



Local & Regional
Europe

CEMR's work programme 2013

*Council of European Municipalities and Regions
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Introduction

“Citizens in Europe”

The European Union declared that 2013 would be the “European Year of Citizens”. Given the difficult situation that our continent and certain countries in particular are going through, this invitation to put the citizen at the heart of actions must lead us to reflect upon the role that local and regional authorities and their national, European and world associations can take on together in order to give meaning back to the European project.

To respond to this invitation, CEMR introduced “**Citizens in Europe**”, a common thread found throughout its 2013 work programme which will allow us to call on our partners and take action to restore the actions carried out at European level and within our countries to their rightful permanent context, that of focusing on citizens, on whose behalf local and regional authorities and their elected representatives work every day.

The year 2013 will be a pivotal one. The **financial framework for 2014–2020** has not yet been decided; preparations for European parliamentary elections will be underway and the future institutional framework will undoubtedly be discussed. It is an opportune moment to ensure that our positions on the future of Europe are heard, within the European Union and with a broader view towards the member countries of the Council of Europe as well.

At a time when the present crisis is being used as a pretext to shuffle the institutional cards in many European countries, we will be commemorating the **60th anniversary of the European Charter of Municipal Liberties** which led to the adoption of the European Charter of Local Self-Government which will also be celebrated in 2013 on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of its entry into force. This will be an opportunity for us to initiate a process of reflection with the Council of Europe’s Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe on the topicality of local and regional self-government in Europe, the progress achieved and most importantly the prospects to be outlined for the years ahead.

As the level of governance closest to the citizens, CEMR will be actively participating in the debate on the **future institutional framework of the European Union** and will conduct its own discussions on progressing towards greater citizen involvement, particularly through town twinning which plays a major role in promoting mutual understanding and in the construction of a shared history, thus guaranteeing that local and regional authorities will be recognised as major players when it comes to governance in Europe and implementing European policies within their territories. Whether it is a question of respect for the principle of subsidiarity as it applies to local and regional authorities, full discretion in the provision of public services, civic participation in the European construction or financial support for spatial planning policies, CEMR will fully carry out its role as a principal representative organisation.

Special attention will be given to the **representation of local and regional authorities** at European level and to how the role and the place of the European Union’s Committee of the Regions and the Council of Europe’s Congress of Local and Regional Authorities have evolved so that their authority can be strengthened and in order to clearly define the particular relationship that we have with these two bodies.

To publicise its positions and strengthen its influence in the European Parliament, CEMR will prepare, with the help of its national associations, a document to be addressed to the European parliamentary candidates and their political groups in order to weigh in on the **future policy programmes and the guidelines** that we wish to see come to fruition at European level.

Faced with the challenges raised by the crisis, we plan to keep on demonstrating that, through their actions on decentralised cooperation, active involvement in their international organisation, United Cities and Local Governments, and participation in PLATFORMA, their platform for exchanges on international development policies, **local and regional authorities and their national associations are the key to finding innovative and lasting solutions** in Europe and throughout the world. In order to continue to act effectively, CEMR will structure its work around **two pillars** which were defined by the strategy adopted by the Policy Committee in December 2011, which consist, first and foremost, of strengthening its influence in Europe through a **lobbying strategy** targeting the European Institutions and the Member States, to be carried out in cooperation with its national associations, and secondly, of continuing its role as the **platform for meetings and exchanges** of local and regional authorities and their national associations.

To respond to its members' expectations, CEMR will continue to present its actions centred around **five main themes**: *Democracy, citizenship and enlargement – Resource efficiency and environment – Partnership, cooperation and world affairs – Economic, social and territorial cohesion – Local and regional governments as employers and services providers* – and to organise the participation of its members at the political level through platforms and committees, particularly the Standing Committee on equality between women and men in local life, and at the technical level within focus groups and thematic networks. To stimulate the thinking and discussions of its members as well as its own reflection, CEMR would like to develop its role as a “think tank” by increasing its capacity for producing studies and analyses, notably through the observatory on the impact of the crisis at local and regional level.

In accordance with decisions taken by the Executive Bureau and the Policy Committee, we will be implementing the **transfer of services from Paris to Brussels** in the interests of streamlining and maintaining the efficiency of the Secretariat's work. This transfer will be carried out in stages with the objective of serving the organisation and its members' interests in the best possible manner while still respecting the work accomplished by the permanent staff and the history of the organisation during its 50 years of operations in Paris.

