



Local & Regional  
Europe

# CEMR Presentation

## A Europe for our Municipalities and Regions



Council of European  
Municipalities and Regions

# About us

## Local and regional Europe since 1951

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) is the oldest and broadest European association of local and regional government. We are the only organisation that brings together the national associations of local and regional authorities from 41 European countries and represents, through them, all levels of territories – local, intermediate and regional.

Since its creation in 1951, CEMR promotes the construction of a united, peaceful and democratic Europe founded on local self-government, respect for the principle of subsidiarity and the participation of citizens.

Our work is organised around two main pillars:

- 1. Influencing European policy and legislation** in all areas having an impact on municipalities and regions;
- 2. Providing a forum for debate and cooperation** between European local and regional authorities via their national representative associations.

CEMR is also the European section of the world organisation United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), through which we represent European local and regional government on the international stage.

Founded in 1951

57 member associations

41 countries

150 000 local and regional authorities

# Our members

**150 000 local and regional authorities united within CEMR's 57 member associations**

CEMR's members are national associations of local and regional government, whose own members are local and regional authorities in their country.

CEMR is made up of 57 member associations from 41 of the 47 Council of Europe member countries, including all 27 member states of the European Union (EU).

Together, they represent some 150 000 municipalities and regions.



# What we do

An organisation committed to a local and regional Europe

CEMR's work focuses on five thematic areas, which affect all aspects of the lives of European citizens as well as the local and regional authorities that represent them:

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European legislation has an impact on more than 60% of the policies implemented by cities, municipalities and regions. CEMR works together with its members to ensure that their interests are taken into account when European policy is being drafted. We intervene from the earliest stages of the European Commission legislative process, through to the adoption of amendments for consideration by the European Parliament.

European legislation affects

more than **60%**

of local and regional policies



[www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)

CEMR also acts as a platform for exchange as well as political and technical debate. We provide our members and local and regional authorities with opportunities to share and learn from one another. Every year, CEMR organises technical meetings, debates, conferences and seminars on subjects relevant to local and regional governments.

In addition, CEMR publishes a number of studies and publications such as the *White paper for an active European citizenship*, *Key figures on local and regional Europe*, and *Local and Regional Government in Europe*, which presents an overview of the structures and competences of European municipalities and regions.

Last but not least, CEMR is behind several political documents of significance to local and regional governance, such as the Charter of Local Liberties (adopted in 1953), which inspired the Charter on Local Self-Government of the Council of Europe, adopted in 1985. We also launched the Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, which was adopted in 2006 and has been signed by more than 1 300 local and regional governments in Europe.

# Democracy, citizenship and enlargement

As the first level for practicing democracy, local and regional authorities are best-placed to enable citizens to participate in the decision-making process. Since its founding in 1951, promoting a united Europe based on the principle of subsidiarity and autonomous local and regional self-government has been at the heart of CEMR's activities.

CEMR therefore campaigns for municipalities and regions to have a stronger role in Europe, based on principles outlined in the European Charter of Local Self-Government. To this end, CEMR works in collaboration with the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and with the EU's Committee of the Regions.

Moreover, CEMR and its members promote the full participation of citizens in the European construction via town twinning and other citizen-oriented activities.

## **We have called for a new model of European governance**

CEMR organised a high-level conference in December 2011 with the three other major European networks of local and regional authorities, calling for a "governing in partnership" approach. This approach aims at mobilising local, regional, national and European spheres of governance, as well as civil society and local actors in the fields of economy, science, research and academia for the drafting and implementation of EU policies.

“CEMR and its members must be considered as key partners, as they are the closest level of governance to the citizens and the best relay of European policies on the ground. Governing in partnership will create a sense of ownership among all and help build confidence vis-à-vis our common Europe.”

**Wolfgang Schuster,**  
Former Mayor of Stuttgart and  
President of CEMR



“ *The current crisis should lead Europe to define a new model of growth based on local development and innovation. This remains possible so long as the states preserve intact local and regional authorities' financial independence and capacity to act.* ”

**Annemarie Jorritsma,**  
*Mayor of Almere,  
President of the Association of  
Netherlands Municipalities (VNG)  
and Co-President of CEMR*

### **We have analysed the impact of the crisis at local and regional level**

CEMR launched an Observatory on crisis and decentralisation in 2011 to monitor the state of local and regional finances and analyse the effects of the crisis across Europe. In 2012, two studies were published in this context in collaboration with CEMR: *Local Government in Critical Times – Policies for Crisis, Recovery and a Sustainable Future* (Council of Europe) and *Sub-national Public Finance in the European Union* (Dexia Crédit Local).

