



**Local & Regional
Europe**

CEMR 2016 Work Programme Proposal

November 2015

2016 CEMR Work Programme Proposal

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Introduction

2016 will be marked by the next edition of CEMR's **Congress of European Municipalities and Regions**, scheduled on 20-22 April 2016 in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Under the title "*Tomorrow starts today! A Local & Regional Vision of Europe 2030*", participants will have the chance to meet, learn and get inspired from peers and partners in insightful and forward-looking conversations on some of the most pressing challenges for Europe and for its local and regional governments from today to 2030.

Up to 1000 participants are expected to participate in the 30 different sessions, clustered in 7 different themes: governance & leadership; economy & finances, environment, climate & energy; society & culture; cooperation and partnerships; business, technology & innovation; and EU integration. A **Local and Regional Vision of Europe 2030** will be adopted as outcome of the Congress and will feed the general debate on the Future of Europe.

Beyond the Congress, 2016 will be a year to strengthen and **consolidate** the achievements and results booked in 2015.

Overall, we will continue promoting CEMR towards the European institutions as **strategic partner** and raise our profile as the broadest European organisation representing local and regional governments. To this end, we will continue our exchange with the European Commission, in particular the Directorates General whose work has a direct impact on local public policy and governance, as well as with Members of the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions.

Our **lobbying** efforts will continue to target EU policy initiatives, including the Better Regulation Package and the Circular Economy Package, as well as programmes that enhance the capacity of local and regional governments to deal with ongoing challenges – climate, refugee crisis, radicalisation, financial and economic challenges, etc.

Our **projects** will be delivering interesting results that will feed our lobbying activities, while the exchange of the practices and experiences will strengthen collaboration schemes within the organisation. In particular, the first activities foreseen in the strategic partnership between CEMR-PLATFORMA and DG DEVCO-EuropeAid will be implemented while the new Covenant of Mayors, and CEMR's contribution, will become broader in scope and reinforce our leadership on climate-related initiatives.

Last but not least, CEMR's **statutory bodies** will be completely renewed – President, Co-Presidents, Executive Presidents, Vice-Presidents and a full Policy Committee will be appointed in 2016.

1. GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRACY & CITIZENSHIP

1.1. REFUGEES CRISIS, MIGRATION AND DIVERSITY

Following the recent events with respect to the **refugee crisis** and the high inflows of asylum seekers that have arrived in Europe, the local and regional response to this crisis will be one of the top priorities for CEMR in 2016. Local and regional governments are at the forefront when it comes to providing a prompt and effective response to this humanitarian challenge, as well as being responsible for providing basic services, such as healthcare or housing in hotspots, and transit and final destination areas.

More concretely, CEMR will continue assessing **funding opportunities at EU level**, while advocating a better inclusion of local and regional government in the **design, implementation and evaluation** of the different programmes available such as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund or the European Social Fund, in order to better respond to the refugee crisis.

As responsibilities are spread between different tiers of government, which results in the necessity to establish true partnerships, CEMR will continue helping local and regional authorities and our associations to better coordinate with national and European authorities.

In addition, we will push for better involvement of local and regional governments in EU and national decision-making processes, through the existing structures, such as the European Migration Network National Contact Points (EMN NCP), the European Migration Forum and other bodies.

CEMR will explore the possibility of preparing a **project** funded by the EU through which we would develop a **guide** on how to respond to the crisis, as well as how to better integrate refugees in the mid to long term. This will allow us to have a better exchange of best practices among members, for instance through peer reviews, and to come up with a comprehensive, but tailor-made strategy for transit, final destination and “first arrival” municipalities, as well as to work on **capacity building**. We could also discuss the fight against **radicalisation** from a local and regional perspective.

1.2. BETTER REGULATION

CEMR will follow-up the outcomes of the negotiations on the **Better Regulation Package**; we will move towards the **lobbying phase**, making sure that our voice and views are taken into account by the EU institutions. In addition, CEMR will continue its efforts at improving the legislative process at EU level, monitoring relevant existing and new legislation (REFIT), so as to ensure that it is not a burden for local and regional authorities.

