



Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe  
Council of European Municipalities and Regions

**Message to the French Presidency of the  
European Union**

**Key issues for local and regional government**

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions as the European umbrella organisation of local and regional governments, federated through its 51 member associations in 37 countries would like to invite the French government to take into consideration the following aspects, when implementing the Presidency's programme.

## **1. LISBON TREATY**

### ***Gains for local and regional government need to be maintained and implemented***

The Presidency has the vital but difficult task of seeking a way forward in relation to the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. We would like to invite the French Presidency, the Irish government and all Member States, to look for a solution that will help to improve the decision-making process in the EU and to strengthen the role of local and regional government within the EU.

We wish to ensure that, whatever the outcome of the ratification of the Treaty, we are particularly concerned that the following points in relation to regional and local government (which are contained in the Treaty) continue to be a relevant component of the further development of the EU:

- The explicit recognition of local and regional self-government
- The extension of the subsidiarity principle to include local and regional government
- The extension of the concept of cohesion to include *territorial* cohesion, both as an objective of the Union, and as a competence
- The new protocol on services of general interest, and especially the statement that the shared values of the Union in respect of services of general economic interest (...) include in particular the essential role and the wide discretion of national, regional and local authorities in providing, commissioning and organising services of general economic interest as closely as possible to the needs of the users.

## **2. BUDGET REVIEW AND FUTURE OF COHESION POLICY**

### ***For a balanced approach taking into account the challenges ahead and involving all levels of governance***

The debate on the budget review and on the future of the cohesion policy are closely linked. An open discussion on the challenges that the EU is facing internally and in the global context should aim to achieve a well-reflected balance between financial considerations on the one side and the objectives of economic and social cohesion, together with the challenges ahead (e.g. climate change, energy, demographic development, etc.) on the other side.

CEMR advocates a future cohesion policy that continues to assist the regions lagging behind, while also supporting efforts of all local and regional authorities of the European Union to develop their territorial potential and to prepare and adapt to the challenges. The principal objectives of the Lisbon and the Gothenburg agendas remain relevant for the post-2013 period. The partnership principle should be emphasised and the concept of multi-level governance further developed.

We welcome the public consultations and the involvement of the stakeholder organisations and wish to express our wish to contribute to further discussions.

### **3. DECENTRALISED CO-OPERATION AND UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN**

#### ***Reaching the Millennium Development Goals with the support from local and regional government***

CEMR welcomes the French Government's promotion of the concept of a European Charter on Development Co-operation in Support of Local Governance, and the focus of the 2008 Development Days in Strasbourg on local governance. We are convinced that Europe's local and regional governments can play an important role, with our partners in other continents, in the practical achievement of many of the Millennium Development Goals and Targets.

The need for strong "local to local" twinning partnerships is of particular importance at this time as regards the relationship between the countries of the EU and those of the south and east banks of the Mediterranean. We urge that the new Union for the Mediterranean include an important role for, and involvement of, local and regional authorities.

### **4. FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INTERNAL MARKET**

#### ***Exclude inter-communal cooperation from the application of the public procurement rules***

Even though the French presidency has not indicated that it will take any action in the area of public services, we wish to address the question of inter-communal cooperation and the application of the public procurement rules. The European Commission has on several occasions expressed the view that the conclusion of a service contract against remuneration – no matter whether the third party is a private operator or another public authority – necessitates the application of the public procurement rules.

CEMR strongly objects this view. Inter-communal cooperation (and similar forms of public-public cooperation) is often a way to improve efficiency and to reduce costs, which in the end is to the benefit of the end-users and the citizens. We would like to invite the French Presidency to encourage the European Commission to develop a differentiated approach that takes into consideration the specificities of these forms of cooperation.

