

CEMR 2023-2024 WORK PROGRAMME



Local & Regional
Europe



With the support of
the European Union

Introduction

‘Empowering local and regional Europe since 1951, while promoting a more inclusive and sustainable future for all citizens and generations to come’

CEMR 2020-2030 vision |

The current context is obviously complex, with the proliferation of climatic events, the war in Ukraine, the steep rise in inflation, the growing pressures of the cost of living for communities, the induced widening of territorial and social inequalities, the energy (increase in both prices and dependency) and health crisis, the pollution of soils, biodiversity loss and the crises affecting our air and water. Local and regional governments have been affected on multiple fronts. Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) are in need of support and fit-for-purpose solutions to reduce air pollution on their territories, preserve soil and water health, restore biodiversity and better collect, sort and recycle all types of waste, but without being left to bear all the costs alone. Yet, given the onrush of multiple concurrent crises, it is now more essential than ever that Europe show solidarity and stand united to face the future together.

We have also discerned a threat to the rule of law in some European countries, a rise of extreme-right and nationalistic ideologies, moves to deny the right to control one's own body and persecutions of members of the LGBTQIA+ community. Local and regional elected representatives have also been subjected to threats and risks, a development detrimental to local and regional democracy.

On top of this, there has been a growing gap between European territories. Often, wealth is concentrated in densely

populated urban zones, areas where citizens enjoy easier access to public services, whereas rural areas increasingly feel more disconnected and isolated. One of the major challenges of the coming years will be to reconnect these two realities.

LRGs already actively contribute to the objectives set by the EU by working to increase energy efficiency, undertake energy renovation of buildings, accelerate the deployment of renewable energies, develop local economic, integration and equality plans, and much more.

In fact, local and regional governments' undeniable strengths and capacity for frontline actions have been on clear display time and again of late as they proficiently deal with the repercussions of crises on their territories, quickly mobilising people and budgets. For example, CEMR and its members immediately took steps to support their Ukrainian peers and help them in coping with the impact of the war. This included notably assistance in welcoming the sudden influx of refugees, mainly women and children, into municipalities and regions along the borders and further afield, as well as managing the resulting social, energy and economic consequences, often in coordination with national governments.

All this upholds our conviction that our shared values of local democracy and autonomy, equality, cooperation, and sustainability must undoubtedly remain at the heart of our efforts to mitigate the harmful effects of the multitude of crises and conflicts, including war. Furthermore, irrespective of the state of affairs, we must not lose sight of our sustainability agenda and continue striving for sustainability and

equality on our European territories on behalf of all. In 2024, European institutions are slated to undergo their prescribed renewal. This will mark the beginning of a new chapter, albeit one with only six years left to transform the 2030 Agenda into reality. Thus, now represents the watershed moment for shifting towards new models of life, consumption, and production, with public services as the core component, to ensure inclusiveness and sustainability, in bringing them to life. Preparing for future shocks and anticipating possible consequences remain after all key factors of success.

Local and regional governments, through their proximity to citizens, can serve as a driving force in responding to all these challenges. The part they play in promoting the exchange of good practices, redefining public services and amplifying citizens' voices at national and international levels all represent opportunities for the local and regional levels to make an impactful difference.

To this end, we wish to be a steadfast indispensable tool, guide and resource for our members during their mission to help LRGs become inclusive and sustainable

territories through cooperation. We want them to build greater capacity to act, monitor, evaluate and influence European policies and ambitions, which will in turn determine the direction and implementation of policies in a way conducive to creating liveable environments for and with the residents at local and regional levels.

This document is a proposal for CEMR's 2023-2024 work programme. It takes into account the current geopolitical context and the discussion that took place – involving 60 national associations of local and regional government associations from 40 European countries – during CEMR's Retreat in September 2022, as well as the European Commission's annual work programme for 2023. It outlines what will drive us – members and Secretariat alike – for the next two years. It also indicates the steps we will take to continue implementing the [multiannual strategy for 2020-2030](#).

The Annex provides further information on the activities, broken down by thematic area of work.

Overarching objective



CEMR's main objective for 2023 and 2024 is ensuring a green and inclusive transition on European territories, by dint of the leading role of national associations of local and regional governments and through participatory democracy.

We want our calls for a sustainable, green and resilient development to be heard in Europe and in the world.

Drawn up in line with CEMR's multiannual strategy, our plan of action for 2023-2024 revolves around four "Ps":

1. PEOPLE – Inclusive societies, leaving no one behind and bringing Europe closer to citizens:

Respect for equality and fundamental rights is essential to building more sustainable societies.

2. PARTNERSHIP – Local self-government, subsidiarity, cooperation, and involvement of local and regional governments

The ongoing multiple crises and the war at Europe's doorstep have underscored the importance of local and regional governments collaborating to find solutions and mitigate adverse effects.

3. PLACES – No territories left behind and a high quality of life

All territories, rural or urban, must ensure that their citizens have a good quality of life, no matter where they live. How can we ensure that they are provided with the suitable tools and framework?

4. PLANET – Carbon-neutral Europe / building resilient territories

This core objective involves guaranteeing that local and regional governments can achieve carbon-neutral societies by 2050 by looking at adapted solutions to reduce air pollution, preserve soil and water health, restore biodiversity and better collect, sort and recycle all types of waste on their territories, without leaving them to take on all the costs alone, particularly amidst soaring energy prices and external dependency.