### **What is next?**

- Report on the status of decentralisation in Europe and the consequences of the crisis on the distribution of power and relations between the different spheres of governance.

## **We have taken a further step to ensure the equality of women and men in local life**

In March 2012, with the support of the Swedish national government and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), CEMR created an Observatory of the European Charter on Equality of Women and Men in Local Life. The Observatory's aim is to help the some 1 300 signatory municipalities and regions all across Europe to develop gender equality policies through locally-led actions and initiatives.

To this effect, CEMR launched a website for the Observatory to showcase best practices and examples of successful local gender equality policies. It includes a guide on how to draft and implement an action plan as well as an atlas of the different cities that have signed the Charter and their commitments.

### **What is next?**

- Establish a network of gender equality coordinators from CEMR's national member associations to ensure a link between signatories in their country and follow-up on the implementation of the Charter at the local level.
- In the longer term, develop a system of indicators to better monitor the implementation of the Charter on the ground.

“ True democracy cannot exist without gender equality and the full participation of all citizens in local life. We are proud to support the equality-related commitments of municipalities. ”

**Ewa Samuelsson,**  
Vice-Mayor of the City of Stockholm

[www.charter-equality.eu](http://www.charter-equality.eu)





“ With 20 000 existing partnerships between municipalities all over Europe, town twinning continues to be an essential and powerful tool to bring people together. It also greatly contributes to the construction of a Europe of and for the citizens. ”

**Louis Le Pensec,**  
Deputy-Mayor of Mellac,  
Honorary President of the AFCCRE,  
Vice-President of CEMR and  
former French minister

The town twinning website, with a partner search function, is available in over 20 languages.

[www.twinning.org](http://www.twinning.org)

### We have promoted an active European citizenship

CEMR organised a Congress on Citizenship and Twinning from 29 September to 1 October 2011 in Rybnik, Poland, following a two-year reflection process between representatives from local and regional government, civil society and European institutions. This led to a *White paper for an active European citizenship*, which brings new perspectives on actions led by local and regional authorities in the promotion of an active European citizenship and, more particularly, on town twinning's role.

### What is next?

- Lobby the European Commission and Parliament to ensure that the 2014-2020 “Europe for Citizens” programme provides strong financial and political support for town twinning and networks of municipalities.
- Promote the active participation of local and regional authorities and their citizens in the 2013 European Year of Citizens.

# Resource efficiency and environment

The world is faced with an increasing use of natural resources, including fossil fuel, water, soil, air, metals, minerals and timber, which has a negative impact on the climate, the environment and our health. Thus, increasing the efficient and sustainable use of resources has become a political objective in Europe, which is supported by CEMR and the local and regional governments we represent via our member associations.

Indeed, municipalities and regions are concerned with many aspects of resource-related policies. For example, they ensure the provision of vital goods and services to citizens, such as good water and air quality, waste and wastewater management, energy and public transportation.

Environmental policy is often linked to the use of resources and to avoiding or dealing with potential negative impacts. All relevant environmental policy and legislation is done at European level and is therefore at the core of CEMR's activities.

Local and regional authorities can greatly contribute to an efficient and sustainable production and use of energy. In many European countries, they act as energy suppliers and produce it from renewable sources, such as waste and biomass. They are also important energy consumers, since they need heat and power for their buildings, social housing and street lighting.



“ We fully support the EU objective to increase energy efficiency. However, the current economic situation and lack of financial resources do not allow local and regional authorities to reach a binding annual target for the renovation of their buildings, as initially proposed by the Commission. We thus welcome that the final text provides more flexibility. ”

**Erwin Mohr,**  
Mayor of Wolfurt and  
Vice-President of the Austrian  
Association of Municipalities

### **We have contributed to debates and decision-making on waste, climate change and sustainability**

CEMR has recently participated in the debate and decision-making process on different initiatives: waste (biodegradable, electric and electronic), air quality, water, urban environment and urban mobility. We also contributed to the debate on climate change at the European level and, via our world organisation UCLG, supported actions in relation to the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Moreover, as a founding member of the Sustainable Cities and Towns Campaign, CEMR participates in conferences organised every three years, which bring together signatories of the Aalborg Charter (1994) and the Aalborg Commitments (2004). These gatherings aim at motivating local and regional governments to continue their work towards becoming more sustainable.



### What is next?

- Contribute to the debate and influence the decision-making process on the revision of existing EU air quality, waste and water legislation. The revision is being undertaken in the context of the European Commission's broader approach, reflected in its *Roadmap to a Resource Efficient Europe*.
- Actively participate in the 7<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Sustainable Cities and Towns, to be held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 17 to 19 April 2013.

