



**Local & Regional
Europe**

Towards a Europe for Citizens

Mid-term review of the Europe for Citizens Programme 2014-2020

CEMR Position Paper

15/06/2017

KEY MESSAGES

CEMR's key messages are:

1. We believe that, as the main promoter of twinning in Europe and the biggest umbrella organisation of local and regional governments (LRGs), CEMR plays a unique role in this Programme with a whole thematic area of our work dedicated to twinning and the involvement of Citizens in the European Project.
2. We share the opinion of the European Parliament that the Europe for Citizens Programme *"...is a unique and highly symbolic programme, insofar as it is a listening exercise on civil society's debate, as it stimulates critical thinking on the European project..."*¹.
3. We also agree with MEPs that *"... owing to budgetary constraints, the total number of funded projects is too small to achieve the programme's ambitious goals..."*².
4. In consequence, we welcome the European Parliament's proposal aiming at providing the Europe for Citizens Programme with a total budget corresponding to the symbolic and reasonable amount of € 1 per citizen, and more concretely, € 500 million for the post-2020 period; while calling the European Commission and the Council to support it.
5. On the other hand, we are in favour of finding another legal basis under the European Treaties that enables the European Parliament to act as a co-legislator in all decisions related to the Europe for Citizens Programme.
6. We believe that the European Commission should reform the Civil Dialogue process as part of the Programme's framework into a permanent structured dialogue and a platform of discussion between beneficiaries, the European Commission and National Contact Points (NCPs) in order to discuss policy developments in the fields of democratic engagement, civic participation and citizenship in general, as well as the proportion of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) dedicated to it.
7. With this objective, as representatives of main implementers of the programme, we call on the European Commission to establish a *Permanent Table* between the European Commission, CEMR and national associations of local and regional governments to discuss the Programme and the policy developments in the field of citizenship and democratic engagement. It is necessary to allow a higher involvement of national associations of local and regional governments is crucial, as they are the ones in close contact with local governments and also better placed to understand their needs.
8. We encourage the European Commission and the Council to better link the Programme priorities with the challenges of citizens in their daily lives and the policy priorities of the EU legislative/policy agenda on citizenship.

¹ goo.gl/ZrmyQr

² goo.gl/ZrmyQr

9. The online platform showcasing projects for beneficiaries of the Programme as well as interested organisations to disseminate project results, pool good practices, but also to enhance visibility and follow-up projects should be strengthened. It should also serve as the main platform of the Civil Dialogue group.
10. In a context in which the Union is striving to ensure support of citizens, we wish that the Programme is preserved and reinforced after 2020 in order to, at least, be able to finance 1000 projects per year facilitating the accessibility in order to increase the impact and the image of the Programme.
11. We recommend that the European Commission adapts the Multiannual priorities of the Programme in order to allow open and critical discussions about the future of Europe. In particular, by supporting exchanges addressing challenges which mark the daily life of Europeans: employment, integration, housing, environment, mobility, etc., while promoting the European values and interculturality.

Contact

Carlos Mascarell Vilar

Policy Officer – Governance and Citizenship

1 Square de Meeûs, 1000 Bruxelles

Tel. + 32 2 500 05 44

Carlos.MascarellVilar@ccre-cemr.org

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 41 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 member 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.

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