



Welcome to **Resonance!**

The monthly news **bulletin** from across CEMR and its member associations

We hope this finds you well as we delve into this month's issue, packed with updates, events, and insights shaping local and regional governance across Europe.

This month Secretaries General and Directors gathered for the **SGDs meeting** hosted by the Union of Cyprus Municipalities. We'll see how CEMR and its member associations are actively advocating for environmental sustainability, international cooperation, and the empowerment of local governments.

As always, we invite you to mark your calendars for upcoming events, such as the celebration of **ANMP's 40th anniversary**, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of democracy in Portugal - *do not miss our special interview with President Luísa Salgueiro in the Voice section!* - and the **X-Budgeting - The Power of Subnational Finance** event on May 23rd at CEMR headquarters in Brussels or online.

Check our latest **Twinning Report** and learn how Local and Regional Governments can play a role in addressing global challenges.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement in our initiatives, especially ahead of the European election. Together, let's continue to amplify the voice of Local and Regional Governments, driving positive change in our communities.

[communications@ccre-cemr.org](mailto:communications@ccre-cemr.org)



**Secretaries General and Directors Meeting - Cyprus 23-24 April**

CEMR met with its member association's Secretaries General and Directors on April 23-24, 2024. Hosted by the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, served as a platform for crucial discussions just ahead of the European election.

[Read more --](#)



**Local Alliance - Joint Letter to EU Commission**

CEMR has joined 7 Local Networks in an open letter to urge the European Commission to stay the course on Green Deal implementation and to keep the goal to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 a top priority of the next mandate.

[Read more --](#)

**Our new Twinning Report is online!**  
Charting Twinning in Europe

A small image of a laptop screen showing a colorful bar chart representing data from the Twinning Report.



**CEMR Event - Green Day (2024 edition)**

CEMR Green Day 2024 provided a platform for policymakers, experts, and stakeholders to delve into the future of the green transition within the EU and beyond. Held on April 10th, this event fostered a dynamic exchange of strategies, challenges, and opportunities for driving climate action at the local and regional levels.

[Read more --](#)



**RGRE - European Charter for Equality**

Celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Basic Law (Grundgesetz) for the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (RGRE) is set to host the 5th National Conference on the Implementation of the European Charter for Equality.

[Read more --](#)

**What is our call to action for the upcoming EU elections?**  
Find out

A graphic featuring the CEMR logo on the left and a tablet displaying a colorful call to action message on the right.





#### RRF - Survey findings presentation

Despite the RRF being halfway through its implementation, Local and Regional Governments express continued frustration at being sidelined from National Recovery and Resilience Plans (NRRPs). The results of the CoR-CEMR survey confirm a trend of highly centralised management of the RRF by Member States.

[Read more --](#)



#### ANMP - Invite to 40 Anniversary in Coimbra

CEMR extends a warm invitation to our member associations to join the international conference "Municipal Associativism and European Challenges: The Role of Cooperation between Local Authorities," slated for May 20th in Coimbra, Portugal.

[Read more --](#)



Discover the key findings of the representation and **violence on women in politics**



As discussions unfold amidst preparations for the next EU long-term budget, concerns arise over the potential sidelining of the territorial dimension. **Marine Gaudron**, CEMR Advisor on Economic, Social, and Territorial Cohesion, questions the evolving landscape of Cohesion Policy.



#### *Is the territorial dimension disappearing from Cohesion Policy?*

The Cohesion Forum took place on 11-12 April in Brussels. Organised every three years by the European Commission following the publication of its Cohesion Report, it is an important event gathering the Member States, Managing Authorities, regions, and cities involved in implementing the Cohesion Policy. In this election year, the Forum was an even more important moment for the European Commission to start preparing Cohesion stakeholders for the big change ahead.

The proposals for the next EU long-term budget (2028-2034) are expected to be published in the first half of 2025, therefore it is no surprise that the current Commission used the Cohesion Forum to test some ideas. Increasingly DG REGIO is talking about a radical change for the Cohesion Policy, which is no longer called "Cohesion" but "Instrument for Reforms and Investments" - on the model of the Recovery and Resilience Facility. The idea of linking instruments to reform conditionality seemed to be quite consensual during the Cohesion Forum. This is presented as a major simplification together with a "performance-based model", meaning that the funds will be delivered upon completion of activities and milestones, which is expected to reduce a significant part of the administrative burden compared to the current system of financing linked to actual costs.

