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# [ Foreword ]

Founded in 1951, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the oldest and, through its membership, the broadest representative association of European local and regional authorities.

Indeed, CEMR differentiates itself from other associations in that its members are national associations representing local and regional authorities rather than the authorities themselves.

In this CEMR Welcome Pack, you will find information about our association, which we hope will be useful to you throughout your work.

How was CEMR founded? How did it and will it evolve? What is CEMR today? How does it function? Who works at and represents CEMR? What are its fields of activity and work?

All of these questions, and more, will be answered in this very Welcome Pack. Should you require any further information, I and my Secretariat General, are at your full disposal. I would also invite you to consult the CEMR website, available both in English and French ([www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)).

Also, at the occasion of a future trip to Paris or Brussels, come visit us at either of our Secretariat offices. We would be delighted to take some time to exchange with you and to show you our premises.

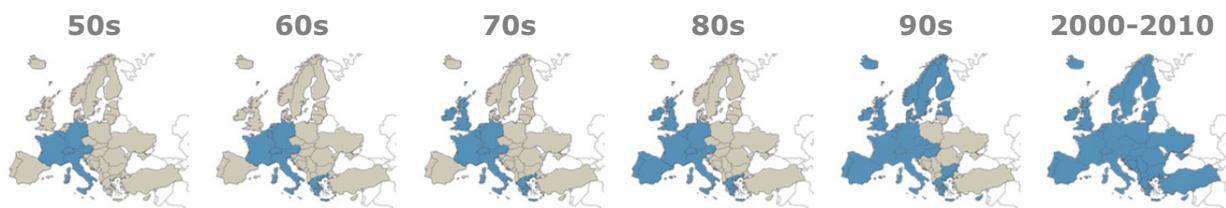
Frédéric Vallier  
CEMR Secretary General



# [ Our history ]

The Council of European Municipalities was founded on 28 January 1951 in Geneva by some sixty mayors from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, Switzerland, and The Netherlands. The aim of this newly-formed association was to create a network of elected representatives from municipalities and cities, united in the promotion of the ideal of a Europe founded on local autonomy.

In 1984, CEMR recognised regions as active government authorities and welcomed them into the association, thus becoming the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). Then, in 1989, with the fall of the Berlin wall, CEMR began to head east thus considerably broadening its membership.



*CEMR membership from 1951 until now*

In 1990, CEMR became the European section of the world organisation of local authorities, the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), which later merged with the FMCU-UTO to create United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in 2004.

Since its creation, CEMR aims at representing local and regional authorities at the European level, be it vis-à-vis EU institutions or the Council of Europe, to inform and interest these authorities in the creation and development of a united Europe and to organise local and collective responses to arising economic and social problems.

In the past sixty years, CEMR has notably contributed to developing the principal of "*autonomous self-government*" at the local and regional levels and to the creation and implementation of a true European regional policy. CEMR also participated in initiatives launched to strengthen the European institutions, including the setting-up of consultative bodies within the Council of Europe and its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the EU, and the Committee of the Regions, as well as the creation of the European Parliament intergroup representing the interests of local and regional authorities.

# [ Our present ]

Today, CEMR is the largest organisation representing local and regional authorities all across Europe. Its members are 53 national associations of towns, municipalities and regions from 39 European countries, which account for some 100 000 local and regional authorities. CEMR thus does not limit itself to the 27 EU member states but rather covers the European continent on a larger scale.

CEMR works to promote a greater local and regional autonomy by trying to **influence European legislation** and pushing for the participation of local and regional authorities in the European integration process. CEMR strives to ensure that future EU legislation takes into account local and regional interests, in collaboration with its member associations. A number of **policy positions** are developed with the help of experts and CEMR members, which are then pushed forward throughout the European legislative process in the hopes of influencing the EU institutions.

CEMR also works in close collaboration with the **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**<sup>1</sup> of the Council of Europe, including in the promotion of the European Local Democracy Week. In addition, CEMR is an associate member of **NALAS**,<sup>2</sup> the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe, and works in close cooperation for the promotion of local democracy and good local governance.

W<sub>www.</sub>

1. [www.coe.int/t/Congress](http://www.coe.int/t/Congress)
2. [www.nalas.eu](http://www.nalas.eu)

CEMR aims at reinforcing the ideal of a united Europe, having thus undertaken a series of activities to enable the full participation of citizens in the European construction. Such activities include **citizenship and town twinning**, which has been at the heart of CEMR's work since its founding in the early 1950's, when the official twinning movement began. In this regard, CEMR went on to help set up a European fund for the promotion and development of citizenship and twinning in 1988, known today as the "*Europe for citizens*" programme. Today, CEMR cooperates with the European Commission Directorate General for Communication, which orchestrates the aforementioned programme.

In 2008, CEMR created a website<sup>3</sup> entirely dedicated to town twinning, available in 23 languages, which allows mayors to find suitable partners for their cities and municipalities. Another website<sup>4</sup> dedicated to international cooperation was also created and linked to the aforementioned website. Finally, CEMR has recently launched a reflection process so as to adapt the citizenship and twinning movement to current needs and challenges.

CEMR is also at the forefront of the European debate on the **participation of women in local political life**. Indeed, in 2006, CEMR launched the European Charter for Equality of

W<sub>www.</sub>

3. [www.twinning.org](http://www.twinning.org)
4. <http://int.twinning.org>
5. [www.ccre.org/docs/charte\\_equalite\\_en.pdf](http://www.ccre.org/docs/charte_equalite_en.pdf)

Men and Women in Local Life,<sup>5</sup> which has been signed by over 1 000 local and regional authorities all across Europe.

Moreover, CEMR is active within and host to **PLATFORMA**,<sup>6</sup> the European platform of local and regional authorities for development, created in 2008. This platform provides sub-national governments and their associations with the possibility of coordinating and strengthening their voices in terms of development cooperation vis-à-vis the EU institutions. In addition, PLATFORMA is the designated Secretariat of the European Charter of Development Cooperation in Support of Local Governance, launched in 2008, which CEMR in turn actively supports and promotes.

Also among CEMR's more recent commitments is its involvement in the **Covenant of Mayors**,<sup>7</sup> whereby municipalities commit to developing sustainable energy action plans in order to reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions beyond the EU objective of 20% by 2020. CEMR's role consists in promoting of the Covenant, participating in the organisation of events, and heading relations with the associations of local and regional authorities. CEMR has been involved in the development of the Covenant from the very beginning. Thus, we have been widely consulted by the European Commission and had the opportunity to directly contribute to the shaping of the Covenant priorities. Together with other European networks, CEMR jointly provides and manages the Covenant of Mayors Office since January 2008. Today more than 2 150 municipalities have adhered to the Covenant.

CEMR is also involved in the Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities, a web-based tool to help cities and municipalities develop sustainable development strategies or projects.

W<sub>www.</sub>

6. [www.platforma-dev.eu](http://www.platforma-dev.eu)

7. <http://www.eumayors.eu>

8. <http://www.cities-localgovernments.org>

Finally, CEMR is the European section of the world organisation of local and regional authorities, **United Cities and Local Governments**<sup>8</sup> (UCLG).

## [ Our political structure ]

CEMR's main governing bodies<sup>9</sup> are the Policy Committee and the Executive Bureau.

The **Policy Committee** approves the budget and the annual work programme, decides on the main policy lines and on the adhesion of new members. The Committee is composed of over 170 members elected for three years, with each member country having a number of seats ranging from three places for countries of less than 5 million inhabitants, to 8 seats for countries of more than 75 million.

The **Executive Bureau** includes CEMR's president, co-presidents, executive presidents, a maximum of ten vice-

W<sub>www.</sub>

9. [http://www.ccre.org/structure\\_politique\\_en.htm](http://www.ccre.org/structure_politique_en.htm)

presidents and the secretary general. It follows up on Policy Committee decisions and, between Committee meetings, is responsible for CEMR's work and policy.

CEMR's political leadership is ensured by its presidency, which comprises:

- ★ The president, elected by the Policy Committee. The president is meant to represent CEMR and chair statutory meetings.
- ★ The co-presidents, elected by the Policy Committee.
- ★ The executive presidents, nominated by the president with the approval of the Policy Committee to assist him in representing the organisation.

All of these office-holders have a three-year mandate.

Elections, held at the occasion of CEMR's Policy Committee meeting in Mondorf-les-Bains, Luxemburg, on 6 and 7 December 2010, saw the renewal of CEMR's political structure and statutory bodies.

## [ Our members ]

CEMR's members<sup>10</sup> are national associations of local and regional government, whose own members are local or regional authorities in their country.

CEMR has 53 member associations in 39 out of the 47 Council of Europe member countries, including the 27 EU member states.

New member associations are approved by the Policy Committee, having established that they are both representative and democratic. Full membership is open to associations in countries belonging to the Council of Europe.



W<sub>www.</sub>

10. [www.ccre.org/membres\\_en.htm](http://www.ccre.org/membres_en.htm)

## [ How are we funded? ]

Approximately 85% of CEMR's budget comes from its members' annual subscriptions, calculated for each country based on a formula combining GDP and population. It amounts to a total of around €1.6 million. In addition, CEMR benefits from a European Commission grant amounting to some €240 000 per year. We also receive funding for projects, such as PLATFORMA and the Covenant of Mayors, enabling us to undertake specific actions.

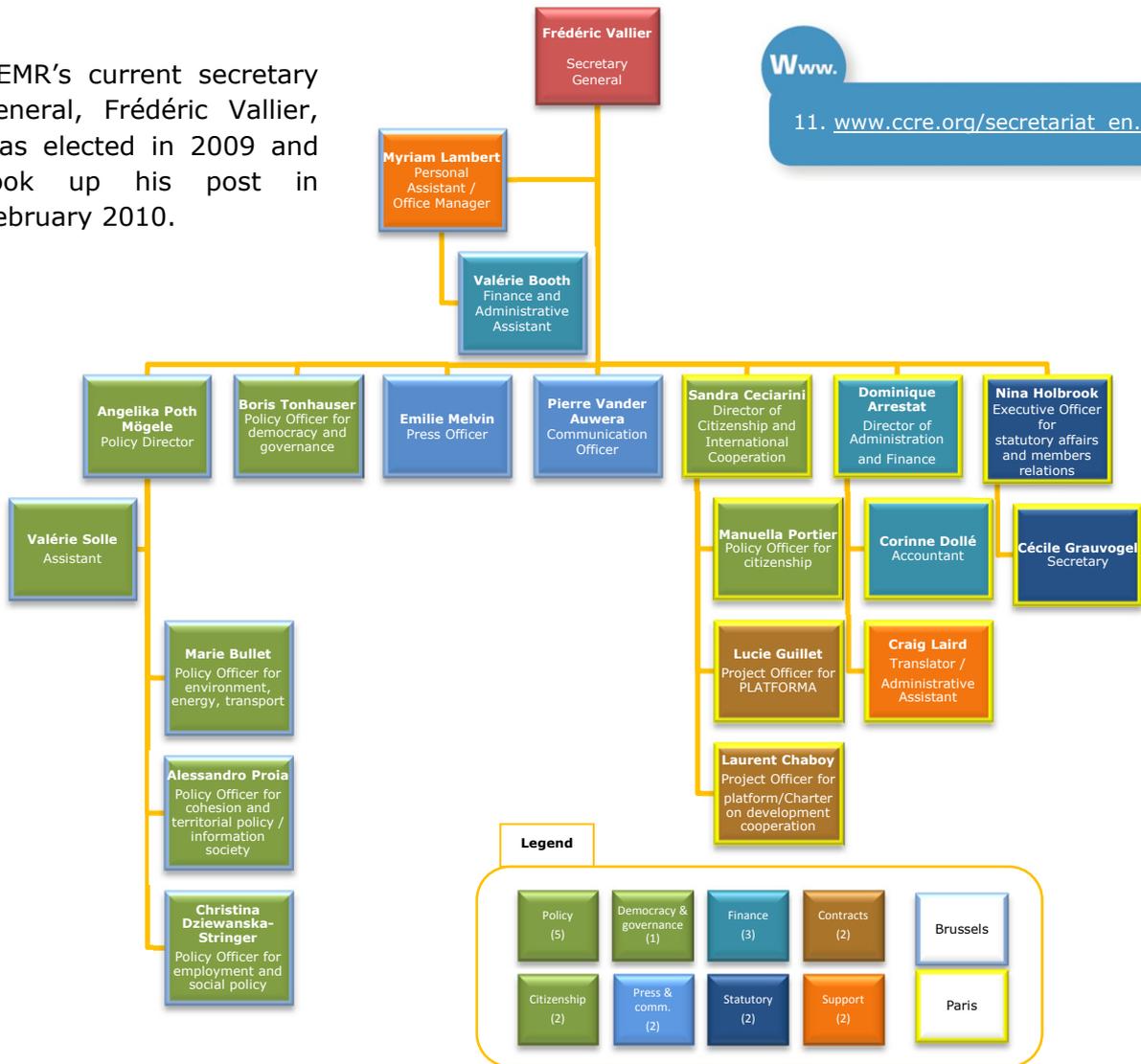
# [ Our Secretariat ]

The staff of CEMR's Secretariat General<sup>11</sup> is composed of some 20 people based in Brussels and Paris and working in five different services (European Policies, Citizenship and Twinning, Statutory Affairs and Member Relations, Press and Communication, Finance and Administration).

CEMR's Secretariat is headed by a secretary general, elected by the Policy Committee for a period of six years, and who is responsible for ensuring the daily functioning of CEMR.

CEMR's current secretary general, Frédéric Vallier, was elected in 2009 and took up his post in February 2010.