Where possible, CEMR will work in partnership with the European institutions to ensure that proper **consultations and territorial impact assessments** take place, and continue our efforts to be represented in relevant expert groups and strategic dialogues of the European Commission and other European institutions.

We will also continue influencing the application of the **Inter-Institutional Agreement on Transparency**, in particular the rules on the **Transparency Register**, and in this endeavour aim to exempt national associations of local governments from the obligation to register.

CEMR will assess how to make **trilogues** more transparent and follow up the outcomes of the “Transparency, Accountability and Integrity in the EU institutions” report of the European Parliament. CEMR will also monitor a potential **Treaty Reform** from a local and regional perspective, in order to defend an appropriate role for local and regional governments within a future treaty change, as well as to clarify and re-define the **subsidiarity principle**.

1.3. LOCAL FINANCES, GOVERNANCE & DECENTRALISATION

CEMR will continue following up the evolution of Europe’s **local and regional government finances** and in particular raising awareness on the impact of European regulations on local public investment. In order to provide evidence to our position, we intend to gather data and to analyse the development of local finances in Europe in the last years by updating the CEMR-Dexia study on sub-national public finances from 2012.

CEMR will also update the local governments’ structures and competences publication from 2011. Given the latest developments on **territorial reforms** in many European countries, we will monitor and start updating our knowledge and building our evidence-based expertise on the situation of decentralisation in Europe. We will assess recent recentralisation, decentralisation and especially, **regionalisation and metropolisation** trends in Europe in cooperation with the Council of Europe, in particular the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the European Committee on Governance and Democracy (CDDG) and NALAS.

On a general basis, CEMR will continue to work with Congress of Local and Regional authorities of the Council of Europe, and aim to strengthen our role monitoring the European Charter on local-self-government of the Council of Europe. As an observer, CEMR will also continue collaborating with the **European Committee on Democracy and Governance** of the Council of Europe.

Finally, CEMR will continue working together with researchers and academics on the varying aspects of local government and administration in Europe, in order to strengthen our evidence-based approach, both for our advocacy and knowledge exchange pillars.

1.4. CITIZENSHIP & TWINNING

We will monitor the implementation of the **Europe for Citizens programme** and support local and regional authorities in designing useful and interesting projects. We will continue reinforcing our role as a partner of the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and DG Home Affairs of the European Commission in order to promote citizens exchanges and **town-twinning** as the main *raison d’être* of the programme.

In this respect, CEMR will continue strengthening its position as the main promoter of town-twinning in Europe and the platform of reference on European town-twinning knowledge exchange. The CEMR www.twinning.org website will be improved.

CEMR will also consolidate the work of the Committee of **Young European Leaders for Active Citizenship** and work for a better involvement of young generations in politics and public life. Core themes and objectives in 2016 are the fight against youth unemployment, enhancing education and mobility as well as youth participation in the democratic life.

We will start exploring how to reinforce new forms of **citizen participation** through **e-democracy** tools and other innovative forms of active citizenship such as **open data**, **participative budgeting**, etc. Last but not least, CEMR may also follow developments in the field of fundamental rights and comparative citizenship at the local level.

1.5. GENDER EQUALITY

CEMR will continue to advocate gender equality as an essential issue at European, national, regional and local level. We will foster our role as a promoter for gender equality by strengthening our dialogue with the European institutions and other relevant organisations. We will also continue to **monitor the work of European institutions** both in regard to specific policies and programmes on gender equality but also by monitoring the gender aspect of policies in other areas such as economic growth and employment, social and environmental sustainability and in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals. Following its publication, CEMR will assess the European post-2015 equality strategy on its relevance for local and regional governments.

Following the work with the **Observatory** and the **Pilot project on developing indicators**, CEMR will continue to monitor and promote the implementation of the European Charter for Equality and disseminate and promote our recently developed toolkit with indicators. To ensure sustainability of this work, CEMR will search for additional funding to continue these activities in 2016.

