

Two months of CEMR activities

December

01/12 (Cologne): Some 40 local elected representatives from the Palestinian territories and Israel met at the initiative of the City of Cologne to discuss objectives for concrete joint projects in the fields of water, environment and education, which CEMR participated in and supports. In this context, the City of Cologne, which is trilaterally twinned with Tel-Aviv and Bethlehem, also co-organised a conference on **Euro-Middle East City-to-City-Cooperation** during which local authorities shared their experience in terms of bilateral and trilateral cooperation with Palestinian and Israeli cities. ⁽ⁱ⁾ Contact: florent.resche-rigon@ccre-cemr.org

06/12 (Brussels): The European Commission's directorate general for communication (DG COMM) presented its proposal for a new "**Europe for citizens**" programme during a structured dialogue meeting, notably attended by CEMR. The two main strands will now be "*Remembrance and European citizenship*" and "*Democratic engagement and civic participation*". ⁽ⁱ⁾ The total budget for 2014-2020 is of €229 million and will mainly support networks of twinned-towns, remembrance projects and civil society-led activities. At this occasion, CEMR presented the final declaration of its Rybnik Congress, which was welcomed by stakeholders and DG COMM representatives. ⁽ⁱ⁾ Contact: sandra.ceciani@ccre-cemr.org / manuella.portier@ccre-cemr.org

08/12 (Paris): In order for **women in Mediterranean countries** to come to power, they must continue to be involved in the non-profit sector, but also invest political parties. This was one of the conclusions of the international conference entitled "*Women, networks and revolutions: democracy through the prism of gender in the Euro-Mediterranean*", organised by the Women's Foundation for the Mediterranean. Thus, much advocacy work vis-à-vis political parties and awareness raising within civil society must be undertaken in view of upcoming elections in countries affected by the Arab Spring. ⁽ⁱ⁾ Contact: manuella.portier@ccre-cemr.org

08/12 (Brussels): CEMR presented its priorities for the **2012 structured dialogue** between the European Commission and European networks of local and regional authorities, which include partnership contracts and code of conduct in cohesion policy ⁽ⁱ⁾ as well as public procurement ⁽ⁱ⁾ and service concessions ⁽ⁱ⁾ in single market policy. Also among its priorities are air quality in environment policy and energy efficiency in energy policy, ⁽ⁱ⁾ all of which were voiced during a preparatory meeting held in cooperation with the Committee of the Regions. Contact: angelika.poth-mogele@ccre-cemr.org

09/12: Dexia Crédit Local and CEMR have jointly published their annual figure-based **portrait of local and regional Europe**. These information sheets comprise a series of indicators that compare the organisation and finances of subnational authorities in the 27 EU member states. ⁽ⁱ⁾ Contact: boris.tonhauser@ccre-cemr.org

9-11/12 (Florence): The mayors and presidents of local and regional authorities within the **World Council of United Cities and Local Governments** (UCLG) have called for national and international strategies on sustainable development and the adaptation of climate change to take local and regional views into consideration. Participants also agreed to strengthen their strategic partnership with the United Nations and its Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and to plan for a delegation of the UCLG Standing Committee on Gender Equality to meet with the president of UN Women, Michelle Bachelet. Contact: sandra.ceciarini@ccre-cemr.org

12/12 (Brussels): In a common declaration, the four major European networks of local and regional authorities called for the active involvement of local and regional governments and their leaders in all EU policies with a territorial dimension via the "**governance in partnership**" approach. The declaration was presented at the occasion "*Governing in partnership – United to build a stronger Europe*", with the participation of European Commission president, José-Manuel Barroso, regional policy commissioner, Johannes Hahn, president of the Committee of the Regions, Mercedes Bresso, and member of the European Parliament, Jan Olbrycht.  Contact: nina.holbrook@ccre-cemr.org

12/12 (Brussels): "*The situation today is difficult, we need to confront it, we need more than ever to show a common political will to act together, decisively and urgently. We will succeed only if we all share a common vision and also a common direction. We need for that a real partnership.*" Such was declared by European Commission president, José-Manuel Barroso, at the occasion of the event "**Governing in partnership – United to build a stronger Europe**".  Contact: nina.holbrook@ccre-cemr.org

