foreign Action, Institutional Relations and Transparency **Bernat Sole**, and the President of the CIDOB Council **Antoni Segura**.

The first discussion panel, "Regional cooperation in the EU: how to improve the participation of the regions in the face of current global challenges", was chaired by the CIDOB researcher **Hector Sanchez Margalef**, with the participation of **Hannah Abdullah**, principal investigator at CIDOB; **Denis Cocconcelli**, director of CIRIDD (Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes); **Armando de Crinito**, Scientific Director, Deputy Director General, PoliS, from Lombardy; and **Andreas Pyka**, Chair of Innovation Economics at the University of Hohenheim, (Baden-Wurtemberg).



Academic board

The Director of the Advisory Council for Sustainable Development, **Arnau Queralt**, chaired the second panel discussion, on "The role of the regions in achieving the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda". Participating in this debate were **Cecile Bernard**, Head of the Programming

and Studies Service of the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes Government Environment and Energy Department; **Mario Nova**, Director General of Environment and Climate for the Lombardy region; **Sibylle Hepting-Hug**, Director for Policy, Sustainability, Climate Protection, Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy at the Government of Baden-Wuerttemberg Ministry of the Environment, Climate Protection and Energy Sector; and **Merce Rius Serra**, Director General for Environmental Quality and Climate Change at the Catalan Ministry of Territory and Sustainability. The Director of CIDOB **Pol Morillas** was in charge of closing the session.



Board of governmental agents

The debate addressed the impact of COVID-19 on most of the SDGs in the 2030 Agenda and the European Green Deal, and the role of the regions in achieving the SDGs. The experts exchanged experiences and best practices to provide answers that benefit European citizens and to share transformative reactivation policies for a socially inclusive economy, to guide us towards a fairer, more sustainable, more equal, more supportive and more inclusive Europe, while contributing to leaving a better planet.

With the aim of recording the network's commitments to the 2030 Agenda and the European Green Deal, an article was produced from the event, signed by the Minister for Foreign Action, Institutional Relations and Transparency on behalf of the Four Motors for Europe, and published in the press of three of the four regions: the newspapers *El Punt Avui* from Catalonia, *La Tribune* from France and *Il Sole 24* from Italy.

Revitalising the dynamics of the network - new working group and transparency

In compliance with SDG 17, during this long year of the Catalan presidency we put extra effort into promoting and strengthening collaboration within the network's working groups. Furthermore, with the aim of guaranteeing continuity in the collaboration in different sectors, already in existence for some years, we also promoted the new Working Group on Sustainable Food Systems.

New Working Group on Sustainable Food Systems

Under the impetus of the Catalan presidency, the first meeting of the Four Motors for Europe in the field of agriculture was organised for March 17, 2021. Among other aspects, the different activities planned for this specific area in the medium term were discussed, and then carried out during the second half of the presidency (the previously mentioned From Farm to Fork strategy, forest management and rural women).

For the following months, it was agreed to formalise the scope of the working group given the

intense, continuous collaboration by members in recent years in the network (such as the signing of the position on product quality in 2018). The new group is called the **Working Group on Sustainable Food Systems** and was officially presented during the transfer of the presidency to Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes.

Update of the Four Motors for Europe website

In line with the strategy for strengthening governance, signed between the four territories in 2018, specific measures were adopted to improve the network's communication and transparency:

- An article was published on the website for each relevant events and meeting during the Catalan presidency and on the initiatives by other regions, summarising their main discussion points and the acquired commitments.
- Two new sections have been added to the website:
 - Positions: a list of all the positions signed since 2010, with a brief description of each and a link to the scanned document.
 - Presidencies: another list with the description of the main objectives of the current and previous presidencies, with a link to the programme document for each.
 - Finally, we also worked to update the descriptions of each working group.
- Other featured topics
 - The event on digital training, scheduled for December 10, 2020, which included the Ministries of Digital Policies and Public Administration and Education, was postponed, since participation of the other regions could not be guaranteed.
 - The Working Group Day, an internal event to generate synergies among all the members of the working groups and improve the functioning of the network, was planned for 23 November, 2021. The decision was made to postpone the event for a few months due to anticipated low participation in some of the working groups, given the heavy workloads in all the regions.

Handover ceremony from the Catalan to the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes presidency

The event took place in Barcelona, at the Palau de la Generalitat, on 3 December 2021, attended by the political delegations from Catalonia, Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes and Lombardy, and a remote connection from Baden-Wurtemberg during the official ceremony.



Handover of the presidency from Catalonia to Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes

The Catalan delegation was headed by the Minister for Foreign Action and Open Government Victoria Alsina, who was also responsible for handing over the symbol of the presidency to the head of the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes delegation, the First Vice-President responsible for Economy, Relocation and Regional Preference Stephanie Pernod. The Undersecretary for Relations with International Delegations, Alan C. Rizzi, and the Secretary of State at the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism, Patrick Rapp, represented the delegations from Lombardy and Baden-Wurttemberg, respectively. The President of the Government of Catalonia Pere Aragonès also welcomed the delegations for a brief exchange before the central portion of the event.

In addition to the symbolic handover of the emblem of the presidency, the event provided a chance to review the state of the network, take stock of the outgoing presidency and present the main pillars of the programme for the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes presidency. The speeches by the institutional representatives were complemented by the keynote speech "Science, politics and transformative resilience" by Dr Asun Lera St. Clair, Senior Advisor at the Barcelona Supercomputing Center and member of the European Commission for Climate Change Adaptation and Societal Transformation. Two of the association's ongoing initiatives were also presented at the event: the 4ME Business Passport, headed by Roger Suarez, member of the Economics Working Group, and the creation of the new Sustainable Food Systems Working Group, headed by Carmel Modol i Bresolà, Food Secretary at the Catalan Ministry of Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda.

