



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS 2019

Message from local and regional elected representatives: Involve local and regional governments for a stronger EU!

(Adopted on 11/12/2018 at Ludwigsburg)

1. We, mayors and leaders of local and regional governments from all over Europe, representing the 130,000 European local and regional governments that are members of our 62 national associations from 41 countries, believe in a strong and united Europe, founded on common and powerful values: democracy, human rights, solidarity, gender equality and respect for rule of law, which form the basis of the European Union. This approach lies on the principle of mutual commitment that serves the whole Union.
2. We acknowledge that the elections to the European Parliament take place at a crucial point in time when the EU faces many challenges. We call on the members of the future European Parliament and the next European Commission to engage with the same courage, dynamism and determination as our founders did, who called for the reconciliation and unity of our continent after World War II.
3. The future of Europe concerns all European citizens. It is time to reflect upon what kind of Europe citizens want in order to provide a sustainable, stable, inclusive and peaceful future to the next generations. Therefore, the response must be guided by the motivation to improve the functioning of the institutions, to reinforce transparency and a decision-making process based on dialogue between citizens and their elected representatives.
4. Considering the global dimension of today's challenges, the Sustainable Development Goals should become the guiding principles for the future European Strategy. To achieve the Paris Climate Commitments and comply with the 2030 Agenda, we need a profound transformation of our development model and the adaptation of the entirety of European policies. Europe should be a driving force for the world, showing the way towards a new model of development, mobilising all areas of economic and social intervention and supporting local governments to build decarbonised and resilient communities.
5. The challenges being faced by Europe can only be solved by action or contribution of local and regional governments, and financing of local public services. A strong partnership between all spheres of government is the way to succeed.
6. In this sense, the European Union should support the dynamics of growth, innovation and social promotion launched at local and regional level with the resources corresponding to its ambitions, and the appropriate legal framework.
7. The European Parliament¹ recognises the key role of local governments in preparing, designing, financing and implementing key European Union policies, as well as the important role of local governments in the Union's external development policies. It is convinced of the need to significantly strengthen their role in shaping future EU policies, and stresses the importance of their representative associations, such as the CEMR, to become key partners of EU institutions.
8. The European Commission² emphasises the need to significantly increase the involvement of local and regional governments in a structured way through the principle of subsidiarity, in all phases of the EU decision-making process, to enhance the added value of EU legislation for our citizens.

¹ Resolution adopted on 3 July 2018, P8_TA-PROV(2018)0273

² Communication on Subsidiarity and Proportionality, adopted on the 23rd of October 2018 COM (2018) 703- final



We commit:

1. To promote European debates in our constituencies so that citizens participate and vote consciously in the European elections in May 2019.
2. To engaging local and regional governments in building partnerships with European institutions to support a positive image of the European project and contribute to creating a democratic and visionary model of development throughout our continent.
3. To mobilising local and regional governments and their associations to cooperate with their peers in developing partner countries to address the 2030 Agenda and to mobilise efforts and fight against climate change.

We propose:

1. To establish an innovative governance model based on a partnership which fully recognises local and regional governments' role in the European governance structure.
2. To give substance to article 4 of the Treaty on the European Union, which establishes local and regional governments as participants of European governance.
3. To work with EU institutions so that annual dialogues can take place locally, open to citizens to debate the link between their communities and the European Union.
4. To review the modalities of the European Civil Dialogue by introducing a specific status for organisations that represent local and regional governments and civil society.
5. To introduce more transparency into the decision-making process, European institutions should seek to better inform citizens about their activity, their positions in negotiations and the decisions they take.
6. That European policies be consolidated, by supporting projects promoted by local authorities, and contribute to the sustainable development of our regions. In this sense, the Cohesion Policy must remain at the heart of the European Union's priorities. Furthermore, the future 'rights and values' and the Erasmus+ programme must be strengthened and an Erasmus of Territories programme be created.
7. To promote the European Charter for Fundamental Rights and the history of the European Union in schools in all countries of the European Union, in order to facilitate better knowledge on the functioning of the EU institutions. The introduction of appropriate financial and legal conditions, allowing every pupil to have the opportunity to visit the European Institutions once during their schooling, is important.

We call on the European Union to ensure:

1. The application of the principles of local self-government in the context of the European Union legislation as enshrined in Article 4, paragraph 2 of the Treaty on the European Union and in the European Charter of Local Self-Government and to respect of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.
2. That beyond 2020, appropriate arrangements are put in place to ensure easier access for the United Kingdom's local and regional governments to cooperate with EU counterparts through EU cooperation programmes. This should be done in a similar fashion to countries such as Norway and Iceland, as well as through macro-regional strategies, Interreg and within EGTC³ frameworks.

³ European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation