



Local & Regional
Europe

2014 Work Programme

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Re-enchanted Europe through its territories!

With the elections to the European Parliament and the renewal of the Commission, 2014 will be without a doubt a decisive year for the future of the European Union. First of all, citizens will have to decide what policy they want Europe to undertake on their behalf.

A great challenge awaits the future elected representatives: It is simply to give another chance to the European project and this chance might be decisive such the disillusiones are great. The Europe of the Lisbon Treaty was supposed to be a crucial step towards political union rebalancing powers between the various institutions including by recognizing local authorities as full participants of European governance and affirming a common leadership. The application of the Treaty on the contrary shows an imbalance in favour of the member states (especially the most powerful ones) against the public interest.

The future Europe, which we are calling for, and that we present in our manifesto for the European elections is a Europe that gives a chance to territories and strengthens the link between the territories and the European institutions. There is no possible growth without sustainable development of local and regional territories in Europe. The municipalities, cities, provinces, metropolitan area and regions can bring the growth that Europe needs so badly.

In 2014, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions will be the advocate of a Europe that gives a position to its territories, inside and outside the European Union, a Europe that also gives to European citizens a position in decision making and implementation of policies oriented towards future, innovation, solidarity and citizenship. We will follow the debate in the European elections, not to take sides, but to ensure that future elected representatives and political groups commit to defend a territory based vision of development.

Most states are worn out, our territories can create the dynamic which could break the spiral of decline and unemployment. The needs are great, so are the ambitions of our local and regional elected representatives. It is with the action and innovation strength of the 150,000 communities we represent that Europe will be able to invent a new future, provided that the states and the European institutions take into account this ambition and finally recognize the role and capacity of our local and regional governments.

This is why as the most representative organisation, strong of our fifty-seven national associations of towns, municipalities, provinces and regions, we require a special status among institutions. Because we are not just an association of elected representatives, we are the only organisation that represents all European territories from the Atlantic to the eastern borders of Europe, we ask to be recognised for our historic role and our mobilising capacity wherever it is useful and necessary.

2014 will also be a year of renewal of our bodies with a new Policy Committee, a new Executive Bureau, a new presidency. At the operational level, we will finalise in 2014 the consolidation of our services in Brussels and the technical organisation of CEMR. We will remain present in the national debates through our 57 national associations to consolidate with them the positions we advocate at European level in the debates specific to the various countries where we are represented. The modernisation of our services will continue with the introduction of new exchange and communication tools: a new platform of exchange on the internet dedicated to our members and tools to facilitate the participation of all our experts in the exchange by video conference call.

We will insure our place in our global organisation UCLG next to the European Co-Presidents and the future European Vice-President. The debate on climate and energy, the post 2015 strategy and global commitments to sustainable development will take a new dimension in the European and global agenda with the preparation of the 2015 Global Climate Conference in Paris and the preparation of the urban agenda of the "Habitat III" conference in 2016. CEMR will commit so these

international meetings are useful to local and regional governments in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

As leader of Platforma we will support cooperation between our national associations and their counterparts from partner countries and take an active part in the design and monitoring of European development policies, strengthening of decentralisation processes in the world and the recognition of our network before the United Nations and its agencies. We will strengthen our cooperation with our natural partners which are the continental sections of UCLG.

Cooperation and exchanges between Local and Regional Governments help strengthening the capacities of each other. In Europe, twinning is the basis of these exchanges, they must continue to be supported and developed, we will make sure they do. Worldwide, decentralized cooperation is still an action that lack of recognition in many countries. Despite the economic crisis, we must continue to contribute to its development as it is also a way for Europe to contribute to the emergence of a more democratic world and a world more respectful of human development and therefore a safer world.

The main event of 2014 will be the European Congress of Citizenship and Twinning. This year, we propose to organise it under the auspices and with the support of the Italian Presidency of the European Union. It will occur in concordance with our Policy Committee at the end of the year with the following main themes: citizen participation in decision making, integration, equality between women and men in local life and exchanges between European citizens.

To effectively contribute to the debates that we wish to advocate in Europe, CEMR develops projects in partnership or with the support of its members and external partners. As the main organisation representing European local and regional authorities, we assume the coordinating role of all actors and organisations. The project of the observatory on equality between women and men in local life will be continued and expanded with the support of SALAR and the Swedish government, a complementary project funded by the European Union should allow us to develop indicators on the implementation of the European Charter for equality.

Likewise there is no possible influence without concerted action by all members of CEMR on topics that concern us, there is no possible good lobbying without a thorough knowledge of the issues, statistical and scientific data of our actions. This is why we have decided to set up a studies and research cell that will take over the European Observatory of the crisis at local and regional level. It will collect data on local and regional governance in Europe and offer scientific studies to support our arguments and positions. This unit will work with partners such as the OECD, the services of the European Union, the Council of Europe and the research offices of our associations to help strengthen our role as a "think tank" of the European local and regional governance.

The next financial programming will enter into force in 2014, we will follow its implementation to ensure the best conditions for cities and regions.

Last but not least, we will continue to strengthen our influence toward all European institutions. In the Union and beyond, CEMR is the only organisation that defends an overview of the development of our territories. Texts, charters and conventions are not only symbolic acts but they operate as tools that contribute to sustainable development, solidarity among peoples and the fight against decline and crisis that undermines the future of our entire continent and condemns the younger to social insecurity or exile. There is no fatality in the richest continent on the planet no longer being able to give its children a future. This is the challenge of our actions at European, national or international level, and it is this challenge that we invite you to meet together in 2014!

Democracy, citizenship and enlargement

Although the European Year of Citizens is over, the renegotiation of the Europe for Citizens programme 2014–2020, the elections to the European Parliament or the appointment of the new European Commission, make of 2014, a crucial year in terms of governance and citizenship.

This year in addition, CEMR will host one of its milestones taking place every 4 years; the **Congress on citizenship and twinning**. Besides twinning and citizenship themselves, the congress will also deal with the fields of participation, equality and integration. In general, CEMR's 2014 activities in these topics are going to be structured with the congress as the principal guiding goal. The Committee on Governance and Citizenship will meet twice during the year in order to prepare the general structure of the congress, while the sub-themes will also be addressed more in detail by other working structures.

The budget of the new **Europe for Citizens Programme 2014–2020** has been reduced, while the budgetary allocation to the different strands has also changed. CEMR will monitor the first steps of the implementation of the programme during 2014, explain it to member associations, work for the increase of the budget in future revisions, and assess the impact of these changes in the citizen meetings, the Networks of Twinned Towns sub-strands, as well as in small municipalities.

CEMR will continue maintaining and improving the **twinning website**, both the technical and visual levels of the tool. CEMR will invite members of the Focus group on twinning to assist in improving the website as well as to explore new ways to boost town-twinning through new media.

On integration, CEMR will continue defining the topics to address within the relatively new Thematic network on diversity and integration keeping, structuring all our work in this field to end up with the congress on citizenship and twinning as the milestone of the year. Our objective is to become a hub for local authorities and stakeholders working on **integration at the local level**.

In preparation of the **elections to the European Parliament** in May 2014, CEMR will pursue a campaign targeting candidates, in order to present its manifesto and the views of how Europe should look like in the following years according to local authorities. A meeting with the Friends of CEMR group running for re-election will be also organised.

CEMR's work on **Equality of Women and Men in Local Life** will continue within the Observatory of the European Charter for Equality, currently funded by the Swedish government (until March 2015) with the support of SALAR. Provided our proposal for a pilot project on **developing indicators to measure the implementation of the European Charter for Equality** will be selected by the European Commission, major work would be dedicated on this issue. CEMR will continue to mobilise signatories of the Charter to contribute to the Observatory website by uploading relevant information and making it an interactive and interesting resource of data. Following the debate in the Standing Committee for Equality in November 2013, CEMR may support a study on **'local elected women in Europe'** to be published in 2014, in time for the CEMR's Conference on Citizenship, which will take place towards the end of the year.

Resource efficiency and environment

Energy and climate will again be high on the European agenda in 2014. A communication on revised targets for greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy and energy efficiency by 2030, expected to be released at the end of 2013, will accelerate the debate on the level of ambition of future energy and climate policies in the EU. CEMR will prepare a position of local and regional authorities on this important topic, so as to ensure that the new EU priorities will be supportive of

local and regional efforts to fight climate change and participate in the transition to sustainable energy.

This work will also feed into the position of the European Union in **the international negotiations on climate change**, which should achieve a global agreement on climate in 2015 in Paris. In addition to the above-mentioned work done at European level, CEMR will contribute, in partnership with UCLG, to the advocacy work of local and regional government for an ambitious international agreement which would empower municipalities and regions all over the world to act and to have enough resources to reach ambitious targets. In this respect, the mobilisation of European local and regional government will be crucial since the 2015 United Nations conference on climate will take place in Europe.

The European Commission will pursue the implementation of the **7th Action Programme for the environment**, notably through the release of two packages of proposals revising EU environmental policies in the field of **air quality** and **waste management**. CEMR will continue its lobbying work initiated in 2013, with the objective of ensuring that the Commission's proposals take into account the local experience and ensure the right balance of responsibilities between the different stakeholders involved in air protection and waste management. In addition, CEMR will contribute to the reflexions of the European Commission on **sustainability criteria for cities**, which are announced in the 7th Action programme for the environment.

New proposals on **urban mobility** are expected in 2014 in order to support the local sustainable mobility policies. Sustainable mobility plans, environmental zones and congestion charging and urban logistics will be addressed in the urban mobility package and CEMR will ensure that the proposals made by the European Commission are helping cities addressing sustainable mobility challenges without infringing local competences.

The CEMR will increase its involvement in the Office of **the Covenant of Mayors**, which is a European-funded project running since 2008. So far, more than 5000 municipalities, provinces, regions and networks of local and regional authorities are involved in this ambitious initiative in the field of energy and climate. Future activities will focus on increasing the technical and financial capacities of municipalities to develop and implement local strategies on sustainable energy.

Economic, social and territorial cohesion

With the adoption of the regulations of the Structural Funds in 2013, further actions are envisaged for 2014 to assist CEMR members in the **implementation of the regulations** and in particular to monitor the application of the 'Code of Conduct' and the guidance for the new instruments (Community-Led Local Development, Integrated Territorial Instruments, Joint Action Plans). In this respect, we intend to do second survey among our members on the involvement of national associations of local and regional government in the preparation and implementation of the Partnership Agreements, and based on its outcome, highlight concerns and make recommendations.

In the context of the implementation of the structural funds, further specific issues may also be addressed: smart cities and communities, rural development, innovation, entrepreneurship, capacity building, financial engineering, synergies between structural funds and other EU programmes. Particular attention may be given to the use of the European Social Fund to fight Youth Unemployment.

Sustainable Urban Development will be in the centre at European at international level: the European Commission is developing an EU Urban Agenda and at the same time preparing the EU's input to the HABITAT III conference in 2016, which intends to generate a 'New Urban Agenda' for

the 21st century. The CEMR will contribute to these activities and will play an active role in the Urban Forum, organised by the European Commission on 17&18 February 2014. Furthermore, we will monitor and explore possibilities to influence the initiative of the International Standardisation Organisation (ISO/TC 268) on 'sustainable development in communities'.

CEMR will also contribute to the reflections on **Territorial Development** and on the implementation of the Territorial Agenda 2020. Issues to be addressed will be territorial impact assessments, integrated territorial development, urban-rural relationships, etc. We will further collaborate with the OECD Territorial Development Policy Committee and other relevant organisations aiming at putting into place the Territorial Agenda 2020.

The CEMR will continue to work on **Demographic Change** through its thematic network on **Age Friendly Environments**, which is due to be set up and managed through a European project. CEMR has a lead role for developing this network and providing local and regional authorities, researchers and other stakeholders a platform to discuss, exchange and develop ICT-based innovative solutions for Age-Friendly Environments. Furthermore, the CEMR will continue to be involved in the **Joint Programming Initiative on Demographic Change** through debating and providing input to the Strategic Research Agenda for Member States.

Local and regional governments as employers and service providers

CEMR and its member associations will continue to focus on **youth employment**, and prepare a report on Youth employment. The main purpose will be to highlight the role and work done by local and regional authorities to integrate young people into the labour market, through employment or education. This will steer any further work to be done on this namely through including recommendations and key political messages.

The Focus Group of Local and Regional Government as Employers' will assess the relevance of the expected **Labour Mobility Package** and its relevance for local and regional authorities as employers' and contribute to discussions in the **European Social Dialogue Committee**, on topics including a new **Occupational Safety and Health** Strategy and the European Year for Reconciling Work and Family Life. The CEMR will continue implementing its Framework of Action pertaining to main themes of discussion including recruitment and retention, training and skills development, migration and gender equality, through our joint work in the Committee.

2014 could see further developments take place on the **Working Time Directive and Posting of Workers** – which will be monitored by the CEMR.

Early 2014, the adoption of the directives on **Public Procurement and Service Concessions** will take place; CEMR's members are interested in monitoring their transposition into national legislation and their application. Further legislation is expected to put into place **e-procurement** (e.g. e-invoicing); CEMR will examine the proposals and consider actions. We will also monitor the upcoming proposal on a 'definite VAT system', and if necessary, take actions to avoid negative impact on local and regional authorities.

The modernisation of **State aid** is expected to be completed in 2014 with the adoption of the relevant regulations, communications and guidelines. CEMR will express its view on new proposals and examine the adopted texts, analysing their impact on local and regional government.

CEMR will continue working on **data protection** and in particular seek support for its position to obtain certain exclusions for the public sector use of personal data in the proposed regulation.

Partnership, cooperation and world affairs

With major international gatherings scheduled in 2015 and 2016 – the adoption of the post-2015 global sustainable development goals, the 2015 Paris Climate Conference and the UN Habitat III Conference – 2014 will be a year of **preparation** and **consultation** which local and regional governments (LRG) and their associations will need to contribute to.

CEMR's focus-group on international cooperation and the UCLG Europe coordination platform, which saw their mandate adapted and evolved in 2013, will play a key role in this process, the former at a technical level and the latter at a more political level. Their insights will be crucial to the good functioning of the broader **Global Taskforce** on Post-2015 Development and Habitat III, led by UCLG and which CEMR is member of.

Eyes will be particularly turned towards the consultation of European LRG on **UN Habitat III** and its New Urban Agenda, which CEMR will lead in the first semester of 2014. The output will then serve the first UN-Member States preparatory meeting on the next Habitat Conference to be held in September 2014, and the production of the 4th GOLD Report, led by UCLG, starting next year and which will precisely focus on Habitat III.

At the same time, proper implementation of the Local Government **Climate** Roadmap, which is in its second phase, will be conducted. Attention will be paid to the 20th Conference of Parties (COP) in Peru, which will be the last major gathering before the Paris Climate Conference in 2015, where a new global binding agreement is set to be adopted.

With the 2015 **European Year of Development** in mind, CEMR will seek to launch a Development Education and Awareness Raising campaign on the benefits of decentralised cooperation in Europe, with a particular focus on the newer EU Member States and pre-acceding countries.

In parallel, CEMR will keep strengthening **PLATFORMA** as the voice of European local and regional authorities active in decentralised cooperation, with a third phase of the coordination project fully on track, and three regional seminars under the capacity-building project due next year. Discussions on the follow-up on the European Commission's Communication on the "Empowerment of local authorities in partner countries" should also gradually lead to a clearer vision of how this latter process can be implemented.

Last but not least, as the **European section of UCLG**, CEMR will continue to defend the interests and policy objectives of European LRG in the world organisation, particularly at the Executive Bureau in Liverpool in June, and at the World Council in Haikou, China in November.

Press & communication activities

Special attention will be given to the reflection on and realisation of the **private part of the CEMR website**. Reserved to members, this section will be merged with the public part of the site, allowing members to access a calendar and a platform of exchange, as well as to share classified documents. CEMR member associations will be invited to join a think tank comprised of CEMR staff and web developers.

CEMR will promote the use of **teleconference tools** that allow collaborators, experts, and partners from all over Europe to gather together. Informational sessions will be organised with associations so they can familiarise themselves with these tools.

CEMR will undertake the creation of an electronic **contact database** that will ensure a larger coverage and a greater range of messages to various public targets.

In order to best relay regional and local authorities' perspectives to members of the European Parliament, CEMR will publish and advertise the **manifesto for the European elections** adopted by the policy committee in December 2013. Its circulation will be ensured with the support of several involved member associations. CEMR also plans to publish a study about quality of women and men in local life and to republish its presentation brochure, taking into account its new activities as well as the renewal of its governing bodies.

The press and communication team will ensure the visibility of CEMR activities and outcomes throughout the year. Special attention will be given to the **European Congress on Citizenship and Town Twinning** in December 2014.

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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 41 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 member associations and their elected officials and experts.

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

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