



European Committee
of the Regions



Local & Regional
Europe

Memorandum of Understanding between the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

The CoR and the CEMR:

- affirm that local and regional governments are players whose contribution to the European legislative process is distinct, from the shaping of draft legislation to its implementation, given their role of representing the needs and specificities of each territory in compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality;
- highlight that regional and local governments are close to citizens and are therefore best placed to facilitate communication so as to improve the understanding of European policies and their impact on citizens' lives and their communities;
- underline their key contribution to the implementation of multilevel governance;
- stress the need to strengthen their cooperation in order to enhance the role of local and regional governments at European level;

Considering:

- the role of the CoR as the institutional body representing local and regional authorities in the EU and the CEMR's work as the European umbrella organisation of national associations of local and regional governments;
- the decision of the CoR to increase cooperation with the European associations representing local and regional governments enshrined in several Bureau documents and CoR opinions;
- a shared political interest in strengthening the voice of local and regional governments in the EU;

Commit to:

Promoting, whilst fully respecting each other's political and institutional role, cooperation and participation in their respective activities, in particular by:

- encouraging **regular contacts** between political representatives, through **participation** in relevant meetings, such as debates, conferences and stakeholder events, including meetings whose objective is to discuss priorities and issues of common interest;
- enabling opportunities for closer cooperation between **CoR rapporteurs and CEMR spokespersons** within relevant bodies;
- facilitating the engagement of experts from national associations to assist CoR rapporteurs in their preparation of draft opinions;
- exchanging and agreeing on the content of biannual **action plans**, in order to identify common measures to be taken in cases of shared political priorities;
- providing opportunities for the CEMR to provide **timely input** into CoR activities;
- facilitating dialogue with the European Commission, in particular in the context of preparing the **annual legislative work programme**, within the **REFIT platform** and in relation to work on **monitoring the subsidiarity principle**;
- cooperating in supporting **local democracy** and decentralised cooperation in candidate, neighbouring and partner countries;
- cooperating to uphold the concept of and promote **multilevel governance and signing up to the CoR Charter**;
- facilitating the organisation of CEMR **meetings and events using CoR facilities** where mutually valuable outcomes are desirable and can be achieved;
- promoting the development of joint activities in order to **increase awareness** by EU decision-makers and the public of the work done by local and regional governments within the EU context.

This Memorandum of Understanding does not involve a commitment to disburse funds, but assumes that each signatory will implement the envisaged activities at its own cost and using its own resources in accordance with the signatories' respective regulations, rules and standard practices.

Signed in Rome on 24 March 2017.

**For the European Committee
of the Regions**

The President

Markku Markkula

**For the Council of European
Municipalities and Regions**

The President

Stefano Bonaccini

ANNEX

Multiannual Joint Action Plan for the period 2017-2019

In accordance with the joint Memorandum of Understanding signed between the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), collaboration between the CoR and the CEMR during the agreed period will focus on the following three areas of action.

1) **Europe's Future – the place of local and regional governments in communication efforts seeking to reconnect citizens with the European project**

Both the CoR and the CEMR will be working in 2017 to amplify the voice of LRGs in the debate on reforming the EU. The organisations will work together to mobilise local and regional authorities with the aim of achieving more effective dialogue with EU citizens.

- The CoR will involve the CEMR in preparing its response to the White Paper on the Future of Europe (timetable tbc), to be coordinated by the CIVEX commission.
- The CEMR will work with the CoR on organising and planning town-hall-style debates, by optimising links with CEMR national associations and their members.

2) **Boosting public investment and social and territorial cohesion across Europe**

The CoR will step up action over the next few months to boost local public finances, so as to restore growth, social and territorial cohesion in the EU.

The CEMR will complement the efforts of the CoR, in particular through input into the CoR's work, so as to enhance the preparation of evidenced-based arguments for better governance within the future EMU debate and for a territorially balanced cohesion policy post-2020.

3) **Complementing the EU efforts to reach out to Wider Europe – strengthening the development of local democracy through cooperation with neighbourhood countries**

Given what is happening in the countries of South Eastern Europe and the challenges they face in developing democratic structures, it is more crucial than ever for local and regional governments to cooperate with their counterparts beyond the EU's borders.

- The CEMR will provide input into the CoR's work on the Enlargement Package 2017-2018.
- The CEMR will support the CoR's activities designed to reach out to countries in Wider Europe, in particular partners in South Eastern Europe and the Balkans, through the CEMR's cooperation with NALAS.
- The CoR and the CEMR will work together where appropriate to organise joint meetings, conferences and other events aimed at facilitating cooperation and exchange between local authorities in the EU and in the neighbourhood countries.

4) **Stepping up sustainable development cooperation between local and regional governments in a globalised context**

Both the CoR and the CEMR are actively promoting support for and implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Real synergies can be achieved by strengthening cooperation in this area. In particular:

- through PLATFORMA, the European voice of local and regional governments for development (hosted and co-founded by the CEMR), and through the ongoing work of the CoR to promote decentralised cooperation. The objective is to advance knowledge and good practices in relation to working with local authorities in developing countries (through the Assises of Decentralised Cooperation and opinions on EU development policies).
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