### We have influenced the debate on energy efficiency and continued our active involvement within the Covenant of Mayors

CEMR and its members have been actively involved in the debate revolving around the new directive on energy efficiency, adopted by the European Parliament in September 2012. We have successfully advocated more flexibility when identifying and implementing the most cost-effective measures in order to achieve greater energy efficiency and to tailor these to local, regional and national contexts and to available financial means.

[www.eumayors.eu](http://www.eumayors.eu)

“ Thanks to the Covenant of Mayors, the City of Cadiz is translating its political commitment to fighting climate change into concrete actions and sharing its success with other local authorities across Europe! ”

**Teófila Martínez Saiz,**  
*Mayor of Cadiz*

On the more practical side, CEMR is a member of the Covenant of Mayors Office, assisting national supporters (associations and regional, national or European networks of local authorities) and organising events (annual conference, workshops, etc). More than 4 600 mayors have already committed to reduce their energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, 18 CEMR member associations having also become active supporters of the Covenant in their country. CEMR supports the extension of the Covenant to the EU's neighbouring countries, and in particular to South-Eastern Europe.

#### What is next?

- Co-organise the Annual Ceremony of the Covenant of Mayors, to take place on 24 June 2013 in Brussels, Belgium.

# Partnership, cooperation and world affairs

CEMR is the European section and a founding member of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). As the broadest and most representative organisation of local and regional government in Europe, we are a key player in furthering cooperation and exchange between European local governments and their counterparts around the world.

Since 2008, CEMR hosts the secretariat of PLATFORMA, the European platform of local and regional authorities for development. This platform allows for municipalities, regions and their associations to coordinate their messages on development cooperation vis-à-vis the European institutions.

## **We have worked to provide better access to European funding for cooperation**

In view of the 2014-2020 European programming period, PLATFORMA has developed a position on the future of European development policy and its implementation procedures, submitted to the European Parliament and Council of the EU. These drawn-up proposals aim at rendering European cooperation programmes more accessible and at strengthening EU support for decentralised cooperation. In addition, PLATFORMA calls on the EU to include the principles of support for local democracy and decentralisation in partner countries in its cooperation policies.

“ Many of the challenges faced on a global scale can be resolved through local action, which is why we believe that the experiences of some can be beneficial to all. The European cities and regions that we represent and their counterparts from around the world, can thus come up with lasting solutions together. ”

**António Costa,**  
Mayor of Lisbon,  
Executive President of CEMR  
and Co-President of UCLG

[www.cities-localgovernments.org](http://www.cities-localgovernments.org)  
[www.platforma-dev.eu](http://www.platforma-dev.eu)





CEMR launched a network for North-South cooperation in order to facilitate the exchange of experiences between its members, contribute to PLATFORMA's activities, and define CEMR's priorities within UCLG.

#### **What is next?**

- Organise the debate on the next five to ten years of the European policy for development cooperation. A consultation will be launched by the European Commission via PLATFORMA's network sometime in 2013.
- Carry out discussions with EU partner countries in order to come up with recommendations for improving European support to local and regional authorities in these partner countries.

#### **We have carried the voice of Europe onto the global stage**

As the European section of UCLG, CEMR coordinates the action of European members and makes it easier for them to take part in the international organisation's activities. Europeans are particularly active in actions involving aid effectiveness, equal opportunities, decentralisation, city diplomacy, climate change, urban mobility and culture.

CEMR supports UCLG's request to the United Nations (UN) for official recognition as a permanent observer. At the Rio +20 conference held in June 2012, the UN officially recognised local and regional authorities as key actors in sustainable development and in the fight against climate change.

#### **What is next?**

- Coordinate the European contribution to UCLG's global report on decentralisation, published every three years with a focus on a particular theme. The next edition of the report is scheduled for 2014 and will cover local public services.

# Economic, social and territorial cohesion

CEMR supports a strong European cohesion policy, so as to reduce disparities among territories and ensure a decisive role for local and regional authorities in the sustainable territorial, economic and social development as well as in the devising, implementation and monitoring of EU policies. This is all-the-more important when considering that European legislation affects more than 60% of items on local and regional agendas.

## **We have lobbied for a strong cohesion policy**

After months of lobbying the European Commission and Parliament for the new draft cohesion regulations (2014-2020), CEMR and its members saw their efforts rewarded in July 2012 following a first vote in the Parliamentary Committee for regional development (REGI). The members of European Parliament retained many amendments put forward by CEMR. The proposal to reinforce the partnership principle, for example, was approved, whereby municipalities and regions would be more involved in the preparation, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of cohesion funds. Furthermore, a clear distinction was established between public authorities and the other stakeholders involved in the process.