Moreover, CEMR will celebrate the **10th anniversary of the European Charter for Equality** in 2016 and take this as a momentum to launch a new strategic approach for signatories of the Charter. The Observatory website www.charter-equality.eu will remain a platform for exchange providing information and tools to support local and regional authorities in their work on gender equality.

Finally, CEMR will also continue its work with the **Standing Committee for Equality of women and men in local life** and strengthening its role as a forum for exchange of experiences. The main objectives for the next two years will be to increase awareness on gender equality among CEMR member associations and elected representatives, and to contribute to the development of gender equality at global level.

2. ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE & ENERGY

2.1. AIR, WASTE & CIRCULAR ECONOMY

In 2016, CEMR will continue its lobbying activities on the legislative proposals related to **air quality and waste**, as the latter have a direct impact on local and regional environmental policies. CEMR will continue monitoring the Clean Air Policy Package proposed by the European Commission (which could substantially help municipalities and regions improving local air quality). CEMR will lobby the EU legislators in 2016 in order to ensure that the proposed level of ambition will not be lowered.

The European Parliament and the Council of Ministers will also take position on the **Circular Economy Package**. CEMR will actively promote its updated position due in the first quarter, to ensure the appropriate level of ambition, that suitable targets are acceptable for local and regional government and that the local dimension is sufficiently taken into account before any new legislation is proposed. At the same time, we will strive to convince European decision-makers to set waste-related targets (e.g. municipal waste recycling target, targets for landfill ban, etc.), which could be realistically achieved by municipalities.

2.2. ENERGY & CLIMATE

The Heads of State and Government decided on the objectives of the EU **energy and climate policy** by 2030 ahead of COP21. With the new Covenant 2030 and the new climate agreement, the new goals have to be implemented and to be translated into concrete actions in 2016. CEMR will push to ensure that local and regional authorities continue their involvement in the implementation of these policies at national level, through the new governance system to be developed by the Commission. At the request of the expert group on climate and energy transition, we will also continue organising exchanges of experience and information between our members on innovative financing solutions to implement ambitious energy and climate policies at local and regional level.

Furthermore, CEMR will pursue its involvement in the **new Covenant 2030** adopted last October. This will include further cooperation with the European Commission's services to organise high-level events and to insert a local and regional dimension in their various initiatives. In addition, we will organise a series of events at national and European level aiming at promoting this new Covenant, capacity-building of Covenant stakeholders and raising awareness about financing possibilities. Developing synergies with other EU initiatives and cooperating with networks of local and regional authorities involved in the Covenant will also count among our core activities. CEMR will support the implementation of the Covenant of Mayors in Africa and support municipalities and associations from the neighbouring countries in the South East and the Balkans

Following the outcome of the public consultation on the **energy performance in buildings directive** and depending on the European Commission's proposal for a recast of the directive, CEMR will prepare and advocate for its position.

In preparation of the **COP22** in Morocco in December 2016 (UNFCCC Conference of the Parties), CEMR will also play a key role: the coordination of the voice of European local and regional governments. CEMR will continue to lobby for the presence of local and regional governments (LRGs) and their national and European associations in the European delegations, during the negotiation process. CEMR will cooperate as the European umbrella organisation in the Climate Summit of LRGs together with UCLG/ICLEI/C40/Climate Group and other relevant networks. In addition, CEMR will continue finding valuable complementarity between European and international initiatives in the field of climate and energy, notably between the World Compact of Mayors and the European Covenant of Mayors, and lobby to ensure that adequate means are allocated in the future to finance climate action in municipalities, cities and regions.

Pursuing its commitment in the framework of the **Mayors Adapt** initiative, now integrated in the new Covenant of Mayors as its "Adaptation Pillar", CEMR will be engaged in the continuous mobilisation of local authorities throughout Europe to get at least 200 adhesions by the end of the current contract. This will include the organisation of an awareness raising seminar at our Congress in Nicosia, but also the progressive involvement of CEMR members to encourage their active contribution in the mobilisation and dissemination activities for the new initiative.