12-13/12 (Brussels): CEMR's **Policy Committee** adopted the 2012 work programme as well as CEMR's new logo and unanimously approved the membership of the Albanian Association of Communes and the observer status of the Faroese Municipal Organisation. The host Belgian associations presented local government in Belgium while Bruno García De León, deputy-mayor of Cádiz, presented CEMR's 25th General Assembly to be held in September 2012. A number of local and regional representatives were also elected into CEMR's Executive Bureau.  Contact: nina.holbrook@ccre-cemr.org

15/12 (Brussels): In the framework of its 60th anniversary, CEMR released "**Local and Regional Government in Europe – Structures and Competences**", a second edition of a study first released in 2005. The publication provides an overview and guide to European local and regional governments in 39 countries, as well as their functioning, competences and more.  Contact: emilie.melvin@ccre-cemr.org

15/12 (Brussels): CEMR welcomes the Committee of the Regions' proposal on **energy efficiency**, which encourages local governments to implement alternative measures in order to reduce their energy consumption by 20% by 2020, without imposing binding targets, as it is the case in the European Commission's current draft directive.  Indeed, the Commission currently states that, starting 1 January 2014, 3% of the total floor area owned by public bodies must be renovated each year, a proposal to which CEMR is strongly opposed.  Contact: axelle.griffon@ccre-cemr.org

29/12 (Brussels): **PLATFORMA** has received a new grant from the European Commission, confirming its position as the voice of European local and regional authorities for development. PLATFORMA's new activities will thus allow it to further the dialogue between local and regional governments in EU partner countries,  their networks and EU delegations when it comes to formulating recommendations on Europe development aid policies. The project will last three years starting from 1 April 2012. Contact: lucie.guillet@ccre-cemr.org / florent.resche-rigon@ccre-cemr.org

January

11/01 (*Brussels*): CEMR welcomes the European Commission's proposal to exempt state aid up to €500 000 over a period of three years, as presented in its draft regulation on *de minimis* aid for the provision of **services of general economic interest**.⁽ⁱ⁾ Indeed, the draft text takes into account three of CEMR's points, that is to say simpler rules, a threshold increase and no limitations in terms of number of inhabitants.⁽ⁱ⁾ Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@ccre-cemr.org

19/01 (*Brussels*): National governments must fully take into account the value and importance of **social dialogue** in this time of crisis and austerity rather than merely impose cuts on the public sector without negotiations. Such was voiced during the kick-off workshop of the EU social dialogue project on the **future of the workplace**, which discussed alternative funding mechanisms for the local and regional government sector. Alternatives mentioned include public-private partnerships, public-public cooperation and the involvement of the voluntary sector in the provision of public services.⁽ⁱ⁾ Contact: christina.dziewanska-stringer@ccre-cemr.org

25/01 (*Brussels*): CEMR shared its concern on limiting the choice of EU level priorities for competitiveness regions to three out of the 15 **Europe 2020 strategy** priorities as this would be counterproductive, limiting and irrespective of the specific needs and comparative advantages of each region or sub-region. While CEMR supports greater concentration, it advocates the freedom of local and regional authorities to choose priorities relevant to their territory. Such was voiced during a meeting with Ioannis Vardakastanis, European Economic and Social Committee rapporteur on the draft regulation for **cohesion policy** and structural funds, who expressed his interest in CEMR's views and agreed to take these into consideration when preparing his final report.⁽ⁱ⁾ Contact: alessandro.proia@ccre-cemr.org

29-30/01 (*Bari*): Francisco de la Torre Prados, mayor of Málaga and CEMR representative within the **Euro-Mediterranean Assembly of Local and Regional Authorities** (AR-LEM), was elected representative of the associations of local and regional authorities within the ARLEM Bureau. On this occasion, he reiterated his commitment to maintaining the dialogue and cooperation between elected officials in Europe and the South of the Mediterranean and called for more initiatives enabling exchange and learning. The new office mandate will begin in August 2012, with new co-presidents Ali Abdelrahman, governor of Giza, Egypt, and Ramon Luis Valcárcel Siso, president of Murcia, Spain, and soon-to-be president of the Committee of the Regions.⁽ⁱ⁾ Contact: sandra.ceciani@ccre-cemr.org