### **5. ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

#### ***Ensure effective waste and emission management solutions***

Several waste and emission dossiers are on the agenda of the European legislator. We welcome the vote on the waste framework directive in the 2<sup>nd</sup> reading in the European Parliament and hope that the Council will achieve its adoption under the French presidency. The revision of the directive on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE directive) and the recast of the directive on "industrial emissions" (integrated pollution prevention and control; IPPC) are also relevant for local and regional authorities and we would like to express our strong wish that their views and experience are taken into account when it comes to the modifications of the existing legislation.

CEMR would also like to encourage the French Presidency to find a positive outcome of the negotiations on the directive for the protection of soils, while considering the strong local and territorial dimension of soil policies.

## **6. ENERGY POLICY AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

### ***Adoption of the climate change and energy package***

We welcome very much the wish of the French Presidency to allocate high attention to the climate change and energy package, addressing the reduction of CO2 emissions, increase the use of renewable energy and biofuels. Local and regional government play an important role in all these areas as users, managers, suppliers, producers and educators. A number of local and regional policies are related to energy, e.g. transport, spatial planning, etc. We would like to stress the need of good cooperation of all levels of governance, and thus encourage the French Presidency and the Member States to address energy issues in cooperation with the local and regional government representatives.

We would like to encourage the French Presidency to ensure that the EU continues to act as a leader in term of climate change measures. Bold post-2012 mitigation targets are necessary, while an adaptation strategy needs to be developed. It is therefore important to acknowledge the vital role local and regional authorities play in mitigating and adapting to climate change. We also wish to express our commitment to contribute to the great efforts needed to tackle the challenges ahead and together with other European and international representatives of local and regional government. CEMR calls on the Member States and the European Union to involve all levels of governance in the preparation of post-Kyoto solutions, and specifically to include an explicit role for local and regional government in any future protocol or any other instrument.

## **7. EUROPEAN TRANSPORT POLICY**

### ***Adoption of the green transport package***

The 'green transport package' includes relevant initiatives for local and regional authorities, such as the clean vehicles directive, which encourages public authorities to purchase 'green' vehicles and the review of the Eurovignette directive, which aims to internalise external (environmental, health, etc.) costs. We are pleased that the French Presidency intends to accelerate the decision making process concerning the legislative proposals and hope that local and regional governments' concerns will be taken seriously into consideration. In particular, the review of the Eurovignette directive is a good opportunity to encourage cleaner modes of transport and reduction of congestion.

In addition to the legislative proposals, the Presidency aims to adopt conclusions on the upcoming action plan on urban mobility, which the Commission will present in autumn. CEMR hopes that the conclusions will on the one hand respect the principles of subsidiarity and local self-government, while on the other hand concentrating on EU-wide measures with added value to cities and towns (e.g. integrating urban transport into sectoral EU policies; providing financial support via the structural funds; supporting clean vehicles, etc.).

## **8. INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS**

### ***Support exchange of experience with local and regional government***

The conclusion of a European pact on asylum and migration is one of the highest priorities of the French Presidency. It is expected that Heads of State and Government will agree at their summit in October on a set of political guidelines on what should be the EU's role in immigration policy, including integration. We understand that the focus will be mainly on the legal framework for migrants and asylum seekers in the European Union.

We would like to encourage the French Presidency to pay particular attention to the issue of the integration of migrants. Successful integration of migrants is a key aspect of the EU common migration policy, which very much depends on initiatives and efforts at local and regional level. There are many examples of excellent practice developed by local governments, in promoting the integration of migrants into their life and economy. We would therefore wish to propose that the French Presidency should encourage the exchange of experience among all levels of governance involved.

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*The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the broadest association of local and regional government in Europe.*

*Its members are national associations of local and regional governments from over thirty-five European countries.*

*The main aim of CEMR is to promote a strong, united Europe based on local and regional self-government and democracy; a Europe in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to its citizens, in line with the principle of subsidiarity.*

*CEMR's work covers a wide range of themes, including public services, transport, regional policy, the environment, equal opportunities...*

*CEMR is also active on the international stage. It is the European section of the world organisation of cities and municipalities, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).*

*Further information available at [www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)*

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