W<sub>www.</sub>  
11. [www.ccre.org/secretariat\\_en.htm](http://www.ccre.org/secretariat_en.htm)



# [ Our fields of activity ]

CEMR is active in a number of fields<sup>12</sup> including influencing European law and policy with an impact on local and regional levels. It also campaigns for a stronger role for decentralised governments, promotes good practices in terms of local governance and the exchange of experiences at the local and regional level. CEMR has been, and still is, very active when it comes to issues revolving around citizenship.

- ★ Cohesion and territorial policy
- ★ Climate change
- ★ Employment
- ★ Energy
- ★ Environment
- ★ Equal opportunities
- ★ Democracy, governance and European integration
- ★ Information society and e-government
- ★ International local government
- ★ Local and regional governments as employers (European social dialogue)
- ★ North-South cooperation
- ★ Public services and procurement
- ★ Social affairs
- ★ Transport
- ★ Twinning
- ★ World affairs – European section of UCLG

W<sub>www.</sub>

12. [www.ccre.org/champs\\_activites\\_en.htm](http://www.ccre.org/champs_activites_en.htm)

13. [www.ccre.org/commissions\\_et\\_groupes\\_de\\_travail\\_en.htm](http://www.ccre.org/commissions_et_groupes_de_travail_en.htm)

# [ Our committees and working groups ]

CEMR has both **committees and working groups**<sup>13</sup>, which address specific issues or themes of interest to local and regional authorities, thus covering all of CEMR's fields of activities (see above). Committee and group members meet on a regular basis, accompanied by the relevant CEMR policy or project officer, so as to determine CEMR's positions vis-à-vis different EU legislation.

CEMR has also created a number of **focus groups** so as to discuss less permanent subjects and challenges.

In the framework of its reflection process (see below), CEMR and its members are looking to adapt the functioning and structure of these committees and working groups so as to render their work more transversal.

# Our positions, policy papers, publications, newsletter

CEMR produces a number of **position and policy papers**,<sup>14</sup> drafted by its various working groups, committees and CEMR policy and project officers. These papers allow for CEMR and its members to speak on behalf of local and regional authorities and represent their interests throughout the different stages of the EU legislative process.

W<sub>www.</sub>

- 14. [www.ccre.org/prises\\_de\\_positions\\_en.htm](http://www.ccre.org/prises_de_positions_en.htm)
- 15. [www.ccre.org/publications\\_en.htm](http://www.ccre.org/publications_en.htm)

CEMR produces **publications**<sup>15</sup> providing expert views and key messages on specific issues and themes related to local and regional authorities. In addition, and to

support its advocacy efforts, CEMR occasionally publishes **charters**, such as the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life<sup>16</sup> or the European Charter of Local and Regional Services of General Interest.<sup>17</sup>

CEMR also publishes a series of **studies** and documents on specific issues, such as the effects of the financial and economic crisis on local and regional authorities<sup>18</sup>.

Finally, CEMR's Secretariat prepares a **monthly newsletter** in English and French showcasing past and ongoing activities, including highlights of main accomplishments and events to come.

W<sub>www.</sub>

- 16. [www.ccre.org/docs/charte\\_egalite\\_en.pdf](http://www.ccre.org/docs/charte_egalite_en.pdf)
- 17. [www.ccre.org/docs/charter\\_sqi\\_en.pdf](http://www.ccre.org/docs/charter_sqi_en.pdf)
- 18. [www.ccre.org/docs/second\\_survey\\_ec\\_crisis\\_en.pdf](http://www.ccre.org/docs/second_survey_ec_crisis_en.pdf)

# Our events and conferences

CEMR organises **seminars and conferences** revolving around different issues so as to allow members to meet, discuss and exchange experiences and best practices.

Every three years, CEMR organises its **General Assembly**, bringing together around 1000 local and regional representatives. The previous one was held in Malmö, Sweden, in 2009 under the theme "*Fit for the Future? How Europe's local and regional governments are preparing*". CEMR's next General Assembly is to take place in 2012 in Cádiz, Spain.

## [ Our Extranet ]

The Extranet<sup>19</sup> is a communication tool available only to CEMR members. By registering to the Extranet, via a login and password, members have the opportunity to exchange with other members and CEMR staff.

It also allows users to follow and stay up to date on the developments and meetings revolving around specific policy areas.

W<sub>www.</sub>

19. <http://extranet.ccre.org>

## [ Our working languages ]

CEMR has two official working languages: French and English. However, certain documents are translated into other languages, notably by CEMR's member associations so as to reach a broader readership.

An automatic translation of the CEMR website ([www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)) is available in 28 different languages.

## [ Our reflection process ]

On the eve of its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which kicked-off on 28 January 2011, CEMR launched a reflection process on its role and the place of local and regional authorities in the new European governance.

CEMR thus intends to develop a forward-looking strategy and identify its main priorities with the year 2020 in mind.

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