

Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and “Doing Less More Efficiently”



The White Paper on the Future of Europe has stimulated a deep process of reflection about the Europe we want. The work of this Task Force should be seen as part of this broader discussion and I hope our report and its recommendations will find their place in the ongoing reflections.

Today, we have 41 national Parliament chambers, 74 regional legislative assemblies, around 280 regions, and 80,000 local authorities. They are all engaged directly in applying the Union's policies on the ground. Their concerns and practical experience should be heard more systematically if we want policies that work while respecting the character and identity of our nations, regions and localities. I hope that providing a more meaningful say in how things are done will also allow our national Parliaments and local and regional authorities to be more effective ambassadors and advocates of the European Union.

Frans Timmermans, Chairman of the Task Force on Subsidiarity, Proportionality and “Doing Less More Efficiently”
Brussels, 10 July 2018.

Mandate

In the context of the debate on the future of Europe triggered by the publication of the Commission's White Paper on the Future of Europe, the President of the European Commission announced in his State of the Union Address on 13 September 2017 the creation of a Task Force on Scenario 4 – “Doing Less More Efficiently”. In this scenario, the Union would focus its attention and limited resources on a reduced number of areas, to be able to act quickly and decisively in these chosen priority fields.

The Task Force was established on the 14 November 2017 under the chairmanship of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans and comprised three members from the Committee of the Regions, including its President, Karl-Heinz Lambertz, and three members from national Parliaments, coming from Austria, Bulgaria and Estonia. The European Parliament was also invited to nominate three members but did not do so. Task Force members were appointed in a personal capacity.

The mandate of the Task Force comprised three tasks:

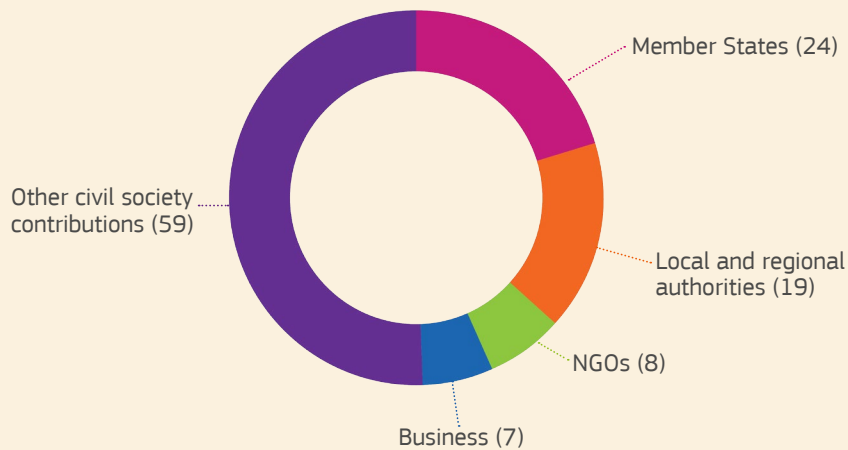
1. How to better apply the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality in the work of the Union's Institutions, notably regarding the preparation and implementation of Union legislation and policies.
2. The identification of any policy areas where, over time, decision making and/or implementation could be re-delegated in whole or in part or definitively returned to the Member States.
3. The identification of ways to better involve regional and local authorities in the preparation and the follow up of Union policies.

How the Task Force worked

The Task Force met **seven times** to discuss the three tasks presented by President Juncker in his decision establishing the Task Force. On the basis of **those discussions, a public hearing and the inputs provided by numerous stakeholders**, the Task Force reached several broad conclusions and presented nine recommendations in

