



Empowering Local & Regional Europe since 1951

CEMR 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary | #CEMR70

## Short history of CEMR

The Council of European Municipalities was founded on 28 January 1951 in Geneva by some sixty mayors from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, Switzerland, and The Netherlands.

The aim of this newly-formed association was to create a network of elected representatives from municipalities and cities, united in the promotion of the ideal of a Europe founded on local autonomy.

A strong pillar of CEM's activity has been constant advocacy in the defence of local democracy.

The newly-founded CEM immediately set to work on the task of promoting local democracy, notably with the adoption of the European Charter of Municipal Liberties in Versailles in October 1953. The document outlined the conditions for municipalities' genuine administrative and financial self-government, and as a statement of shared values among CEM members.

As so often in European political life, steady advocacy over the years eventually brought tangible results. CEM's 1953 Charter notably served as a basis for the Council of Europe's 1985 European Charter of Local Self-Government. The latter has since been ratified by 47 European states, committing them to respecting municipal rights, with regular oversight by international observers.

In 1984, CEMR recognised regions as active government authorities and welcomed them into the association, thus becoming the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). Then, in 1989, with the fall of the Berlin wall, CEMR began to head east thus considerably broadening its membership.

In 1990, CEMR became the European section of the world organisation of local authorities, the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), which later merged with the FMCU-UTO to create United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in 2004.

Since its creation, CEMR aims at representing local and regional governments at the European level, be it vis-à-vis EU institutions or the Council of Europe, to inform and interest these authorities in the creation and development of a united Europe and to organise local and collective responses to arising economic and social problems.

In the past seventy years, CEMR has notably contributed to developing the principal of "autonomous self-government" at the local and regional levels and to the creation and implementation of a true European regional policy. CEMR also participated in initiatives launched to strengthen the European institutions, including the setting-up of consultative bodies within the Council of Europe and its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. At the EU level, it supported the creation of the Committee of the Regions; as a consultative body to the European institutions on topics affecting local or regional interests, as well as the creation



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of the European Parliament intergroup representing the interests of local and regional authorities.

CEMR has engaged in the discussions and shared the local perspective through face-to-face advocacy, publications and debates. At the celebration of CEMR's 70th anniversary in 2011, then President Wolfgang Schuster presented his concept of 'governing in partnership' to former Commission President José Manuel Barroso, who agreed that *"we will succeed only if we all share a common vision and also a common direction. We need for that a real partnership."*

Today, CEMR is the largest organisation representing local and regional governments all across Europe. Its members are 60 national associations of towns, municipalities and regions from 41 European countries, which account for some 100,000 local and regional authorities. CEMR thus does not limit itself to the 27 EU member states but rather covers the European continent on a larger scale.

## Important dates

**1946-1950** The beginnings

**1951** Creation and set up of the Council of European Municipalities (headquarters in Geneva)

**1953** General Assembly in Versailles: the European Charter of Local Liberties

**1956** Move of the headquarters in Luxemburg

**?** CEM established in France

**1957** Creation of the European Conference of Local Authorities of Europe (Council of Europe)

**1964** 7<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Rome: 15 000 participants...

**1967** CEM creates Consultative Committee of Local and Regional Authorities (CEE)

**1970** Opening of the office of representatives of local and regional government toward the European Communities CEM/IULA in Brussels