Ongoing activities

CEMR and its focus group on **service concessions** are preparing a position paper on the European Commission's proposal for a directive on the award of concession contracts.⁽ⁱ⁾ Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@ccre-cemr.org

CEMR and its focus group on local and regional government are preparing a response to the European Commission green paper on **corporate restructuring** and anticipating change, which is to highlight the important role of local and regional authorities in the process of restructuring as well as the vital role of the public sector as an employer and service provider.⁽ⁱ⁾ Contact: christina.dziewanska-stringer@ccre-cemr.org

CEMR and its focus group on **public procurement** are working on a position paper on the European Commission's proposal for a new public procurement directive. ⓘ Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@ccre-cemr.org

CEMR is working to contribute to the visibility of the Council of Europe's European **Local Democracy Week**, which will take place from 15 to 21 October 2012. ⓘ Contact: boris.tonhauser@ccre-cemr.org

PLATFORMA is organising its annual forum, which is to take place from 2 to 3 April 2012 in Florence, Italy, and will focus on participatory governance and partnerships between local authorities and civil society in Europe and EU partner countries. ⓘ Registration is open until 20 March 2012. ⓘ Contact: lucie.guillet@ccre-cemr.org / florent.resche-rigon@ccre-cemr.org

CEMR and its focus group on **energy efficiency** are currently lobbying the European Parliament against the 3% annual renovation rate for public buildings and for more flexible public procurement rules in the energy efficiency draft directive. The vote is to take place on 28 February 2012 in the industry, research and energy parliamentary committee. ⓘ Contact: axelle.griffon@ccre-cemr.org

CEMR and its focus group on **cohesion policy** are updating the CEMR policy paper on the future of EU cohesion policy and lobbying the European Commission regarding its cohesion proposal for the 2014-2020 programming period. CEMR will also work with European Parliament rapporteurs, EU Danish presidency representatives and key Commission officials on the draft common strategic framework and code of conduct cohesion regulations. Contact: alessandro.proia@ccre-cemr.org

CEMR's calendar¹

07/02 (Brussels): CEMR focus group on **public procurement**. Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@ccre-cemr.org

07/02 (Brussels): CEMR focus group on **service concessions**. Contact: angelika.poth-moegele@ccre-cemr.org

28/02 (Webinar): Second workshop of the **social dialogue** project "**Future of the workplace**" on recruitment and retention, with a special focus on youth and elderly employment. Contact: christina.dziewanska-stringer@ccre-cemr.org

Other events

10/02 (Brussels): Seminar on "*European Solidarity as a driving force behind the development of Europe's territories - What are the challenges for EU **Cohesion Policy** 2014-2020?*", organised by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) at the Committee of the Regions. ⓘ Carola Gunnarsson, CEMR rapporteur on cohesion and territorial policy, will be speaking on behalf of CEMR at this occasion. Contact: alessandro.proia@ccre-cemr.org

14/02 (Brussels): Forum on the European Year for **Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations** organised by the Committee of the Regions. ⓘ Contact: christina.dziewanska-stringer@ccre-cemr.org

16/02 (Brussels): Urban Forum organised by the European Commission,ⁱ during which António Costa, CEMR executive president, mayor of Lisbon and co-president of UCLG, will be presenting the Europe 2020 strategy's challenges and opportunities for cities in the framework of integrated **urban development**. Contact: alessandro.proia@ccre-cemr.org

16-17/02 (Brussels): Conference on "*Change in **Public Services**: Fora for the Expertise in Restructuring*", organised by the European Centre of Employers and Enterprises providing Public services (CEEP).ⁱ Contact: christina.dziewanska-stringer@ccre-cemr.org

¹ CEMR's calendar is available on our website: www.ccre.org