In the CITYnvest project, we will continue facilitating the exchange of information on **innovative financing models for energy efficiency renovations in public buildings**, mainly via its website but also through seminars in Latvia, Lithuania and a third country. Those events will be organised in cooperation with CEMR members from those countries.

3. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION

3.1. URBAN AGENDA

The development of the **EU Urban Agenda** remains a priority for CEMR and we will use our position paper to advocate an Urban Agenda that comprises small and medium-sized towns, as well as local governments in functional areas (rural-urban partnerships, sub-regional cooperation, etc.). The expert group will follow closely the next steps of the **pilot's partnerships** development that will be launched and in which CEMR will be involved through municipalities of our member associations. We intend to participate in the pilot partnership on urban poverty, which will be led by France and Belgium, and supported by Germany, the United Kingdom, Greece, Spain, Poland and UN-Habitat.

The expert group will follow the preparation of the **Habitat III** Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, foreseen in Quito (Ecuador) in October 2016. CEMR, as member of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for Post-2015 Agenda towards Habitat III can provide input and influence the development of the new global Urban Agenda. We will emphasise the links of the EU Urban Agenda with Habitat III in order to have an EU Urban Agenda aligned with Habitat III objectives. CEMR together with the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic is organising a seminar in Prague (17-19 March 2016) during the European regional meeting of Habitat III, and also plans to organise a seminar with the Urban intergroup of the European Parliament on the Habitat III negotiations before the **Habitat III Regional Meeting Europe**.

3.2. TERRITORIAL COHESION & FUTURE OF COHESION POLICY

Integrated territorial development remains one of the core topics for the CEMR in the area of economic, social and territorial cohesion. The expert group will therefore follow those topics related to urban-rural interrelations, cooperation between municipalities and the future rural development agenda.

We will also continue to cooperate closely with the **URBAN intergroup** of the European Parliament, and are planning a specific meeting on the refugee crisis in spring. We will also strengthen our collaboration with the **RUMRA intergroup** (Rural, Mountainous and Remote Areas).

The reflections about the **future of the EU cohesion policy** will start soon; therefore the expert group will begin its work to formulate CEMR's position. Based on the outcome of the previous negotiations and in consideration of the experience of the current funding period, CEMR will advocate a more harmonised and integrated approach of the EU cohesion funds that gives more flexibility to local and regional authorities.

The expert group will continue its work on **simplification** and cutting red tape in the European Structure and Investment Funds that started with the contribution to the public hearing in the European Parliament in October 2015.

CEMR will position itself in the mid-term review of the multiannual financial framework (MFF), which will review the EU's budget and expenditure in relation to its effectiveness and political priorities. This is linked to the preparations for the **Post-2020 reflections**, taking into account the results of the consultation on the Europe 2020 strategy. The proposals to review the strategy are expected to be presented before the end of 2015. CEMR will pro-actively propose new orientations through a position, analyse the proposals of the Commission and prepare a specific lobbying plan.

We will also follow the **territorial reforms** that are taking place in different countries such as Sweden, France or Estonia and will look at their impact on the implementation of cohesion funds. We will continue our discussions on the **financial instruments** for local and regional governments and the innovative financing tools to tackle main financing problems of local and regional authorities. For both topics, the expert group will closely work with CEMR research and studies section and the expert group on local finances.

In collaboration with OLA, the Comenius University, and the Slovakian member association of CEMR, we will organise a symposium in Bratislava on "the Impact of Regionalisation, Inter-municipal Cooperation and Metropolisation on Local, Regional, and National Governments in Europe" end of June.

CEMR's work in the area of cohesion may look more closely at the issues of **social cohesion** and **poverty and inequality** at local and regional level. The financial pressure on local and regional governments has an impact on the quality and quantity of services and support that they can provide to their citizens. An exchange of experience on the valorisation of the measures funded by the European Social Fund at local and regional level could be organised as a first step and to discuss further actions.