Main lines of action for the next two years

To build more democratic, inclusive, resilient and peaceful societies, it is essential to ensure the meaningful participation of territories of all types and sizes, and to amplify their voices at national, European and international levels. We believe it is crucial to foster active participation at all levels of policymaking so that people feel represented and heard by their elected representatives, who are held accountable under the goals they have committed to achieving of democracy, fundamental rights and sustainability.

To ensure this transition takes place at the lowest social, economic and environmental cost, we will continue our work to properly

advocate before the European institutions and duly **inform** (in a timely and regular manner) the national associations of local and regional governments, representing all sizes and types of territories, in order to counteract any feeling of being left behind that can lead to the rise of extremism and the spread of misinformation, which also undermines citizens' trust in democratic institutions, as well as help LRGs to impart necessary information to their residents. We will also **build their capacity** for European initiatives through workshops and training throughout the year, with a focus on an inclusive and green transition. We also want to increase the capacity of our member associations to **develop coordinated activities** (pan-European campaigns, dissemination, events) that promote inclusive and green territorial development across Europe.

Looking inwards as well, we will continue to **streamline our internal processes** and adopt suitable state-of-the-art tools.

1. Shift towards a more sustainable and inclusive organisation

Four expected results

- CEMR functions democratically with members enabled to participate in decision-making bodies
- CEMR's network remains fit for purpose, responding to members' needs and keeping them united through the development of innovative strategies
- CEMR is financially sound and sustainable
- CEMR's Secretariat ensures high-quality daily work

Sample actions

CEMR renews its political leadership in December 2022. It will guarantee a democratic decision-making process by arriving at its views and positions through the political engagement of its members and its thematic spokespersons in particular. Building on the change process begun in 2020, CEMR will also reaffirm its values and roadmap for impact.

Moreover, a designated point of contact within the Secretariat will enable the equitable participation of members, in all their diversity, in CEMR's activities and decision-making bodies. CEMR will strive to ensure the territorial and regional diversity of its membership is reflected in the composition of its secretariat.

CEMR will also further adapt its working methods to a changing environment, using smart technologies to facilitate interactive hybrid debates, ensuring the continuous development and well-being of its staff through training, and guaranteeing smart and green procedures for the coming years.

Lastly, the CEMR Code of Conduct on harassment (adopted in 2018) was updated in 2022 and will be distributed to CEMR staff, member association staff, elected representatives, and third parties participating in CEMR activities or events to ensure that the policy has been disclosed and understood by all persons concerned. We will also develop an internal equality and diversity strategy.

2. Be the essential 'go-to' reference for all policies relating to local and regional governments at European and international levels, and a reliable partner for European institutions

Three expected results

- European local and regional government associations remain well-informed when it comes to European policies and can better influence them
- European institutions take LRGs and their associations' perspectives and needs into greater account
- LRG associations become more visible and make pertinent contributions to international events, and they form partnerships with peer LRGs, national governments and EU institutions in global fora

Sample actions

The midterm review of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027 is expected to start in 2023. The monitoring of certain instruments will be an essential part of our policy work.

Alliances with other networks are also crucial to conveying some of our messages to key decision-makers.



Furthermore, we will also partner with European institutions on the global stage to cultivate a local and regional perspective in multilateral organisations and international fora. CEMR will also represent local and regional governments' interests in non-EU bodies, e.g. the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) work on local finances, including green investments, integration of migrants and refugees, decentralised cooperation and territorial development.

3. Be the preeminent European umbrella organisation where local and regional governments and their associations can acquire knowledge and upgrade their practices

Two expected results

- European local and regional government associations enrich the CEMR network's fount of knowledge with their own experiences, enabling CEMR to produce and share further expertise on local and regional governments
- European local and regional government associations are better able to fulfil their role at the national, partner country's and EU levels.

Sample actions

Knowledge and actions are rooted in facts and evidence, peer learning and exchange of practice and experience. We will pool our associations' expertise through the use of studies, surveys and best practices. Disseminating methodologies, knowledge and tools across Europe is also crucial in strengthening national associations and enabling them to better design, implement and monitor policy frameworks in line with their competences.

If the decision is taken to organise a CEMR Conference in 2025 – providing a space for exchange, learning, and the showcasing of LRG strengths – we would like to propose addressing the following theme: local democracy and people's participation in decision-making processes at all levels of governance. The preparation process would need to start as early as 2023.

4. Become a highly visible and influential thought leader on issues relating to local and regional governments

Two expected results

- Local and regional issues and messages are disseminated to maximum effect among

relevant European and international stakeholders and decision-makers.

- CEMR and its associations benefit from maximum visibility at European level and at local level.

Sample actions

We will rethink our positioning and branding, always in the aim of improving the quality of our content both in substance (data, facts, figures) and in form (storytelling).

Our messages will be disseminated through various media, including e-publications and videos. By intensifying our communications during special campaigns and on key dates, in collaboration with our members and elected officials, we will maximise our visibility and political impact.

