



**COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONS
CONSEIL DES COMMUNES ET REGIONS D'EUROPE**

**CONSULTATION ON THE EUROPEAN
UNION'S FUTURE DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

- CEMR RESPONSE -

Consultation on the European Union's Future Development Policy

CEMR Response

1. The Council of European Municipalities and Regions is the broadest association of local and regional government in Europe gathering national associations of local and regional governments from over thirty countries.
2. CEMR, presently chaired by Michael Häupl, Mayor of Vienna, is the European section of the world organisation of cities and municipalities, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).
3. UCLG is committed to support at local level the implementation of the MDGs and its objectives include cooperation for development at local level, including Municipal International Cooperation, City to City Cooperation and Twinnings.
4. Many of CEMR national associations promote a wide range of activities in the field of development cooperation in which cities, local governments and the national associations themselves are involved. In order to exchange experience and information on this issue and to promote a wide recognition of local governments' role the CEMR created in 2002 a network for North/South Cooperation. CEMR has recently published a booklet gathering some examples of the initiatives undertaken by its national associations.
5. **The CEMR welcomes the European Commission's consultation on the future of the European Union's Development Policy and is happy to give its contribution to the EU reflection by referring to the structure of the issues paper.**

Development in EU Action

6. CEMR believes that Europe has an important role to play in finding solutions to the issues in our society. Development policy is an integrated part of the European Union's external actions and needs to be considered as a fundamental instrument for the EU to accomplish this role.

7. We consider that in order to ensure a stronger and more effective impact, the European Union needs to make its policies for development cooperation more coherent with one another and to look for more synergies in all its actions.

Development Actors

8. The CEMR believes that if we want to find solutions to the issues in our society it is essential to implement a close partnership between all levels of government – ranging from international to local action.

9. As such the CEMR welcomes in particular the points (2) and (3) raised for discussion under the issue no. 7 recognising that “local authorities must play a bigger role” and that “all categories of non-state actors ...and other decentralised actors (local authorities...) should be enabled to participate in the different steps of the development process, with a view of enhancing their respective role and their potential to promote bottom-up development approaches.”

10. CEMR wishes to welcome this recognition that local authorities are spheres (or levels) of government and do not coincide with organisations of civil society. They are (relatively new) committed players in actions for development cooperation and need to be recognised as such in the framework of the development policy.

11. Moreover, whilst underlining the vital role in development – including implementation at local level of the MDGs – of local authorities in the low and middle income countries, we also wish to play on record the important role of Europe's local governments and their associations, who are active partners with their southern counterparts in promoting capacity building, good governance, etc.

Concentration and Differentiation

12. The issues paper underlines that the EU has its own distinctive values and approaches in different areas which could form the basis for a common framework for the EU and the member states' development policies. In general terms we support the areas proposed as the basis for a common thematic framework. However we wish to recall the role played by local government in many of the areas mentioned and would welcome a stronger reference to this role.

13. Theme 1. Development of human resources and citizens' rights.

Local government has a major role in the promotion of respect for citizen's rights, the empowerment of the underprivileged, and the fight against poverty.

14. Theme 2. Governance for development.

The Habitat Agenda and the Johannesburg Declaration and Action Plan each underline the crucial role of good governance at all levels, including local government. Promoting good governance is in general terms the very heart of local government's work on development.

15. Themes 3, 4 and 6: The environment, economic growth, and social cohesion.

The issues of the environment, development of local economies and social cohesion, are essential elements of local development strategies and activities – indeed together they form the essence of local sustainable development. Municipal International Cooperation partnerships frequently focus on these themes.

16. Theme 5. Land use planning: including rural and urban development programmes and local development.

We welcome the specific reference to local development under this theme, but feel that the reference to "the importance of local *entities*" should include a more specific reference to local *governments* – it is the governmental role at local level that is one of the most important aspects.

17. Furthermore CEMR recalls that the UNDP Report on Poverty (2000) refers to decentralisation as a key factor in the fight against poverty and believes that good governance must be considered as one of the main issues for institutional reform in developing countries. These reforms are linked to the development process that is taking place in most of the developing countries where local governments act as a new institutional actor between national governments and the population.

Funding Development Aid

18. Many of the national associations of local and regional government, members of CEMR, play an important role in capacity building for good governance with a wide range of programmes and actions which are supported by national governments.

19. CEMR wishes that the future EU development policy recognises the role of local government and its national associations in North/South Cooperation by earmarking adequate financial resources to co-finance such activities.

20. We note that twinning is considered as an interesting aid modality to finance the secondment of civil servants from EU and beneficiary states. The issues paper also states (page 20) that “twinning can be used to implement all institution capacity building projects”. We propose that twinning between cities and local governments, including the secondment or exchanges of local government practitioners, should likewise be possible under the neighbourhood policy.

21. Under the issues for discussion we would like to make two points:

- the concept of twinning (see point 5) should be more explicitly extended to include the possibility of local government twinning.
- Under point 9: the reference to non-state actors should also include other decentralised actors, in particular local authorities. This is essential to ensure consistency between this point and the point made under issue n° 7.

Conclusion

22. CEMR welcomes this opportunity to respond to the consultation undertaken by the Commission on the issues paper on the future of EU development policy. Consultees are asked to address the questions “why, who, what, how”.

23. We broadly accept the paper’s comments on the “why”; we appreciate and emphasize the inclusion of local governments amongst the “who” partners; we agree with the main thematic framework in relation to the “what” question, but consider that this can be further enhanced by taking the local dimension more into account; and we suggest some modest amendments to the “how” – including a recognition of local government twinning for development and specific aid modalities for local to local partnerships. In these ways, we believe that the local government sector will be able to play its role more effectively, as part of a coherent and consistent EU policy for development.