



Local & Regional
Europe

Newsletter

July, August and September 2013

Dear colleagues,

CEMR is preparing for the vote in plenary of the European Parliament in October on the next legislative package on cohesion policy (2014 – 2020). The joint implication of CEMR and our members in the negotiations has been decisive to allow the combined use of several EU funds in the same territory. Indeed, we hope this new package will support a stronger and more sustainable development of European municipalities and regions. We hope that the parliament will agree on the community-led local development approach that we have been lobbying for. We await the positive results of this vote with impatience.



I will take also this opportunity to inform you of the new work direction of our coordination platform of UCLG Europe and our focus-group on international cooperation. Our members have agreed to focus their efforts on lobbying actions on the global post 2015 agenda: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Climate Change (preparation of the Paris 2015 conference) and the Urban Agenda (preparation of the 2016 Habitat III conference).

This month's edition of the newsletter covers our activities of July, August, and September and includes several updates.

I wish you a good reading.

Best regards,

Frédéric Vallier
CEMR secretary general

Monthly highlights

Climate change

Local and regional governments launch the mobilisation for an international climate agreement in 2015

Around 100 mayors and leaders of local and regional governments adopted a declaration on climate change during the World Mayors Summit in Nantes (France) on 27 and 28 September 2013⁽ⁱ⁾. The text highlights local governments' role to tackle climate change and calls national governments, the European Union; and international bodies to commit to the creation of mechanisms giving local government the capacity and resources to act. CEMR was represented in the event by its Secretary General, Frédéric Vallier. Contact: marie.bullet@ccre-cemr.org

Waste

CEMR raises its voice on the review of the EU waste policy

While the European Commission is preparing a review of the EU waste policy for 2014, CEMR is busy promoting its views on how the EU legislation could be improved. Thus, the CEMR Focus group on waste participated in a public consultation on the review of waste targets (e.g. targets for recycling of municipal waste) in early September and its coordinator, Marianne Haugland, from the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, had the opportunity to represent CEMR in two key events addressing the issue of the extended responsibility of producers ⓘ: a closed workshop to share CEMR expertise with the European Commission and an international conference to make our views widely known. Contact: marie.bullet@ccre-cemr.org

Research and studies

Reinforcing our role as a think tank in local and regional governance

In order to support CEMR's lobbying activities and work, we have recruited a Research and Studies Officer. Part of the Knowledge and Strategy department, Nathalie Noupadja will be in charge of collecting data concerning local and regional governance in Europe and proposing academic studies to further our arguments and positions at the EU level. Nathalie will work with the research offices of our associations and partners like the OECD, various services within the European institutions and the Council of Europe. Contact: nathalie.noupadja@ccre-cemr.org

CEMR team

Welcome, newcomers!

Following the decision of regrouping CEMR services to Brussels, we are pleased to welcome new colleagues to our team ⓘ. Join us in making them feel welcome at our future meetings and events. Marielle Combe is our new director of administration and finance; Olivier Baumard assists the statutory affairs and governance team; Nathalie Noupadja ensures the research and studies coordination at the secretariat; Marlène Siméon is the policy officer in charge of the cohesion and territorial policy, information society and e-government.

In the think tank

Youth employment

Answer our questionnaire on to tackle youth unemployment at the local and regional level

The resulting text, compiling good practices and needs on the ground, will be disseminated to the European Institutions with the aim of promoting local actions to tackle youth employment and calling for a partnership approach between local, regional and national level. In the first instance, first results will be disseminated ahead of the upcoming European Council meeting on Tuesday 15 October 2013, dedicated to youth employment. To answer the questionnaire, please contact our Policy adviser in charge of employment and social affairs, Christina Dziewanska-Stringer, by Friday 11 October. Contact: christina.dziewanska-stringer@ccre-cemr.org

Crisis and decentralisation

60 years of municipal liberties, where are we today?

In the context of prolonged crisis, is local self-government under threat? Find the answer and join us at the conference '1953–1988–2013: Decentralisation at a crossroads', in Strasbourg (France) on 26 November 2013⁽ⁱ⁾. Discussions will focus on the progress achieved over the last 60 years with respect to local self-government and the current situation under the economic and financial crisis. This conference is jointly organised by CEMR and the Congress of local and regional authorities of the Council of Europe. Contact: boris.tonhauser@cce-cemr.org

Active citizenship

Participate in the European Local Democracy Week

The Congress of local and regional authorities of the Council of Europe invites local government to address citizens' engagement in the decision-making processes during the European Local Democracy Week⁽ⁱ⁾. This year's edition will take place from 14 to 20 October with the theme "active citizenship: voting, sharing, and participating". In partnership with the Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region, we are organising two seminars⁽ⁱ⁾. We strongly encourage you to also promote democratic participation within your communities through the organisation of public debates, exhibitions or competitions. Contact: carlos.mascarellvilar@cce-cemr.org

Mayors challenge award

Bloomberg initiative offers 5 million euros of funding to innovative local projects

The competition is an initiative of Bloomberg Philanthropies⁽ⁱ⁾. It aims to promote innovative ideas and to highlight and fund promising projects proposed by European cities. It is open to European cities and municipalities with at least 100 000 inhabitants. Projects should address a serious problem, improve public services and local government efficiency and increase citizens' engagement in local life. To participate, cities must express interest by 11 November. Applications must be filled out and submitted before 31 January by the city council. Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@cce-cemr.org

Library

State aid

"A step in the right direction - but further simplification is needed" underlines CEMR in its new position

To simplify procedures for local government to grant state aid, this is the message we have relayed to the European Commission as part of a consultation on the general block exemption regulation⁽ⁱ⁾. Today, local and regional governments have to first notify and then wait for the Commission's approval before granting financial aid for several services. In our response, we welcome the Commission's proposal to exempt some services from this requirement – e.g., aid for research and innovation or aid for disadvantaged workers. However, we ask the Commission to also exempt other activities linked to heritage, culture, sport and tourism. Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@cce-cemr.org

State aid

“EU State aid policy should not be a tool to curb regional development and economic growth” stresses CEMR in its new position

In our response to the European Commission’s proposal for state aid to regional airports, we express our concern on the Commission’s proposal to forbid local and regional governments from granting financial aid to airports after a transitional period⁽ⁱ⁾. A restrictive approach to financial aid reduces the freedom of local and regional authorities to support airports and airlines - e.g.: to help with operating costs or marketing support - and the associated economic growth. In this regard, we consider that the Commission does not take into account the vital role of airports on regions’ survival and their need for public support. Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@cce-cemr.org

Health and safety

Joint response on health and safety in the workplace

The response ⁽ⁱ⁾ has been carried out jointly with the European Federation of public service unions. We underline that the implementation and any target setting in the field of occupational health and safety (OSH) should be up to the local and national levels when addressing risks related to work and working conditions – e.g., burnouts or stress related disorders. Our joint response also provides an overview of the main challenges being faced by the public sector in addressing OSH in the workplace, and calls on the next European Strategy on OSH to address these challenges. Contact: christina.dziewanska-stringer@cce-cemr.org