In a nutshell – Policy and Advocacy

Key advocacy files

- Energy and Climate: Fit for 55, REPowerEU
- Migration and Asylum Pact and FAST-CARE
- Directive on combatting gender-based violence
- Circular Economy Packages I and II: Eco-design of products, Construction products, Packaging
- European Urban Mobility Framework and TEN-T Regulation
- Zero Pollution Package
- Waste Framework Directive and Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive
- Nature Restoration Law
- Sustainable Mobility and TEN-T
- Digitalisation (Digital Act)
- New Social Dialogue
- Review of EU economic governance

Policy monitoring

- Equality
- Rural development
- Urban agenda for the EU
- Development Education and Awareness Raising
- Eastern Partnership programme

Midterm review

- Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI – Global Europe)
- Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme (CERV)
- Cohesion policy
- EU Gender Equality Strategy and EU Gender Action Plan in External Action (GAP III)

Annex – Detailed Work Programme

GLOBAL AIM

CEMR's main objective here is to represent, inspire and equip our members as well as advocate on their behalf to ensure a green territorial transition and build inclusive societies through participatory democracy.

Identification and diversification of sources of financing for long-term sustainability

Financial and narrative reports will be regularly prepared for the member associations' information (public annual activity report to be published between June and September of the following year). CEMR will also continue to ensure that contracts are duly delivered, and that donors' expectations are met in accordance with our interests.

Anticipating the impact of indexing for inflation on Belgian salaries and rent (expected to be around 10-12% next year), as well as the decrease in GDP of many countries and therefore the resulting repercussions on the level of membership fees, in order to maintain a high level in its quality of work, CEMR will continue to explore income prospects from external resources by keeping tabs on calls for proposals and contract services, including for the Secretariat itself, involving call monitoring, partnerships with new types of donors and the continuation of ongoing agreements with the European Commission. In order to ensure that any funding action is financially sound and sustainable and suitably aligned with the objectives of CEMR, this search will be carried out in accordance with the 2021 strategy on external resources and in liaison with the platform CEMR set up with members on external funding activities.

Additionally, there will be greater scrutiny of meeting costs, particularly for interpretation and catering.

As part of the multiannual Framework Partnership Agreement that CEMR signed with the European Commission (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Value programme), activity proposals for 2023 are included below.

European elections

In 2024, the next European elections will take place, a renewal affecting more than 705 members of the European Parliament. New Commissioners and a new President of the European Commission will also be appointed consecutively.

The CEMR Secretariat suggests starting to work collectively on a strategy as early as 2023 in view of developing a common local and regional political agenda ahead of the elections. This would include a set of policy priorities fundamental to CEMR's core identity that it would like to see implemented in the coming years. A decision could also be taken to address specific requests, such as the establishment of a European Parliament's intergroup¹ on public services, which would help shine a light on public services as a cornerstone of territorial solutions in Europe. Other objectives will involve identifying, with the help of our members, LRG-friendly MEPs as well as analysing the mandate of Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission (what was positive for LRGs and what could be improved).

Communication

In addition to issuing communications regarding the activities of each work area (see below),

¹ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/organisation-and->

[rules/organisation/intergroups](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/organisation-and-rules/organisation/intergroups)

CEMR will renew its annual media partnership with Euractiv, a pan-European media network specialised in EU policies targeting EU decision-makers, policy stakeholders, journalists, think tanks and other influencers in Europe. This will help boost local and regional governments' visibility at the European level.

We will continue to showcase our members' good practices, the 'stories from the field' and the

network's achievements through videos, social media, animations and the annual report.

In line with our roadmap for impact, we will leverage our brand and look into ways in which we can amplify our voice locally and on the European stage.

Finally, we will team up with our member associations' communication officers to coordinate joint actions and run thematic campaigns around key dates, events and publications.

Key dates

- 8 March 2023 – International Women's Day
- 9 May 2023 - Europe Day
- June 2023 - Policy Committee meeting in Georgia
- October 2023 - European Week of Regions and Cities
- December 2023 - Policy Committee meeting
- 2024 - European Parliament elections and appointment of new European Commission
- June 2024 – Policy Committee meeting
- September 2024 – CEMR Retreat (now every two years)
- December 2024 – Policy Committee meeting

PEOPLE

OVERALL PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

- **Mainstream transversal rights** and concerns of citizens—in all their diversity—into all relevant CEMR work according to the CEMR Secretariat's and members' expertise and ability; reinforce the mainstreaming of equality and fundamental rights issues in CEMR's political and technical work; integrate values/rights issues into all colleagues' work, **each addressing a specific angle**.
- **Build the capacity of member associations** to carry out advocacy activities at the national and European levels in the areas of equality, migration/integration, and city-to-city cooperation; build the capacity of LRGs to implement European and international policy frameworks in line with their competences.
- **Increase the visibility of local and regional governments** and LRG associations' **initiatives** on topics covered by the Citizenship Team; advocate for the key role they play by identifying and highlighting good practices.

