



Local & Regional
Europe

Newsletter

March 2014

Dear colleagues,

Should local government be considered in the same way as Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter or Google? We believe not. In mid-March, we addressed a message ⓘ to European Parliamentarians indicating that the new EU personal data protection regulation is not suitable for the public sector. Contrary to the digital giants of the internet, public authorities use personal data to provide services to their citizens and not for commercial purposes.



Unfortunately, many of the Parliament's amendments will heavily increase the administrative burden and create additional costs to local government without actually benefitting citizens. Our opinion is that the amendments are much too detailed for public administration when it comes to regulating procedures or notification and communication requirements.

We understand that the European Parliament wanted to adopt the new regulation before finishing its mandate. However, we still believe that the next Commission and Parliament should come up with a new proposal more adapted to local and regional reality.

We will keep lobbying during the 2014-2019 parliamentary term to ensure that the new Commission and Parliament come up with a new proposal that is tuned to local and regional governments' needs.

In the meantime, below is an update on the key issues we have been working on.

*Frédéric Vallier,
Secretary General of CEMR*

Monthly highlights

Executive Bureau

Youth unemployment and urban development at the core of the discussions

Members of the Executive bureau [i](#) adopted, on 5 to 6 March in Athens, the report “Tackling youth unemployment: ‘Let’s revive partnership between all Governance levels’”. They also pursued discussions on the European Commission’s proposal to strengthen the urban dimension in its European policies, which would include in particular the introduction of a European urban agenda. Contact: boris.tonhauser@cce-cemr.org

Employment

What should be the next social and economic policy lines to be followed by the member states?

Ensuring lifelong learning methods or promoting flexible working options are essential if we want to enable youth integration into the labour market. These are some of the recommendations [i](#) we sent to policy-makers gathered at the Tripartite Social Summit, on 20 March. This annual meeting brings together heads of state and government, representatives from the EU institutions and the social partners to detect and debate the main economic and social policy lines that EU member states have to follow. Contact: christina.dziewanska-stringer@cce-cemr.org

Climate change

Fighting global warming can only be a success with local and regional governments’ involvement

Today, urban areas are responsible for 80% of energy consumption and CO2 emissions. In consequence, local government is essential to deliver EU objectives to fight climate change, for instance, in the reduction of domestic greenhouse gas. This is the position [i](#) we addressed to heads of state and government gathered in Brussels on 20 and 21 March. We specifically called Member States to take into account the following considerations: to recognise the role played by the Covenant of Mayors to reduce global warming and to constantly support municipalities and regions to implement actions in the ground. Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@cce-cemr.org

CEMR team

Newcomers at CEMR secretariat

We are pleased to welcome new colleagues on board. Caroline Cornil is replacing Nhu Tram as the new policy team assistant. Nhu Tram will be coordinating the new network on active ageing and age-friendly environments (AFE-Innovnet) launched in March 2014. We also welcome Nathalie Klein, who will be the new administrative assistant for PLATFORMA. Join us in making them feel welcome at our future meetings and events. Contact: marielle.combe@cce-cemr.org

Call for Participation

European Parliament elections 2014

Join the campaign and help us spread the word

If you have not yet been able to join our campaign in the run-up to the elections, now is your chance. Here is some information to get you started [i](#). We have produced a video introduction to the manifesto which includes clips in which elected representatives from your associations appear. In addition to this, we have translated the manifesto into 9 languages. All of this to ensure we all get into the starting block for the next parliamentary term. Contact: pierre.vanderauwera@cce-cemr.org

Intergenerational Dialogue

Join us during the first webinar on active ageing

How are we planning to influence European Union policy on active ageing and the policy debate on age-friendly environments? How can your municipality or region engage in this initiative? Join us next 29 April at 11:00 – Brussels' time and get answers to these questions⁽ⁱ⁾. Contact: nhu.tram@ccre-cemr.org

Urban innovation

Get USD 20,000 in support to outstanding projects in the public sector

The Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation⁽ⁱ⁾ recognises pioneering projects that improve socio-economic environments and promote sustainability within cities and regions. Should your local government already carry out such projects, do not hesitate to apply by 31 May. The award is co-sponsored by our global organisation UCLG. Contact : maxime.ramon@ccre-cemr.org

Local autonomy

Decentralisation and local autonomy in Europe will be under the spotlight of a symposium in Vilnius (9-10 May)

During the event⁽ⁱ⁾ we will address different aspects of territorial reforms in Europe, including its impact on the shape of European States or the distribution of competences between States and local government. To participate, please contact olivier.baumard@ccre-cemr.org by Friday 02 May. Contact : nathalie.noupadja@ccre-cemr.org

Library

Youth unemployment

Report on the state of play of local government strategies to tackle youth employment

We have published a report ⁽ⁱ⁾ that provides a snapshot of local governments' measures to drive down youth unemployment. It also points out budget reductions and cuts to services as the main obstacles to overcome this issue. Based on such evidences, our report addressed a set of recommendations to EU and national governments calling for local governments' participation in the design and implementation of programs to reduce youth unemployment rate. This report was presented in 25 March by Cllr Mairi Evans (Councilor of Angus and Chair of CEMR committee of young local and regional elected representatives) during the plenary session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, in Strasbourg. Contact: christina.dziewanska-stringer@ccre-cemr.org

European Parliament elections 2014

The manifesto is now available in 5 additional languages

Thanks to your contribution, our manifesto for the European elections is now available in 5 additional languages: German, Italian, Polish, Romanian and Spanish⁽ⁱ⁾. Is your language not listed? Contribute to its translation and ensure that our proposals are transmitted to future members of the European Parliament in their own language. Contact: pierre.vanderauwera@ccre-cemr.org

State aid

Response to the Commission's consultation on the notion of State aid

The EU Commission is modernising the State aid programme, and in this context intends to provide guidance in form of a "notice on the notion of state aid". A draft was published for consultation, explaining the Commission's view on measures which need to be notified and approved before being lawfully implemented.

In our response⁽ⁱ⁾, we express our concern that the Commission is constantly expanding its interpretation of State aid due to the wide scope of its competence laid down in the Treaties. While the Lisbon Treaty recognises regional and local self-government as part of the structure of the Member States, and Protocol 26 on services of general economic interest (SGEIs) provides wide discretion on how Member States organise their SGEIs, DG Competition interferes more and more in local services, and defines SGEIs. Therefore, we strongly request a reform of the Treaties, in which SGEIs should be excluded from the State aid rules, or in which SGEIs should at least enjoy a more privileged position in comparison to internal market relevant services. Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@ccre-cemr.org