Finally, 2013 will also be an important year for the democratic life of the organisation with the election of the **future Executive Bureau, Policy Committee and president(s)**. This will provide another chance to put gender equality into practice in the highest executive offices and to promote the broadest participation possible in our activities by further opening up our governing bodies to younger elected representatives and those from minority groups.

Democracy, citizenship and enlargement

In light of the 60th anniversary of adoption of the *European Charter of Municipal Liberties* in 1953 and the 25th anniversary of entry into force of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in 1988 and furthermore at the occasion of the European Year of Citizens 2013, the CEMR and the Congress of the Council of Europe will co-organise a European seminar in autumn 2013 to address national governments as well as European institutions on the topicality of self-governments in times of crisis and territorial reforms. Prior meetings of the Committee on Governance and Citizenship should allow to precise the topic of this conference and its expected outcomes.

Croatia is set to become the 28th member of the European Union on 1 July 2013, this opens a new era for South-East European countries and a hope that other candidates might be on the track of joining the EU. In this context, CEMR will launch its Platform on European Union enlargement at the occasion of the NALAS NEXPO 2013 fair and participate at the meeting hosted by the Serbian association in Belgrade, with the support of the French Section, AFCCRE on EU integration.

Depending on the outcome of the current legislative process for the future “Europe for Citizens” programme, the CEMR should either continue its lobbying in favour of the orientations it has drawn for this programme or start concretely preparing its implementation in 2014. In this case, the CEMR should held technical meetings with its national associations in order to discuss how together they could together influence the day-to-day administration of this programme by the European Commission and how they can promote the programme and its possibilities towards local governments.

The CEMR will organise two meetings of this new thematic network on the Integration of migrants. The first of these will allow to discuss the precise role, position and added-value of the CEMR among the many stakeholders active in this field. The other meetings should allow to start the debates and exchanges of practices between participants on the topic as well as to prepare for concrete outcomes for these meetings. The CEMR will target its efforts on making these debates rich of different ideas and perspectives in order to prepare the drawing of a strong common vision on the support that European institutions could give to local authorities’ integration policies.

Resource efficiency and environment

CEMR will concentrate on the implementation of the **7th Environment Action Programme** and on the **Roadmap on a resource-efficient Europe**. More particularly, it will adopt a strong position on the review of the **EU air policy**, which will allow the provision of an early input to the European Commission and relevant stakeholders, in view of the release of a new air legislation package in the autumn 2013. Besides, activities will be implemented to participate in the “fitness check of the **EU waste legislation**”, aiming at preparing the ground for a review of the EU waste legislation in 2014. Water will be the third resource addressed, and in particular the analysis and follow-up of the **Blueprint for Europe’s water**, which should address the assessment and review of the EU water policy on specific issues such as governance, climate change, water efficiency and innovation.

In addition, 2013 will see the issue of **climate** high again on the EU agenda, with discussion starting on a **new energy and climate package** for 2030, including new binding targets for renewable energy, a strategy on adaptation to climate change, and a communication on the urban dimension of EU transport policy. Provided sufficient interest among our members and within our capacity, CEMR may work on these issues. Furthermore, and in this context, CEMR will continue to support an ever-growing number of local and regional authorities engaging in ambitious climate and energy policies through its active involvement in the **Covenant of Mayors’ Office**.

Partnership, cooperation and world affairs

CEMR will continue to bring strongly the voice of the European members to the world organisation and will reinforce the coordination with UCLG direct members through UCLG Europe coordination Platform. Two coordination meetings will be held previously to the Executive Bureau and the World Council.

The European section will actively participate to the World Congress which will take place in Rabat in October 2013.

CEMR has strongly increased its commitment for international cooperation with the launching of PLATFORMA, the voice of local and regional governments for development cooperation. CEMR will continue to contribute to the work of PLATFORMA in 2013. The focus group on international cooperation and partnership will enable CEMR members to take part in the debates of PLATFORMA.

Economic, social and territorial cohesion

With the expected adoption of the regulations of the **Structural, Rural and Maritime Development Funds**, further actions are envisaged to assist CEMR members in the application and implementation of the regulations, in particular concerning the synergies across funds as foreseen in the Common Strategy Framework. These will in particular include an analysis of the adopted texts and the impact on the different regions; assistance to the preparation of the Partnership Agreements and guidance on the implementation of the new instruments (Community-Led Local Development, Integrated Territorial Investments, Joint Action Programmes).