KEY ACTIVITIES IN 2023

February	Swedish Gender Equality Conference in Malmö (TBC) Equality Charter Forum in <i>Chişinău, Moldova</i> (linked with international partnerships)
March	Final IncluCities conference Parallel event (CEMR/PLATFORMA) at 67th UN Commission on the Status of Women (scheduled for 8 March, International Women's Day)
May	International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia
June	Refugee Week Equality Charter Forum in <i>Tbilisi, Georgia</i> (linked with international partnerships)
October	European Week of Regions and Cities

November	International Day for Elimination of Violence Against Women on 25 November
December	International Migrants Day, International Human Rights Day
	Annual Structured GAP III Dialogue (linked with international partnerships)
Dates TBD	Global Refugee Forum
	Participation on the Experts' Jury for the European Capital of Democracy

ADVOCACY

- New Pact for Migration and Asylum
- Proposal for an EU Directive on preventing and combatting specific forms of gender-based violence (from 2022 *until adoption by the EU Council*)
- Urban Agenda of the EU - Proposal for a new UAEU thematic partnership: Cities of Equality ([linked with territories](#), 2023)
- European Care Strategy (2022) ([linked with territories](#))
- Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) - Annual Policy Forum for Development; Structured Dialogues with DG INTPA and EEAS; Mid-term evaluation in 2023/2024 ([linked with international partnerships](#), 2023)
- Women in politics, inclusion and diversity ([linked with European Elections](#), 2024)

EC GRANT ACTIVITIES FOR 2023

Twinning and municipal cooperation

In follow-up to the 2022 analysis of helpdesk requests posted on the CEMR website www.twinning.org, CEMR will conduct a survey to determine the needs of LRGs and their associations in terms of twinning and municipal partnerships in order to capitalise on this methodology and come up with innovative, citizen-centred solutions to common challenges of our time. This work will also prepare the ground for a future project centred on twinning and municipal cooperation in Europe as a way to address societal challenges (with a focus on inclusion). CEMR provides impetus for rethinking this type of cooperation; the time has come for a twinning renaissance! Actions envisaged include:

- Organise a workshop with members
- Make technical modifications to the website to fix and improve the user interface; provide a better networking space for LRGs/LRGAs to find partners; post funding opportunities and information that are up-to-date
- Publish an interactive report on what Europe's LRGs and LRGAs need to best optimise the use of twinning as a tool, including methodology and guidance on twinning and recommendations

Migrant integration and inclusion

Continuing the work on the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) and related webinar that took place in 2022, CEMR will conduct a preliminary study to understand what occurred in LRGs/LRGAs one year after the historic activation of the TPD. CEMR will expect each member association to facilitate survey responses from a minimum of 15 municipalities and regions in their country so as to have an adequate sample size for making comparisons and drawing some initial conclusions on what the impact of the TPD has been on local service provision and financial expenditure. This project could be a jumping-off point for a more in-depth study in 2024 on how the first activation of TPD impacted financial expenditure and service provision for LRGs. Actions envisaged include:

- Organise an event during which LRG/LRGAs can initiate a dialogue with European representatives and decision-makers on migration and inclusion from a local perspective, with a special focus on the TPD's effects one year after its activation
- Conduct a preliminary study (two-page factsheet); issue policy recommendations; hold exchanges with representatives and decision-makers from EU institutions prior to March 2024
- Organise an event on International Migrants Day (December) to present the initial findings regarding the TPD's impact on LRGs one year later

Gender equality – Preparation, research and data collection for the 2024 edition of CEMR’s study ‘Women in Politics: Local and European Trends’

CEMR has been monitoring the representation of women in politics from the local and subnational levels to national and European levels, as can be seen in its many studies, since 1998 and most recently in 2019. To strengthen our actions advocating for gender-balanced leadership, CEMR will begin collecting data for a new publication to document the evidence of the continued underrepresentation of women in decision-making at all levels in Europe.

This work of compiling updated statistics is scheduled to be conducted over an 18-month period (March 2023 to September 2024) with the final results (including women’s representation in the EU Parliament following the elections and renewal of the Commission’s leadership) to be published in English and French in September 2024. If possible, CEMR would also like to gain a better understanding of the diversity of the women holding elected office (in terms of age, education level, country of origin/migration status).

This is an important undertaking, which will help to raise awareness of the challenges, solutions and need for sex-disaggregated data at the local level. The objective is to improve the level of knowledge and encourage innovation in public policies in order to better support new approaches to policymaking. Actions envisaged include:

- Continue CEMR’s #Power2Her campaign to increase the number of women in politics, building on the results of studies conducted in 2008 and 2018/19
- Collect data on women’s representation in assemblies and top leadership positions at the local, intermediate and regional levels in 40 countries (a two-page information sheet)
- Conduct a qualitative survey of local/regional elected women on their experiences (types of portfolios held, pay/remuneration as well as any harassment or dropping out)

CEMR strategy on diversity and equality

Thought will be given to internal recruitment processes and how to further improve the targeting of the non-usual populations who sometimes have less access to the European bubble, and in particular those of diverse ethnic origin. We hope that this will also help to diversify the composition of our statutory bodies in the long term. Three components envisaged consist of:

- Strategic procurement in line with the values we promote (equality, inclusion);
- Diversity policy for CEMR recruitment;
- Training for staff on verbal self-defence.