In this scenario, it is possible that the different Cohesion funds as we know them (ERDF, ESF+, Just Transition Fund, etc) could be merged into a single instrument. But will the fundamental objectives of Cohesion Policy remain in such architecture? Commissioner Ferreira started [her opening speech](#) saying "This is an important moment for economic, social and political cohesion in Europe". It can only be deliberate that the Commissioner ignored the "Territorial" dimension of Cohesion Policy as enshrined in [article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU](#). And versions of the upcoming strategic agenda for Member States' leaders also referred only to "economic and social cohesion", forgetting the territorial dimension.

In this context, it will be important to actively disseminate the messages of CEMR's [position paper on the future of Cohesion Policy](#), advocating for a place-based approach and the extension of the Partnership Principle to all EU Policies with an impact on local and regional levels, and particularly the European Semester which will guide Member States reforms agenda. Whatever the shape of the upcoming instrument(s) for investment, it is essential to ensure it will not be spatially blind, and able to answer the specific needs of the various municipalities and regions in Europe.

Local and Regional Governments are also invited to sign and share the [Cohesion Alliance joint call on a renewed Cohesion policy](#) post-2027 that leaves no one behind.



The National Association of Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP) is celebrating its 40th Anniversary on May 2th in Coimbra.

The National Association of Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP) is a non-profit entity established in May 1984 to represent and defend the interests of 308 Portuguese Municipalities. Based in a historical city, Coimbra, it operates independently, advocating for municipalism and decentralisation while fostering dialogue among diverse political perspectives. ANMP serves as the unified voice of democratic local governance in Portugal.

[Learn more about ANMP](#)

## ***Uma conversa com a Presidente***



We have the pleasure of interviewing **Luisa Salgueiro**, President of ANMP in honor of April 25th and Portugal's 50th anniversary of democracy,

**Dear President, today is April 25 and Portugal marks the 50th anniversary of the Carnation Revolution and the end of dictatorship in Portugal. How does ANMP view the significance of this historic milestone?**

*We view April 25 and the Carnation Revolution as the defining moments that justify our existence as a European country with democratic local governments. Without democracy and freedom, the ANMP could not exist. In many ways, the history of the democratic evolution and consolidation of a Free Portugal is intertwined with the history and evolution of the ANMP itself. That is why we wanted to jointly celebrate the 50th anniversary of April 25 and our 40th anniversary since founding. We have moved far beyond the days of repression and fascism, which April 25 helped dissolve. From its ashes, we built a nation of free people, a fairer nation, a nation of values. It's true that we are now far removed from the repressive forces that oppressed our people for 40 years. Still, democracy now faces new threats that urge us to continue fighting for a future project where democracy prevails—plural, egalitarian, and supportive.*

**What key achievements do you believe the organisation has made in representing Portuguese municipalities, and what challenges lie ahead in ensuring continued progress?**

*The ANMP has addressed all themes related to the nation's development and progress in various capacities. Over the past 40 years, we've focused on key areas such as the environment, education, housing, and public finances. Beyond domestic efforts, the ANMP's influence extends to prestigious international bodies concerning municipal governance, such as the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CPLRE) and the CEMR. Together, we've defined the scope of local autonomy and engaged in critical international collaborations. Another priority has been establishing institutional frameworks in Portuguese-speaking countries, supporting the development of municipal associations there. Decentralization involves transferring significant responsibilities from central government to municipal authorities. This process has been a persistent challenge in our dialogues with various governments. I am now pleased that during this term, substantial and wide-reaching powers, especially in education, social services, and healthcare, have been devolved to local councils. After decades of effort, we can confidently state that substantial progress has been achieved.*

**The upcoming celebration will unite the CEMR members in Coimbra. What opportunities does this event present for ANMP and its members, particularly in fostering local cooperation?**

*Hosting representatives from the CEMR in Coimbra on the day marking the 40th anniversary of the ANMP signifies that cooperation is rewarding, brings mutual benefits, and propels us towards a future where local and regional powers in Europe unite even more closely. It is a day of celebration and a day for sharing the challenges and issues we face together. Through dialogue, we learn to solve problems, discover innovative solutions, and refine our working methodologies. The cooperation exemplified by the May 20 meeting in Coimbra is a testament to strength, determination, and resolve in the various democratic battles we will confront in the future.*