The humanitarian crisis caused by the inflows of hundreds of thousands of **refugees** in Europe is a major challenge for local governments. Emergency measures and long-term efforts to ensure the integration of migrants need to be followed and well-monitored, in order to facilitate the social inclusion (see above). We will continue working on **demographic change** through the thematic network on **Age Friendly Environments** and our contribution to the Societal Advisory Board of the Joint Programming Initiative 'More Years Better Life'. The issue of migration will be addressed in a 'fast track' project due to the relevance of the topic, and two workshops are planned, one on 'wellbeing in later life' and one on 'demography'. Furthermore, the third call on 'place, technology and learning' will be prepared.

4. LOCAL AND REGIONAL PUBLIC SERVICES MANAGEMENT

4.1. LRGs AS EMPLOYERS

The activities of the expert group on local and regional governments as employers are mainly steered by the implementation of the **Work Programme 2015-2017 of the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee on Local and Regional Governments**. In the perspective of the Gender Equality Strategy post-2015 to be announced by the European Commission, CEMR and EPSU have decided to make more operational and promote their Guidelines on Gender Equality, notably in line with the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life and the development of indicators for its implementation.

In the context of the CEMR-EPSU Joint Project 2015-2016 "**New forms of service delivery for municipalities, the contribution of social dialogue and good practice for well-being at work**", CEMR will organise 3 seminars on burning issues: 1) Global challenges: climate change, energy transition, migrate on and their impact on municipalities and citizens (migration), 2) Recruitment of young workers and retention of older workers in local public services: developing new skills and life-long learning (recruitment and retention of workers); 3) Contribution of social dialogue to support well-being and health and safety at work in local public services (well-being and health and safety at work). A film will be produced to report the incurred activities, along with a comprehensive report of the exchanges and key demands to be addressed to the European Commission, after the Final Conference of the project to be held at this end of the year.

In another vein, CEMR will monitor European initiatives dealing with **labour market aspects and the impact on public services and their delivery of the refugees' crisis**, notably in the frame of the upcoming Better **Migration Management** initiative. Even if it is too soon to assess their implementation and accuracy, CEMR will harness the **Guidelines for Migration and Strengthening Anti-Discrimination in Local and Regional Governments** adopted in 2014 to tackle these issues and particularly the objective set to enhance the capacity of local and regional government and their employees who have the primary and frontline responsibility of carrying out these tasks of welcoming and integration.

CEMR will closely look at the initiatives and participate in the activities launched by the European Commission in the frame of the **restart of social dialogue** after the high-level summit in 2015. Furthermore, due to its expected impact on the work organisation, CEMR will monitor any potential initiative related to the **working time directive**; however, it is unlikely that the European Commission will make a move in this area. Nevertheless, the European Court of Justice will most likely enrich the case law related to working time, which will require careful attention from CEMR. This work will be enshrined in the monitoring and advocating process expected on the forthcoming initiative on '**New start for working parents**', linked to the improvement of reconciliation and work-life balance.

CEMR will particularly monitor the initiatives from the European Commission related to the **Pillar of Social Rights** (aiming at identifying common principles and reference benchmarks for a greater convergence of employment and social performance over time) and to the **New Skills Agenda for Europe**.

CEMR will also monitor a potential Commission initiative on the Directive for **Information and Consultation Rights of Workers**, which would include public sector in the scope in the same way as private employers, to the detriment of local and regional governments.

As it has been identified by CEMR, the **new forms of works and occupational health and safety** will push CEMR involvement in all initiatives of the European Commission on these new trends, in order to strike the right balance between the necessary flexibility of work organisation and well-being at work.

On a longer-term perspective, CEMR will continue its contacts and cooperation with **CEEP** and its involvement in the **Public Services' Employers Forum's** (PSEF) activities, mobilising both expert groups on LRGs as employers and the expert group on public services.

4.2. PUBLIC SERVICES

The EC is leading strategic negotiations on two major trade agreements which will impact public services in the EU: the **Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, TTIP**, and the **Trade in Services Agreement, TiSA**.