EXPERT GROUPS

- CEMR Expert Group on Gender Equality
- CEMR Standing Committee for Equality
- CEMR Task Force on Migrant Integration and Inclusion
- CEMR Expert Group on Twinning

PROJECTS

- **IncluCities**: building inclusive cities with migrants (2020-2023, end of project March 2023)
- Gender equality – **European Charter for Equality and Community of Practice** (application Q1 2023, implementation Q4 2023-Q4 2025)
- **Next Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) call** (*TBD*)

STUDIES AND PUBLICATIONS

- Intersectionality primer for LRGs (dissemination)
- Twinning analysis (dissemination)
- Modernised European Charter for Equality and amendments (dissemination)
- 2021-22 Survey of Charter signatories (dissemination)
- IncluCities infographics (January-February 2023)

- IncluCities thematic toolkits for migrant integration (January-February 2023)
- Thematic note: gender equality in decentralised cooperation ([linked with international partnerships](#), May-June 2023)

PLANET

OVERALL TEAM PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2023-2024

- **Climate and Energy Independence** | CEMR will continue working on the monitoring and advocacy actions linked to the revision and implementation of the EU's climate and energy legislation under the Green Deal. This also concerns central elements of the Fit-for-55 package such as the Energy Efficiency (RED) and the Renewable Energy (EED) directives, the Energy Performance in Buildings Directive (EPBD) and initiatives ensuing from the REPowerEU Plan, which was launched to overcome the EU's dependency on Russian fossil fuels following the war in Ukraine (e.g. EU Solar Initiative, review of the electricity market design). Moreover, support for national activities will be provided through the Covenant of Mayors in order to reinforce multilevel governance and offer capacity-building opportunities for the climate and energy transition.
- **Localisation of SDGs and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) conference** | At global level, CEMR will advocate for the localisation of the United Nations' environmental and sustainability objectives. We will participate in the 28th UNFCCC's Conference of the Parties' (COP28) in the United Arab Emirates and work on achieving the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **National Energy and Climate Plans** | CEMR will be actively following the revision process of the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECP) until 2024. In 2023, our research on the draft revisions of the NECPs will be the focus of a publication that also examines LRGs' involvement in the process. In the second half of the year, we plan to organise a conference to discuss effective multi-level governance processes in European and international climate policies, but also to present the study and its key recommendations to policymakers. For this undertaking, we plan to join forces with the Covenant of Mayors.
- **Sustainable Finance** | In 2023, we will build on the findings detailed in our study "Local Finances and the Green Transition – Managing Emergencies and Boosting Local Investments for a Sustainable Recovery in CEMR member countries" (release in Q4 2022). This new online publication will contribute to CEMR's advocacy efforts to mobilise more financial means for the green transition (renewable energy production, mobility, cooling and heating of buildings etc.). CEMR will continue partnering with ESPON and the OECD to better assess subnational sustainable finance funding mechanisms and to identify funding opportunities, such as applying the **EU Taxonomy**. We will also examine the financial impacts of the Green Deal and the Fit-for-55 package and REPowerEU in particular.
- **Circular Economy and Waste** | CEMR will continue working on the Circular Economy packages through its advocacy of the Circular Economy Package I, published on 30 March 2022. Members have showed particular interest in the Ecodesign Directive on products and the Regulation on construction products. In addition, CEMR will produce a **position paper on the Circular Economy Packages** after the second package has been published, expected on 30 November 2022. CEMR will also notably conduct advocacy work on the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive. The revision of the Waste Framework Directive (WFD), planned for the second quarter of 2023, will also be followed closely, especially in light of CEMR's earlier contributory response to the call for evidence and public consultation opened by the Commission.

- **Mobility** | CEMR will continue working to ensure that the new **European Urban Mobility Framework** takes local and regional authorities' interests and needs fully into consideration. In parallel, the Expert Group's work will mainly be focusing on the advocacy work pertaining to **the TEN-T Regulation**.
- **Environment and Biodiversity** | The **Zero Pollution Package**, scheduled for release on 26 October 2022, will be central to the Expert Group's work in the coming year as it also encompasses other important policy issues, such as the **Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive** and the revision of **the EU ambient air quality** legislation. The **Nature Restoration Law**, including the Healthy Soil Law, will be another area of focus of the Expert Group's work.

ADVOCACY

- Advocacy on the **Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (UWWTD)** (Q2-2022)
- Advocacy on the finalisation and implementation of the **Fit for 55 package**:
 - Amendment to the Renewable Energy Directive
 - Amendment of the Energy Efficiency Directive
 - Revision of the Directive on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure
 - Revision of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive
- Advocacy on the **REPowerEU Plan**
 - EU Solar Initiative
 - Redesign of the EU Electricity Market Design
- Advocacy on the revision of the National Energy and Climate Plans
- Advocacy on the **new Urban Mobility Framework** (Q4 2020)
- Contribution to the **Revised guidelines for Public Service Obligations** in the field of public transport (with the Territories team)
- Advocacy on **Circular Economy Packages I and II**
- Advocacy on the **revision of the Waste Framework Directive** (scheduled for Q2 2023)
- Advocacy on the **Zero Pollution Package**
- Advocacy on biodiversity and the **Nature Regulation Law**
- Advocacy on the **Healthy Soil Law**
- Advocacy on **sustainable finance** – implementation and development of the EU Taxonomy
- Advocacy of the recognition of LRGs in combatting climate change in the UNFCCC negotiations
- Advocacy to localise the SDGs/2030 Agenda

