



Local & Regional
Europe

Newsletter

January and February 2014

Dear colleagues,

I am pleased to announce the official launch of the local and regional governments' manifesto in view of the upcoming European parliamentary elections in May 2014. This document, adopted by our Policy Committee in Prague, presents nine key messages to consolidate cooperation between local and regional governments and the European institutions over the next five years.



Our manifesto was first made public on 10 February 2014 at a meeting with members of the European Parliament. Hosted by CEMR's Executive President, Oldřich Vlasák, this event gave us the chance to reiterate the messages contained in the manifesto and gave your elected representatives the opportunity to express their current and future expectations regarding the next legislative term.

I invite all of you to disseminate this manifesto as widely as possible, along with its introductory video, both of which are available in several languages from CEMR's website. It is our joint campaign – to help drive EU policy that matters for local and regional government. Come and join us in the debate through our website materials⁽ⁱ⁾, twitter account (@ccre-cemr) and dedicated hashtag #myEUvoice.

In the last two months, we have also devoted a lot of attention to another topical issue: that of urban development. The European Commission is planning to strengthen the urban dimension in European policies, notably by way of a "European Urban Agenda". We commend of course the Commission's willingness to give greater weight to the local level but also wish to advocate in favour of the interdependencies between cities and their surrounding areas being taken into account. To this end, we organised a seminar which was attended by several of our elected representatives, including the President of CEMR, and the European Commissioner for Regional and Urban Policy, Johannes Hahn. More detailed information is available on our website as well as in this newsletter.

Lastly, I would like to personally welcome the new Coordinator of PLATFORMA, Swati Sain Gupta, as well as Andrea Accorigi, who is working on the Covenant of Mayors.

I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter.

*Frédéric Vallier,
Secretary General of CEMR*

Monthly Highlights

Renovation of Public Buildings

Local and regional authorities are not obliged to carry out renovations of 3% of the surface areas of public buildings

As a result of our successful lobbying efforts, only the central governments of Member States are required, since the 1st of January 2014 when the new directive entered into force, to undertake renovations of 3% of the surface areas of their public buildings each year. Local and regional governments are free to adopt whichever measures are best suited to them in order to reach the goal of a 20% reduction in energy consumption by 2020. CEMR and its member associations have long sought to ensure that the European Commission's energy efficiency objectives offer greater flexibility to the municipalities and regions. ⓘ Contact: andrea.accorigi@ccre-cemr.org

Public Procurement

New EU rules in line with local and regional interests

We welcome the adoption of the new public procurement directives by the European Parliament. Following a long-term endeavour carried out by CEMR and its associations, substantial modifications in favour of local authorities were introduced. They include the possibility for public authorities to make savings by sharing services without conducting tender procedures, and to keep the possibility to award a contract based on the award criterion of "the lowest price". ⓘ Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@ccre-cemr.org.

State Aid

We deplore that the European Commission does not sufficiently take into account the role of regional airports in economic development

According to the new guidelines approved by the European Commission, for the next five years, airports which serve 700 000 passengers a year or less are eligible for public funding. Then, the European Commission will re-evaluate regional airports' need for such financing and, if they do not achieve full operating cost coverage and if another airport is located in the same catchment area, decide its closure. In a statement issued to the European press, ⓘ we expressed our disappointment with these provisions which jeopardise the survival of many airports. Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@ccre-cemr.org

Urban Agenda

The future European urban agenda must take the interdependencies between cities and their surrounding areas into account

"We should not keep thinking of the city in its administrative borders. A future EU urban agenda will need to take into account the interdependencies of cities and their surroundings." This was the message conveyed by the President of CEMR, Annemarie Jorritsma, at the seminar "An EU urban agenda – for and with cities". ⓘ This seminar was held as a side event to the proposal made by the European Commission, which aims to strengthen the urban dimension of its policies, using means such as a "European Urban Agenda". CEMR was also represented at this event by the deputy mayor of Venice (Italy) and vice president of AICCRE, Carla Rey, the mayor of Santander (Spain) and president of FEMP, president of CEMR, Íñigo de la Serna, as well as by the deputy leader of East Renfrewshire and member of COSLA, Tony Buchanan. Contact: marlene.simeon@ccre-cemr.org

Post-2015

CEMR and European civil society call for a central role for cities and territories in the objectives of the “post-2015 development framework”