The negotiations on TTIP are quite advanced and CEMR will continue monitoring the discussions, notably through the TTIP Stakeholders Panel in which our organisation has been invited to participate. The preliminary works on TiSA are under way. Its geographic (24 parties including the EU-28 Member-States) and legal scope (all services as defined by the World Trade Organisation by principle) may require CEMR to closely examine the impact on local and regional authorities and their public services, and engage with the EU institutions to make sure LRGs' interests are duly preserved.

CEMR is aware that the transposition and implementation processes of the Directives on public procurement and concessions will be accompanied by further initiatives from the European Commission, such as the **European Single Procurement Document, e-Procurement** (in the frame of the REFIT initiative on Standard Procurement Document and Standard Forms for Public Procurement), and probably a revision of the **Remedies Directive**, following the public consultation in 2015.

Recently in several state aid decisions, the European Commission has sent some positive signals regarding the interpretation of the State aids rules and the flexibility of the examination of public subsidies' conformity with internal market rules. The Commission will review the **Almunia Package on State Aid and Services of General Economic Interest** to simplify the **State Aid rules**. In that perspective, CEMR will concentrate its efforts to make sure the updated rules will be more suitable to local and regional authorities' needs. Furthermore, a specific **study on Social Services of General Interest** will be conducted in the context of a research project in collaboration with OLA.

Clearly identified as a strategic partner by the **Intergroup on Public Services and Common Goods** of the European Parliament, CEMR will actively join in its activities and working structures, on the numerous issues that will require a proactive approach depending on legislative initiatives and identification of needs.

Depending on the proposals to be published by the Commission, CEMR will assess any legislative developments and engage with relevant stakeholders on further issues of interest, such as the **VAT legislation on public bodies** or **tax exemptions in the public interest**. We will also examine the Commission's proposals to upgrade the Single Market in relation to their impact on local and regional governments.

4.3. ICT AND E-GOVERNMENT

The forthcoming developments of the **Digital Single Market Strategy** will retain CEMR's attention on the monitoring of the European Commission's initiatives which will have a significant impact on the public sector by smartly digitalising the ways of working, the delivery of public services and the relations with citizens. The expert group on ICT and e-government has led a survey among its members in order to identify the key topics of interest and will use the outcomes of this inquiry to focus its works on strategic initiatives to be launched along with answering the relevant public consultations to be launched by the European Commission.

In accordance with its decision to accompany the EC efforts to support the exchanges of good practices across the EU, CEMR will continue its cooperation with the **Stakeholders Unit of DG CONNECT** on issues such as e-government practices and tools, deployment of broadband infrastructures and related services, European Interoperability framework.

Another issue on the agenda may be the continuation of the negotiations on the **Data Protection Regulation**, and the future steps. The task force on data protection will follow up its actions towards the EU institutions in line with its activities in 2015.

Overall, CEMR will contribute to the reflections on the implementation of the **Digital Agenda**, depending on the initiatives linked to this horizontal priority of the European Commission.

5. INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT & COOPERATION

5.1. UNITED CITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (UCLG)

CEMR will continue to play its **coordination role as European section** of the world organisation United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and in particular engage in two major events: the Habitat III Conference (see above) and UCLG's next Congress.

Following the adoption of the SDGs, the United Nations (UN) will produce a new Global Urban Agenda at the **Habitat III Conference** in Quito. This will allow us to ensure the link between the European and global urban agenda and promote our model of local development at the international level. Through the Conference, we want to ensure that local democracy serves local development in emerging economies and promote a code of conduct between different tiers of governance to be adopted by the UN.

The **Congress of UCLG** will be the occasion of the renewal of the Presidency of the world organisation. CEMR will ensure that the next President of the organisation supports the values of the international municipal movement and ensure a smooth renewal of the European section in the statutory organs.

5.2. CEMR-PLATFORMA

Beyond the contribution to the world organisation, CEMR will continue to lead **PLATFORMA** and contribute to the implementation of the strategic partnership signed in 2015 with DG DEVCO, and the 4 objectives it entails: policy dialogue, awareness raising, mobilisation of EU expertise towards development outcomes in EU partner countries and the institutional strengthening of the network.