EC GRANT ACTIVITIES FOR 2023

As part of the multiannual Partnership Agreement that CEMR signed with the European Commission (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Value programme), the following have been proposed for the Climate and Environment team activities:

- A workshop on a cross-cutting environmental topic that would involve all the green Expert Groups, to be held during the EU's Green Week 2023 (first week of June TBC)
- A publication and a conference on LRGs' involvement in the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECP), to be held during the second half of 2023

EXPERT GROUPS

- **Climate and Energy** | Chair: Andreas Hagnell (SALAR) | CEMR contact: Marlon Hilden
- **Mobility** | Chair: Caspar Sluiter (VNG) | CEMR contact: Axelle Griffon and Théo Giubilei
- **Waste and Circular Economy** | Chair: Marianne Haugland (KS) | CEMR contact: Théo Giubilei
- **Environment** | Chair: vacant | CEMR contact: Théo Giubilei

PROJECTS

- **Covenant of Mayors Europe (CoM)**
 - Providing support for the organisation of national activities on:
 - Promoting the Covenant, notably by recruiting (new) signatories, keeping them actively engaged and ensuring the initiative is recognised at national level
 - Building the capacities of local authorities (signatories or not) in the areas of climate change and energy
 - Strengthening multi-level governance in energy and climate policies; organisation of capacity-building webinars and workshops
 - Promoting the work and offering assistance to Covenant of Mayors adherents (including CEMR members)
- **Green City Accord (GCA)** – expected to end in Q1 2023
- **Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC)**
- **Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI)** – starting in January 2022 (three years)
- *Participation in the Adaptation Mission Forum (TBC)*

STUDIES AND PUBLICATIONS

- Local and regional governments’ involvement in the National Energy and Climate Plans (NECPs)
- Follow-up to the 2022 study “Local Finances and the Green Transition in Europe: A decade of local finances – from crisis to sustainable recovery”

KEY DATES IN 2023-2024

February	Cities Forum
May	EU Green Week – cross-cutting Expert Group
June	Swedish Presidency Conference on Green Cities (15-16 June TBC)
September	EU Mobility Week EU Sustainable Energy Week
October	Release of the Study on the National Energy and Climate Plans (TBC)
November	COP28 in the UAE
December	Fourth anniversary of the European Green Deal

PLACES

OVERALL TEAM PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2023-2024

- **Recovery and Resilience Plans |** CEMR will continue monitoring the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and the experiences of local and regional governments in this regard. Spending commitments under the RRF Regulation will have to be made by the end of 2024 and the gathering of insights from CEMR’s members on their access to RRF grants and loans will be instrumental in shaping policymakers’ views on moving forward with the RRF approach beyond 2024. In this regard, CEMR’s expert group on governance will remain a valuable platform of exchange. The knowledge gained from the implementation of the RRF, REACT-EU and this new delivery model will enrich CEMR’s thought processes and positions on the next programming period and the **future of Cohesion policy**.
- **EU Economic Governance and Sustainable Finance |** In 2023, we will build on the work encapsulated in the online study “Local Finances and the Green Transition in Europe: A decade of local finances – from crisis to sustainable recovery” (launch event on 10 November 2022). This publication will bolster CEMR’s advocacy on the revision of the Stability and Growth Pact in favour of an **EU economic governance framework** that enables and fosters local and regional public investments.

CEMR will continue partnering with ESPON and the OECD as well as work with the CEMR expert group on local finances to more fully grasp the impact of COVID-19, the Russian war in Ukraine and the soaring costs of energy and inflation on **local and regional governments' finance and investments**. As part of CEMR's "knowledge sharing" pillar, we will foster exchanges of experience on this topic all across CEMR's member countries.

The **Territory team** will also work in close cooperation with the **Green team** on sustainable finance and the link between Cohesion Policy funds, the Green Deal and REPowerEU in particular.

- **EU's Digital Decade** | The CEMR position paper on "Digital Services for All" was published on 21 January 2022. It was developed to ensure that local and regional governments remain at the forefront of the digital transition as a key player facilitating the spread of digital solutions for citizens, and was also a proactive step to prevent unnecessary economic and administrative burdens stemming from EU initiatives. It also calls for a regulatory and financial framework that truly supports the digitalisation of local and regional administrations. The next European Social Dialogue will focus on digitalisation in the workplace, and will dedicate a new project to this.
- **Social Dialogue** | CEMR will keep close tabs on the Commission's reform of the European Social Dialogue. It will look to safeguard the fundamental role of the European Social Dialogue in helping LRGs to deliver quality public services.
- **Participative Democracy and Deliberative Processes** | Governments are increasingly utilising deliberative methods alongside representative democracy to boost citizens' trust in political processes and as a means to better assess their needs. CEMR wishes to explore the extent to which our members are involved in these developments. CEMR will begin working with members to determine what examples of deliberative processes currently exist in the field in order to help inform its actions moving forward.
- **Care** | Both the impact of an ageing population and shifts in social and family structures make the case for the proportionate and germane involvement of CEMR in the debates on the future of care services. In particular, our work will centre around the recent European Care Strategy.
- **Sustainable Development** | We will continue our advocacy of more inclusive territories that leave no one behind through the Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities. Since March 2021, we have provided guidance and support to 19 cities, under the new URBACT thematic network (Tallinn, Manresa and Braga, among others), throughout their implementation of urban projects structured around the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Cohesion Policy** | CEMR and several members have been involved in a new European Community of Practice on Partnership for improving the implementation of the **Partnership Principle**; this may lead to a potential renewal of the European Code of Conduct on Partnership. In addition to these activities, in efforts to expand its analysis of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) (available end of 2022), CEMR will draft an initial position paper on its findings, conclusions and recommendations for the **future of Cohesion Policy**, and continue its work involving the European Parliament, by way of its Committee on Regional Development (REGI) and the Cohesion Alliance. The CEMR expert group on territorial cohesion will provide an opportunity to impart and exchange information on programming and the implementation of European Structural and Investment Funds. CEMR will also seek to boost communications on Cohesion Policy, possibly through an EU-funded project.
- **Territorial, Urban and Rural Development** | CEMR will be closely associated with the launch of two new thematic partnerships under the **Urban Agenda** for the EU (Cities of Equality and Urban

