

The statement delivered by H.E. Mr. Ciprian Lucian Roșca, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Romania, on the 68th session of the Economic Commission for Europe
- The Session of Statements by Heads of Delegations –

Ms. Executive Secretary,
Mr. Chair,
Your Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a special honour for me to represent Romania at the 68th session of the Economic Commission for Europe within the period of time when Romania holds its first mandate at the **European Union Council Presidency**, from January to June 2019.

Moreover, I am honoured to speak on behalf of the Romanian Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, which is the **Romanian authority on urban and territorial planning and development**, at this event that focuses on the topic of smart sustainable cities as drivers for sustainable development.

In line with the EU statement and following the ideas introduced by the previous speakers regarding the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda, as global frameworks for spatial and city development, I would like to highlight the recent progress made in regard to these frameworks adjusted to the European territory, as is the **Territorial Agenda 2020**, that envision territorial cohesion, and the **Urban Agenda for the European Union**, an important ground document in giving voice to the cities.

Last month, the Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union chaired in Bucharest, on 14th and 15th of March, the **8th European Summit of Regions and Cities**, with the theme "(Re)New Europe", that included the reunion of the European Committee of the Regions, and from the 19th to the 21st of March - the joint reunions of the **Network of Territorial Cohesion Contact Points** and the **Urban Development Group** meeting on the Urban Agenda for the European Union. The objectives of these meetings have targeted:

- the revision of the Territorial Agenda 2020, in terms of strategic scope, content and implementation mechanisms, and

- the first results reported in the implementation of the Urban Agenda for the EU, as Romania is involved in three of the Urban Agenda' partnerships (Jobs & Skills in the local economy, Urban Mobility and Digital Transition), in order to ensure a better linkage between the Urban Agenda for the EU and the Territorial Agenda post 2020 renewal process in line with the provisions of the **next Cohesion Policy 2021-2027**.

The main challenges that occur from the Territorial Agenda 2020 revision warn of the inequalities between territories and target the strengthening of the territorial dimension by strengthening the regulatory and the strategic frameworks and the multilevel governance, in order to encourage programming at the scale of functional geographies and through territorial cooperation initiatives. Accordingly, the **New Territorial Agenda** will shift from a one-off document to an on-going process.

The role of the cities and the city-regions in the territorial development is further approached by the Urban Agenda for the EU, which has been issued in 2016 by the Pact of Amsterdam but in functional connection with the **2007 Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities**.

The major outcome of the meetings chaired by Romania on the Urban Agenda for the EU is the first version the **Bucharest Declaration**, document that is going to be finalized this week, as a preparatory document of the **Strategic Agenda 2019-2024** to be outlined by the EU leaders in May this year, and will eventually be endorsed in June this year, by the meeting of the ministers responsible for urban development.

The Bucharest Declaration underlines the reassurance of the political endorsement for the further implementation of the Urban Agenda and focuses on two priorities:

1. Strengthening the democratic foundation of the European Union, and
2. Anchoring the EU's action locally to build a better future for our citizens.

Overall, the objectives stated by Romanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the realm of the urban development focus on supporting the implementation of the Urban Agenda actions (109 actions), setting up the future activities, facilitating the correlation with the update of the Leipzig Charter and the Territorial Agenda 2020 revision.

In regard to the specific case of Romania, the **Romanian Territorial Development Strategy 2035**, which is the long term vision of the national territory development, has been designed at the beginning on the principles of the Territorial Agenda 2020 regarding spatial planning and polycentric development and has been recently upgraded by including the **concept of "functional areas"/"functional urban areas"**, that was launched 2 years ago at the 17th

Session of the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning (CEMAT) held in Bucharest. Our Territorial Development Strategy is going to be approved this year by the Romanian Parliament.

Also, a recent document published by the European Commission, the **"Reflection Paper towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030"**, that inquires on the sustainable development vision post 2020 and focuses on the sectoral policies, is currently under debate in the Romanian Parliament.

Therefore, on the basis of the updated guidelines for sustainable development, Romania continues its **spatial planning reform**, in terms of legal and regulatory framework, designed to foster the local economic development and to **promote city's innovative practice toward smart and sustainable urban development**.

In this respect, I look forward to capitalizing the outcomes of the current session of the Economic Commission for Europe.

Thank you!