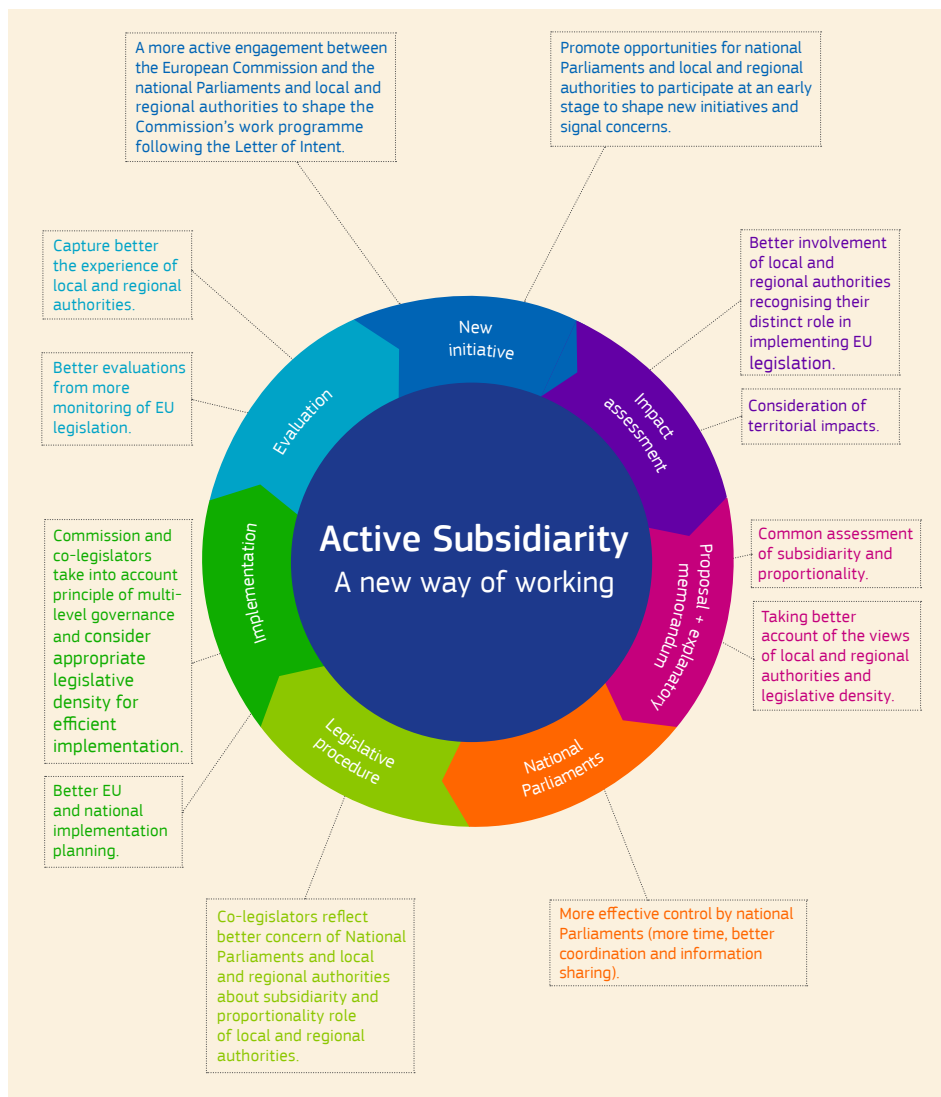
its final report, together with concrete actions addressed to national Parliaments, national, regional and local authorities, the European Parliament, the Council, the European Committee of the Regions and the European Commission.

Number and origin of the contributions received by the Task Force



The Task Force Conclusions

- The Union needs to address important emerging challenges, such as security, defence and migration, and to intensify its actions in other areas such as climate change and innovation. Given that this has to be done against a background of limited resources, there is a clear need at European level to prioritise activities and to use available resources more efficiently.
- A new way of working is necessary to improve the current policymaking processes and to allow the Union to use its resources more efficiently. This will allow local and regional authorities and national Parliaments to make a more effective contribution to policymaking, to the design of new legislation and to ensuring respect for the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.
- This new way of working requires a common understanding of subsidiarity and proportionality and a greater participation of all stakeholders and particularly national, local and regional authorities who often have a specific role in implementing Union legislation on the ground. Such "active subsidiarity" should promote greater ownership and understanding of what the Union does by those involved.
- A 'model grid' should be used to assess subsidiarity and proportionality more consistently across the European Commission, the national and regional Parliaments, the European Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament and the Council throughout the decision-making process.
- The new approach should be applied to the existing body of Union legislation and to new political initiatives, building on the Commission's existing approach to simplifying legislation. The Task Force decided to highlight the input from numerous stakeholders as a way for kick-starting a more rigorous reflection on which pieces of legislation might be relevant for an evaluation from the perspectives of subsidiarity, proportionality, the role of local and regional authorities and legislative density, with the possibility of reviewing or repealing legislation if and when appropriate.
- As there is EU value added in all these areas of activity, there are no competences or policy areas that should be re-delegated definitively, in whole or in part, to the Member States.



Action by the European Union is governed by the **principles of subsidiarity and proportionality**, and the EU institutions have a specific obligation to ensure respect for the two principles.

Subsidiarity means that the Union should act only where the envisaged objectives cannot be achieved sufficiently by the Member States acting alone (centrally or at regional or local levels) but can be better achieved at Union level because of the scale or effects of the proposed action.

Proportionality means that the content and form of European Union action shall not exceed what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties.

The full text of the report on the Task Force can be found at:

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/files/report-task-force-subsidiarity-proportionality-and-doing-less-more-efficiently_en