Food). We will also disseminate any calls, events, and information from the new European Urban Initiative. CEMR will facilitate exchanges within CEMR and with external partners on rural development, as well as monitor the implementation of the **Rural Pact**.

ADVOCACY

- Advocacy on the future **European Semester**
- Advocacy on the **implementation of national recovery and resilience plans**
- Advocacy on the EU's **Digital decade**
- Advocacy on the **EU's economic governance**
- Advocacy on the **future of Cohesion Policy** and the **Partnership Principle**
- Advocacy on the review of the **European Social Dialogue**
- Advocacy as part of the **Rural Pact Community** follow-up on the **Long-Term Vision for Rural areas**

EC GRANT ACTIVITIES FOR 2023

- **Training/info session on European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)** covering the new period, accompanied by a short guide on different methods of ESIF implementation and management in EU countries
- **Follow-up event on the long-term vision for rural areas**
- **Follow-up analysis of the Recovery and Resilience Facility implementation** and involvement of local and regional governments (event and advocacy)

EXPERT GROUPS

- **Governance and Local Democracy** | CEMR contact: Carol Thomas
- **Territorial Cohesion** | Chair: Michael Schmitz (DLT) | CEMR contact: Marine Gaudron
- **Local Finance** | Chairs: Cemal Bas (UTM); Florian Schilling (DStGB) | CEMR contact: Marine Gaudron
- **Local and Regional Governments as Employers** | Chair: Marc Elxnat (DE) | CEMR contact: Paolo Ciambellini
- **Public Services and e-Government** | Chair: Tanja Struve (DE, DLT) | CEMR contact: Paolo Ciambellini
- **Digitalisation** | Chair: Hallvard Hoen (KS) | CEMR contact: Paolo Ciambellini

PROJECTS

- The [Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities](#) (RFSC)
- The role of social partners in preventing third-party violence and harassment at work
- EU Dialogues, Local Solutions
- Digitalisation for All in local and regional governments (Local Social Digital)

STUDIES AND PUBLICATIONS

- **Integrated Territorial Investments** | Short analysis on the use of ITI, CLLD and national integrated territorial investment tools (end of 2022)
- **“Local Finances and the Green Transition in Europe: A decade of local finances – from crisis to sustainable recovery”** (Launch event on 10 November 2022)
- **RFSC | Improved ‘how-to guide’ and publications for RFSC users.** Case studies and lessons learned on using the RFSC to localise SDGs from URBACT

KEY DATES IN 2023-2024

16-17 March · Cities Forum (Turin, Italy)

- June (TBC)**
 - 15-16 June (TBC)**
 - October**
 - 2024**
- UN Habitat Assembly
 - Swedish Presidency Conference on Green Cities
 - European Week of Cities and Regions
 - European elections
 - Summit of Regions and Cities
 - 12th World Urban Forum

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

OVERALL TEAM PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES FOR 2023-2024

- **Strengthen the voice** of EU local and regional governments (LRGs) and their representative associations in EU development policy and ensure they are heard with respect to global agendas and fora
- **Mobilise EU LRGs and associations** towards decentralised cooperation, in partnership with peers
- **Improve current practices** in decentralised cooperation through better knowledge and enhanced learning

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

- 1. Decentralised Cooperation** | Contribute to the mid-term review of the Global Europe instrument
 - a. Assess how local and regional governments both in Europe and in partner countries have been involved in the programming and implementation phase – link with the Team Europe Initiative and the Global Gateway
 - b. Monitor alongside the European Commission and Parliament the use of the €500 million earmarked for local governments
 - c. Through the CoR Alliance, provide information and feedback to the EU institutions, Ukraine reconstruction platform and other stakeholders on municipal cooperation for the reconstruction of Ukraine
 - d. Actively contribute to the Policy Forum on Development (structured dialogue with the European Commission and Civil Society Organisations)
 - e. Work in view of Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) – Annual forum
 - f. Hold annual meeting with the Commissioner for International Partnerships as follow-up to the signing of a Framework Partnership Agreement with the European Commission
- 2. Eastern Partnership and Ukraine**
 - a. Contribute to the localisation of the EU Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and to the EU-Eastern partnership programme (EaP)
 - b. Support local governments and their associations in EaP countries in their efforts to consolidate advances in decentralisation, public administration reforms and local self-government; stand behind them in their dialogue with the EU as candidate countries
 - c. Organise training for Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine on gaining access to EU funds and programmes
 - d. Build the capacity of local officials and facilitate the exchange of experiences between former and current candidate countries