- **POLICY DIALOGUE**

Following the adoption of the **Sustainable Development Goals**, the conclusion of the Addis Ababa conference and the COP21, the European Union will revise the EU development cooperation policy. A public consultation will be launched end of 2015/beginning of 2016 and will lead to the adoption of a new policy later in 2016. PLATFORMA will coordinate local and regional governments' response to the consultation and ensure that our vision is reflected in the new Communication.

A consultation of the **revised Cotonou agreement** is currently taking place until December 2015 and further work - at the Commission, Member States and Parliament level - will be taking place early on in 2016.

PLATFORMA will also support the effort of the **Global Taskforce** in the run-up of the Habitat III conference and will influence the European Union's position in the process.

PLATFORMA will continue playing a key role in the **Policy Forum on Development**, which mandate will be revised and renewed in 2016.

PLATFORMA will also aim at bringing local and regional governments in the EU institutions **key events** on development cooperation, such as the European Development Days.

- **AWARENESS RAISING**

PLATFORMA will implement a **pan-European campaign** to promote the role of local and regional governments in development and in development cooperation towards which will contribute to greater awareness of European citizens of global challenges, the role of LRGs in tackling those and the impact of decentralised cooperation. In close cooperation with several members, PLATFORMA will celebrate in 2016 a one-day event, across European territories, promoting cooperation by LRGs. This will be replicated in 2017 and hopefully institutionalised beyond the Strategic Partnership period.

- **MOBILISATION OF EU EXPERTISE**

One of the key activities under this component for 2016 will be the development of a support facility, currently called “**delivery mechanism**”, which will enable efficient and rapid match making between needs of specific expertise in the partner countries’ LRGs and the expertise of EU LRGs. The mechanism should be operational in September 2016.

The programme will also support the capacity of national associations in **Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine**.

- **INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING**

A strategic reflection will be led by the Secretariat of PLATFORMA and will associate all the members of the network; this will lead to a revision of the mission statement of the network and of the multiannual strategy.

6. COMMUNICATION & GENERAL AFFAIRS

6.1. PRESS & COMMUNICATION

CEMR will undertake the creation of an **electronic contact database** that will ensure a larger coverage and a greater range of messages to various public targets.

The press and communication team will ensure the visibility of CEMR’s activities and outcomes throughout the year. Special attention will also be given to the Congress 2016 taking place in Nicosia from 20 to 22 April (see below).

CEMR will also publish a series of new **publications**, including “Structures and competences - Local and Regional Government in Europe” and a report of activities.

Last but not least, CEMR will launch its new **extranet** tool.

6.2. GENERAL AFFAIRS

2016 will be marked by the next edition of CEMR’s **Congress of European Municipalities and Regions**, scheduled on 20-22 April 2016 in Nicosia, Cyprus.

Under the title “*Tomorrow starts today! A Local & Regional Vision of Europe 2030*”, participants will have the chance to meet, learn and get inspired from peers and partners in insightful and forward-looking conversations on some of the most pressing challenges for Europe and for its local and regional governments from today to 2030.

Up to 1000 participants are expected to participate in the 30 different sessions, clustered in 7 different themes: governance & leadership; economy & finances, environment, climate & energy; society & culture; cooperation and partnerships; business, technology & innovation; and EU integration. A **Local and Regional Vision of Europe 2030** will be adopted as outcome of the Congress and will feed the general debate on the Future of Europe.

Aside from the Congress, CEMR's **statutory bodies** will be completely renewed at the end of the year – President, Co-Presidents, Executive Presidents, Vice-Presidents and a full Policy Committee will be appointed in 2016.



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About CEMR

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the broadest organisation of local and regional authorities in Europe. Its members are over 50 national associations of municipalities and regions from 40 European countries. Together these associations represent some 150 000 local and regional authorities.

CEMR's objectives are twofold: to influence European legislation on behalf of local and regional authorities and to provide a platform for exchange between its members associations and their elected officials and experts.

Moreover, CEMR is the European section of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the worldwide organisation of local government.

www.ccre.org