2015 is the target date for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Many debates are being organised in order to come up with a “development framework for the post-2015 period”, intended to replace the MDGs. As part of this, CEMR has been working alongside partners of the Global Taskforce for the post-2015 agenda [i](#) to ensure that one of the future sustainable development objectives is exclusively focused on cities and territories. This appeal was reasserted and supported by CEMR, civil society and the stakeholders present at the European Economic and Social Committee’s (EESC) conference “A new global partnership” on 13-14 February 2014. The conference’s conclusions will be brought to the attention of EU policy makers in order to help with the drafting of a European position on the post-2015 sustainable development framework. Contact: maxime.ramon@cce-cemr.org

PLATFORMA

We welcome the new coordinator of PLATFORMA

We are pleased to welcome Swati Sain Gupta who joined the PLATFORMA [i](#) team in early January 2014 as coordinator of the secretariat. Swati has several years of experience in the field, notably in Latin America where she headed a number of projects relating to decentralised governance and development. She is replacing Sandra Ceciari, who was the director of PLATFORMA. We wish both of them much success in their new duties!

Call for Participation

Intergenerational Dialogue

Join our new thematic network

Made up of local and regional authorities, research centres, representatives of civil society and industry, this new network [i](#) (AFE-Innovnet) has been set up to influence European Union policy on active ageing and the policy debate on age-friendly environments. It will form a network for exchanging best practices aimed at ensuring a good quality of life for the elderly – particularly in the areas of transport, housing, employment and healthcare services. The network will also provide its members with methodologies for evaluating the socioeconomic impact of environments for groups of all ages. As a result of this 2-year project, A European Covenant on Demographic Change may be set up to ensure the long-term future of the project. Contact: nhu.tram@cce-cemr.org

Restructuring

CEMR is seeking out best practices that will allow for action to be taken before public companies are restructured

At the end of 2013, the European Commission presented an “EU Quality Framework” aimed at alleviating the social impact of restructuring operations and to limit their effects on workers. This framework defines good practices to anticipate and manage restructuring beforehand and proposes guidelines for companies, workers, labour unions, employer organisations and public administrations. It is within this framework that CEMR is looking to collect best practices at the level of local and regional authorities. Should you wish to contribute, please contact the CEMR Secretariat. Contact: christina.dziewanska-stringer@cce-cemr.org

Public Services

Response to the European Commission's consultation on the review of existing VAT legislation on public bodies and tax exemptions in the public interest

The Commission wishes to review the existing VAT legislation as it pertains to public bodies and tax exemptions in the public interest. Following a Green Paper on the future of VAT (2010) and a Communication (2011), the Commission has launched a new consultation which is open until 25 April. ⓘ Since we are currently finalising our response, we will send our draft position to our member associations early April for validation. Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@cce-cemr.org

2014 European Elections

Make a contribution by helping to get the Local and Regional Governments' Manifesto translated into your language

In order to ensure that the manifesto is available in as many languages as possible so that it can reach a wider audience of European political actors at the local, regional and national levels, we call on the associations for help with getting the manifesto translated into their language(s). German, Italian, Polish and Spanish versions are already being finalised. Furthermore, come and join us in the debate through our website materials ⓘ, twitter account (@cce-cemr) and dedicated hashtag #myEUvoice. Contact: pierre.vanderauwera@cce-cemr.org

Culture

UCLG and the City of Mexico are offering 50 000 euro in support for projects linking culture to sustainable development

The international award "UCLG - Mexico City - Culture 21" rewards initiatives or policies that have contributed to building bridges between cultural values (heritage, diversity or transmission of knowledge) and sustainable development. ⓘ These proceedings are being organised as part of Agenda 21 for culture, which represents the first international document highlighting culture as a driving force behind sustainable development within cities. Candidacies must be received no later than 31 March 2014. Contact: maxime.ramon@cce-cemr.org

Library

EU Urban Agenda

CEMR's first contribution towards a European Urban Agenda

We communicated our initial reaction to the European Commission's proposal to strengthen the urban dimension in its European policies, which includes in particular the introduction of a European Urban Agenda. Our contribution emphasised the need to take links of interdependence between the city and its surrounding areas into account. We also stated that, in the future European Urban Agenda, the qualifying term "urban" must be understood as encompassing not only cities but all municipalities, regardless of their size, as well. The complete contribution may be consulted on CEMR's website. ⓘ Contact: marlene.simeon@cce-cemr.org

2014 European Elections

Discover the introduction video to the Local and Regional Governments' Manifesto

In order to increase the manifesto's visibility online and on social networks, CEMR has produced a video which includes clips in which elected representatives from your associations appear. The video is available in English and in French on CEMR's website ⓘ, as well as on YouTube ⓘ. Contact: pierre.vanderauwera@cce-cemr.org