- e. Support local governments and increase associations' involvement in establishing partnerships between Ukrainian and EU municipalities (using the Bridges of Trust project as the framework)
- f. Organise capacity-building training and visits between Ukrainian and EU local governments (under the Bridges of Trust project)

3. Exchange with partner countries

- a. Enhance dialogue with EU Delegations on the implementation of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe
- b. Contribute to the 2023 EU-Latin America and Caribbean Summit
- c. Contribute to the EU-EaP Summit
- d. Promote exchanges between young local and regional leaders
- e. Promote exchanges between women local leaders

4. Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) | Global Citizenship Education (GCE)

- a. Raise awareness on the added value of decentralised cooperation
- b. Work to implement the Declaration on Global Education in Europe to 2050
- c. Monitor the DEAR component of the Global Europe instruments and promote awareness-raising campaigns implemented by local and regional governments
- d. Participate in the multistakeholder group of the European Commission

5. Culture

- a. Follow up on the European Parliament's report on the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations
- b. Contribute to UCLG's Culture Committee

6. Sustainable Development Goals and Global Agendas

- a. 2030 Agenda | CEMR will release an updated edition of its publication with PLATFORMA on the localisation of the SDGs in Europe and work with peers in partner countries. Particular attention will be paid to the Voluntary Subnational Reviews (more than ten European countries will be reporting to the UN in 2023)
- b. Work on CEMR's contribution to the first-ever EU voluntary review on SDGs to the UN: it will consist of a policy paper evaluating how European internal and external policies play a role in achieving the 2030 Agenda
- c. Lobby on behalf of LRGs at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process on climate and at COP summits on the role that they can play in the fight against climate and in coordination with the UN Constituency Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA)
- d. Contribute to UCLG's work and coordination, in particular the pact for the future, gender equality, and local finance

7. Young Elected Official Committee

- a. Consolidate the platform of dialogue between young European leaders to encourage the exchange of good practice with peers from all over the world on issues relating to local sustainable development
- b. Help young elected representatives become aware of the major European policies as well as the opportunities made available to them by the European institutions, offering them the means to contribute to the European debate (e.g. training sessions, peer-to-peer exchanges with CEMR/PLATFORMA's partners, etc.)
- c. Strengthen the voice of local and regional governments in European and international events

EXPERT GROUPS

- CEMR Committee on international affairs
- PLATFORMA cluster on the 2030 Agenda and SDGs
- PLATFORMA cluster on the role of the national associations
- PLATFORMA cluster on DEAR/GCE
- PLATFORMA cluster on the dialogue with EU Delegations and the coordination in partner countries
- PLATFORMA cluster on the Eastern Partnership
- Implementation Committee for the Bridges of Trust project

PROJECTS

- PLATFORMA
- Bridges of Trust 2.0 – supporting municipal partnerships with Ukrainian municipalities

STUDIES, PUBLICATIONS AND CAMPAIGNS

- Mapping of decentralised cooperation
- Thematic note on gender equality in decentralised cooperation
- Thematic note on culture, development and decentralised cooperation, and mapping of examples
- Annual European Days of Local Solidarity (EDLS): every year a huge number of European municipalities organise events with inhabitants regarding global agendas and their actions of solidarity
- Contribution to the report on the Status of Global Education directed by the Global Education Network Europe (GENE)
- Promotion of the 2022 PLATFORMAwards for winning partnerships
- Annual reports on SDGs for the HLPF in July

EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE (CAPACITY BUILDING)

- Partnerships EU-Ukraine (Bridges of Trust)
- PLATFORMA-UCLG Training on SDGs in decentralised cooperation
- PLATFORMA Training on resilience in 2023

ALLIANCES

- Collaboration with the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD on a Global Toolkit currently being developed by the OECD
- Collaboration with the national ministries' network (GENE) on development education and awareness raising
- Lobbying with LGMA on climate (ICLEI is the focus)
- Lobbying with the members of the European Alliance of Cities and Regions *for the Reconstruction of Ukraine*

KEY DATES

- 67th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67), March 2023
- Policy Forum on Development – Global meeting (March 2023)
- Second UN-Habitat Assembly, 5-9 June 2023 (Nairobi, Kenya)
- European Development Days, June 2023
- 11th UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, July 2023
- Ukraine Recovery Conference, July 2023 (London, United Kingdom)
- SDG Summit, September 2023 (held every four years)
- Cities and Regions for International Partnerships, Autumn 2023

- UN Climate Change Conference (CoP28), 6-17 November 2023 (Dubai, UAE)
- EU-Latin America and Caribbean Summit 2023 (TBC)
- 68th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68), March 2024
- 12th UN-Habitat World Urban Forum (WUF12), June 2024 (Cairo, Egypt)
- 12th UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, July 2024
- UN Climate Change Conference (CoP29), November 2024 (Australia/Pacific Islands)

SPOKESPERSONS 2022

Link to the list: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rCFVtygwTPEg_FYj1iMCF1Jyhrdc_qTv/view



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