**CEMR has developed a Call to Action for the next EU election. What do you think should be the priorities of the next EU Commission and Parliament?**

*In my view, the priorities for the next European Commission and Parliament should focus on critical issues that align with current challenges and long-term goals for the European Union. Beyond the challenges of EU enlargement with new members, I will address four areas that seem most urgent: the climate crisis, European security and stability, migrations and the refugee crisis, and promoting civic and political participation among the youth. Regarding the climate crisis, it is essential to prioritize the European Green Deal to reduce emissions, halt global warming, and support both national and local governments in transitioning to green policies. With the ongoing conflict in Europe and several countries investing in defence and rearmament, European security and stability are at a critical juncture. The 80 years of peace we've experienced in Europe were built on dialogue and diplomacy, and these elements must not be diminished in European policies. We urgently need to align our positions on migrations and the refugee crisis, creating a more coordinated European approach to migration that respects the rights of asylum seekers and migrants while ensuring their social integration into European societies. Engaging the youth is crucial; we must understand how to communicate with them, know their interests, and encourage them to participate in politics and civic life. They need to vote and feel connected to the upcoming European Parliament election. Although youth discontent can be challenging as it questions the system, we must address it in a coordinated way that enhances the value of the European project for all.*

**In light of global challenges such as climate change, economic inequality, public health crises, and geopolitical shifts, what role do you believe local governments should play in addressing these pressing issues on a global scale?**

*Local governments play a crucial and increasingly recognised role in these contexts. Local governments should set an example in the climate crisis by implementing green energy policies and necessary measures to mitigate it, addressing issues of environmental and social justice. Local governments can*

*promising policies of sustainability and social justice. Local governments can and should strive to implement more equitable policies that effectively redistribute resources and wealth. Regarding public health crises, it's essential to prioritize public health, fund it adequately, and manage emergency responses as effectively as possible. Portugal has always been known for its contributions to the world, and now, we are part of European and global organisations and institutions that coordinate action strategies. Peace and stability are only possible in this way. No country can dictate global geopolitics alone anymore, and local governments are fundamental components of national policies.*



## Bridges of Trust

### Strengthening Transatlantic Ties: CEMR's Role in Facilitating Cooperation with Ukraine

As the global landscape evolves, collaboration and solidarity across borders have become paramount in addressing complex challenges.

At the GMF Brussels Forum 2024, a gathering convened by the German Marshall Fund of the United States, CEMR representatives participated in discussions focused on confronting various global threats, including Russian aggression and China's assertiveness. Notably, CEMR brought attention to the potential for horizontal cooperation between cities across the Atlantic and shared insights from its experience in pan-European collaboration through initiatives like the Bridges of Trust project. The project serves as a testament to the efficacy of city-to-city partnerships in promoting resilience and fostering economic growth, especially in regions facing geopolitical challenges.

During the forum's dedicated panels on Security and Ukraine, CEMR highlighted the importance of an Economic Counteroffensive to support Ukraine's rebuilding efforts. By exploring avenues for investment and international support, CEMR underscored the role of local governance in driving sustainable development and stability.



### "Local and Regional Development in Ukraine: Renaissance of the New Cities and Regions."

At the EU-Ukraine Business Forum, Stanislav Taran, Project Officer of Bridges of Trust at CEMR, discussed successful instances of horizontal cooperation facilitated by the project. He also highlighted how CEMR and Ukrainian partners showcase the effectiveness of grassroots initiatives in tackling global challenges.



- 24 APRIL - Interview of Federica Bordon (Twitch session)
- 09 MAY - Europe Day (Read more)
- 20 MAY - 40th Anniversary of ANMP (Register here)
- 23 MAY - Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee for Local and Regional Governments (Register here)
- 23 MAY - X-Budgeting Event (Register here)
- 06-09 JUNE - EU Elections (Read more)



47% of local and regional respondents to the CEMR-CoR joint survey view the territorial fairness of allocation of RRF fundings as **poor or very poor**.

[→ Read more about our the new CEMR-CoR consultation here ←]



40

60

110

1



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