

# CONCLUSIONS OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE “ATHENS CHARTER”

Athens, 4 May 2018 – Brussels, 8 October 2018

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## §1

Aware of the challenges that the European Union faces and of the need to develop solutions that meet the needs of citizens, always with a view to achieve greater economic, social and territorial cohesion, and on the initiative of the EGTCs AMPHICTYONY and EFXINI POLI, with headquarters in Greece, representatives of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation<sup>1</sup> met on 8 October 2018 in Brussels to agree on these conclusions.

## §2

These conclusions come as a follow-up to their meeting in Athens in May of 2018, which took place in the context of the open consultation on the White Paper for the future of Europe, also taking into account the positions of the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, as these were formulated on 13 September 2017 before the plenary session of the European Parliament.

## §3

These representatives have concluded that:

- in order to tackle the present challenges for the European Union, such as the re-emergence of exaggerated nationalism and the rise of voices of polarisation and intolerance, the largest and deepest possible participation of all European citizens in the European integration process, which is the most important endeavour for Europe that began with the signing of the Treaties of Rome in 1957, is indispensable;
- the EGTCs are a flagship tool of multi-level cooperation in the hands of the local communities and closest to the citizens for the promotion of interregional, cross-border and transnational cooperation;
- the EGTCs have a crucial role in consolidating civic awareness and using Europe's diversity as a driving force to tap into the strengths of our regions;
- the EGTCs form part of the European commitment to build our common home over and above any divisions based on any ethnic, social, cultural, economic and religious origin;
- the promotion of European values such as the respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality, solidarity, peace and security and the rule of law, and the experience of the European Union's sixty-year history will help us remain strong, united and solidary in face of current and future challenges;
- the European Union and the Member States must remain fully committed towards the EGTCs, including through the provision of appropriate legal, administrative and financial support to enable them to fulfil their role of contributing to the further integration of our continent.

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<sup>1</sup> The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was established on 5 July 2006 by the Regulation (EC) 1082/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council and came into force on 1 August 2006. Today, there are 72 EGTCs established in 20 EU member states and 4 non-member states.