Thomas Phillippovich elected secretary general

**1978-1979** Recognition of CEM's Consultative Committee by the European Communities

**1981** 14<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Madrid / the return of democracy to the "Old Europe"



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- 1983** First conference of women elected representatives in Pisa, Fausta Giani Cecchini Mayor
- 1984** 15<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Turin: regions join - CEM becomes CEMR  
Josef Hofmann (mayor of Mainz, Germany) elected president
- 1985** *June*: Creation of the Assembly of European Regions  
*15 October*: Opening for signature of the Council of Europe's European Charter of Local Self-Government
- 1986** 16<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in Berlin
- 1987-1989** Legal, financial and administrative separation of CEMR and AFCCRE
- 1988** First Euro-Arab Cities Conference (Marrakech)
- 1989** Programmes for exchange of experiences  
Creation of the Community twinning funding programme (Nicole Fontaine)  
Fall of the Berlin Wall (9 November): CEMR heads East
- 1990** Fusion of IULA-CEMR in Europe: development of CEMR in the Anglo-Saxon world  
Elisabeth Gateau elected CEMR secretary general
- 1992** Policy Committee in Prague. Launch of ECOS-Ouverture  
Pasqual Maragall i Mira (mayor of Barcelona, Spain) elected president  
Move of the programmes team to Brussels
- 1994** *January*: the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe becomes the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE)  
*March*: Creation of the Committee of the Regions, set up under the Treaty of Maastricht (7 April 1994)
- 1996** The "Valencia appeal" by mayors and presidents of regions in view of the Inter Governmental Conference
- 1997** Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (former president of the French Republic) elected president
- 2000** Policy Committee in Bordeaux: strengthening of the Brussels office - Secretary general primarily in Brussels
- 2001** Celebration of 50 years of CEMR: dinner at the quai d'Orsay - French ministry of foreign affairs - and celebration in Rome  
Election of Jeremy Smith as secretary general
- 2002** Convention on the future of Europe: VGE chair
- 2003** 22<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly in Poznan: first GA in a Central and Eastern European country
- 2004** *16 January*: Versailles Seminar



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*May:* Creation of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) (Paris Congress): Bertrand Delanoë (mayor of Paris)

- 2005** Michael Häupl (mayor and governor of Vienna, Austria) elected president
- 2009** Policy Committee in Berlin (30.11-1.12): Frédéric Vallier elected secretary general
- 2010** Policy Committee in Mondorf-les-Bains (6-7.12.2010): Dr Wolfgang Schuster (mayor of Stuttgart, Germany) elected president
- 2011** CEMR 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary:
- *28 January in Geneva:* Seminar “The Europe we love, the Europe we need! CEMR - building Europe from the ground up for 60 years”, and ceremony
  - *12-13 December in Brussels:* High-level event “Governing in partnership - United to build a stronger Europe” (presence of the European Commission’s president José Manuel Barroso and the Committee of the Regions’ president Mercedes Bresso), and final ceremony

## CEMR Presidents

Mr. Fernand COTTIER	Mayor of Geneva / Maire de Genève (CH)	1951-1953
Mr. Emile HAMILIUS	Mayor of Luxembourg / Maire du Luxembourg (LU)	1953-1959
Mr. Henry CRAVATTE	Mayor of Diekirch / Maire de Diekirch (LU)	1959-1984
Mr. Josef HOFMANN	Mayor of Mainz / Maire de Mayence (DE)	1984-1992
Mr. Pasqual MARAGALL I MIRA	Mayor of Barcelona / Maire de Barcelone (ES)	1992-1997
Mr. Valéry GISCARD d’ESTAING	Former president of the French Republic / ancien président de la République française	1997-2004
Mr. Michael HÄUPL	Mayor and governor of Vienna / Maire et gouverneur de Vienne (AU)	2005-2010
Mr. Wolfgang SCHUSTER	Mayor of Stuttgart / Maire de Stuttgart (DE)	2010-2013



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Ms Annemarie JORRITSMA	Mayor of Almere / Maire d'Almere (NL)	2013-2015
Mr Iñigo Joaquín de la SERNA HERNÁIZ	Mayor of Santander / Maire de Santander (ES)	2016
Mr Stefano BONACCINI	President of Emilia-Romagna / Président de la région Emilie-Romagne (IT)	Since 2016

## Secretaries General

Mrs. Alida DE JAEGER	1951-1953
Mr. NIFFELER	1953-1955
Mr. Jean BARETH	1955-1969
Mr. Thomas PHILIPPOVICH	1970-1990
Mrs. Elisabeth GATEAU	1990-2001
Mr. Jeremy SMITH	2002_2009
Mr. Frédéric VALLIER	Since 2010