In the framework of the future **cohesion policy**, specific issues will be addressed and further shaped in discussions with the European institutions: new local sustainability instruments (smart cities and communities, the Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities); urban-rural linkages; rural development; innovation and smart specialisation, capacity building.

Special attention will be given to the question how local and regional authorities can enhance entrepreneurship and thus contribute to economic growth; exploring how the European Social Fund can be used in particular for social inclusion, for skills development, for the development of Social Dialogue and integration into the labour market. Furthermore, CEMR aims to contribute to the implementation of the Territorial Agenda 2020, highlighting the important role of local and regional authorities.

Under the knowledge strategy, the CEMR Thematic Network on **Intergenerational Dialogue** will continue to work with other European stakeholders on the follow-up to the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity across Generations. Concretely, the CEMR will work on an initiative aimed at addressing demographic change and age-friendly environments, with support from the European Commission.

Local and regional governments as employers and services providers

The CEMR will continue to follow the on-going negotiations on the EU **Working Time directive**, which is currently being discussed by the European Cross-Sectorial Social Partners. We envisage an exchange on any outcome, and the indefinite implementation of the new directive.

In 2013 the European Commission will publish follow-up proposals to its Green Paper on **Restructuring**, which the CEMR will address in the framework of our European Social dialogue activities, and ensure smooth follow-on from our Joint response with EPSU to the Green Paper consultation in 2012.

Following on from the project '**Future of the Workplace**', providing quality jobs, modern and sustainable workplaces in local and regional government', our Social Partners will implement the European Framework of Action which will run in 2013, and defines concrete objectives to be met both at European and national level. In particular actions pertaining to youth employment will take precedence, given the economic crisis and effects on youth integration and employment within the European Labour Market.

As far as the **Single Market** is concerned, the Commission's proposals for a new directive on public procurement and on service concessions may still be on the agenda; once the directives will be adopted, they will be analysed and relevant aspects in relation to their transposition into national legislation will be examined. CEMR will examine relevant new frameworks for **State aid** guidelines (e.g. regional aid, environmental aid) and the General block exemption regulation and provide the view of local and regional government during the decision-making process.

Furthermore, relevant initiatives concerning the technological change and new approaches in relation to public administrations may be addressed; once adopted, the new regulation on **data protection** and the revised Directive on **Public Sector Information** will be analysed against the background of their application and transposition into national legislation.

The issue of assessing the **performance of public services** was addressed during the CEMR General Assembly in Cadiz and participants highlighted their interest in further exchanging knowledge and experience on this issue. Therefore, the CEMR will explore this topic with interested members and organise a workshop, which may be linked to the discussion of the European contribution to the GOLD III report on the organisation of public services. A draft of this report will be available early 2013 and contain the outcome of the survey that CEMR had done among its members in 2012, completed with further information from the external expert.

CEMR general affairs, service to members

One of our key activities for 2013 will be the creation of a **new website** to facilitate the dialogue and communication with and between CEMR's member associations. The website will be organised according to the five thematic domains and will be adapted to CEMR's new graphic identity.

The transition towards CEMR's **new graphic identity** will continue with the further adaptation of all new communication tools, including the website, newsletter, publications, position papers, statutory documents, working documents, stationery and SmartCards.

In terms of **publications**, CEMR envisages publishing a new report on the crisis, a study on lobbying practices at the national and European level. CEMR will continue to disseminate its SmartCards as a mean to present its key messages and activities.

CEMR's press and communication team will ensure the visibility of CEMR's activities, and results throughout the year. A reflection will also be conducted towards and with member associations on how to best answer the needs in terms of communication, in particular to enhance the sense of common ownership and the information of local and regional authorities (members of members) on key actions of their European organisation.



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About CEMR

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the broadest organisation of local and regional authorities in Europe. Its members are over 50 national associations of municipalities and regions from 40 European countries. Together these associations represent some 150 000 local and regional authorities.

CEMR's objectives are twofold: to influence European legislation on behalf of local and regional authorities and to provide a platform for exchange between its members associations and their elected officials and experts.

CEMR is the European section of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the worldwide organisation of local government.

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