“ In order to achieve sustainable local development we need to mobilise and involve a variety of actors and resources within our territories. The European institutions need to understand how the local level assesses its own value and role in EU territorial development policies. ”

**Carola Gunnarsson,**  
Vice-President of the Swedish  
Association of Local Authorities  
and Regions (SALAR)





“ Intergenerational dialogue is an essential element in the transmission of knowledge, skills and values between generations.

”  
**Andris Jaunsleinis,**  
Councillor of the Municipality of  
Ventspils and President of the Latvian  
Association of Local and Regional  
Governments (LPS)

#### **What is next?**

- Pursue lobbying for sustainable local development to become a key pillar of the upcoming cohesion regulations and, more particularly, continue pushing for the inclusion of the partnership principle, thus ensuring an active role for local and regional authorities.

#### **We have promoted intergenerational dialogue for a more cohesive development**

CEMR was an official stakeholder of the 2012 European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. In this context, we promoted intergenerational solidarity throughout the year via our membership and

provided opportunities for members and other stakeholders to exchange expertise and knowledge.

#### **What is next?**

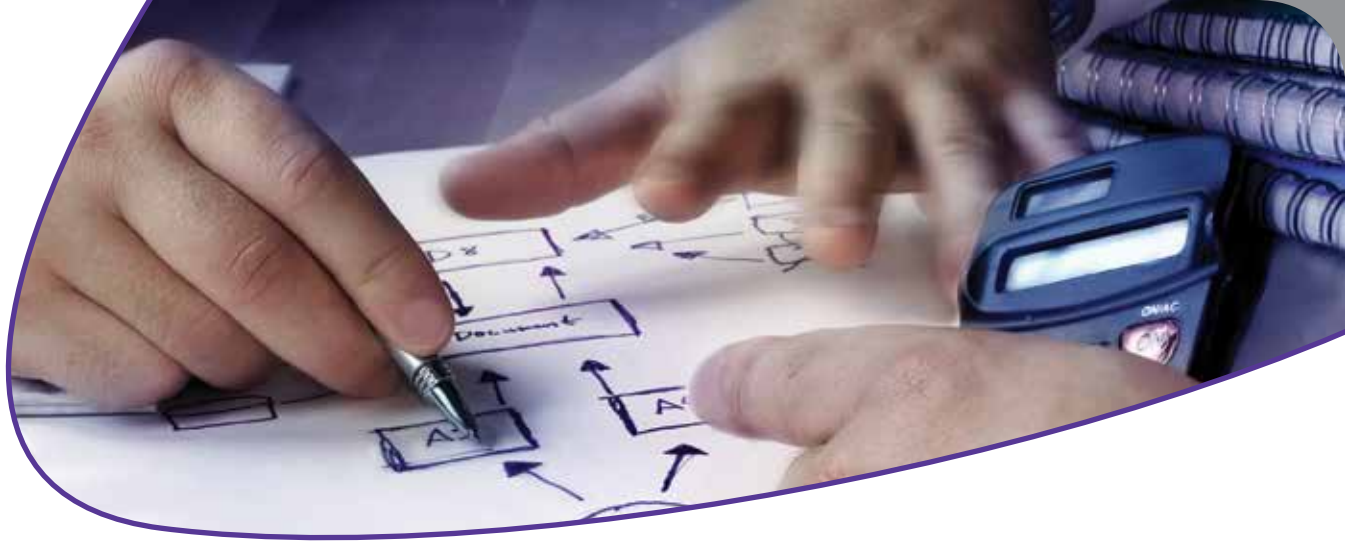
- Continue working on intergenerational solidarity as a follow-up of the 2012 European Year, by contributing to the reflection on a possible pact on demographic change.
- Discuss the issue of diversity and integration in the framework of CEMR's debate on the reorganisation of public services, notably with the aim of better integrating migrant workers into the local and regional government sector.

# Local and regional governments as employers and service providers

Education, social services, economic development, housing, spatial planning, environment, culture and leisure: European local and regional authorities are active in all these fields and are at the forefront when ensuring the proper delivery of these to the population. As the number one employer in Europe, they are also an engine for economic growth and account for more than two-thirds of public investments, or 1.6% of Europe's GDP.

Brought together through their national representative associations federated by CEMR, local and regional authorities share the common objective of offering quality public services to meet the needs and expectations of citizens.

CEMR also represents local and regional authorities within the European Social Dialogue Committee, where employers and trade unions discuss employment policies as well as recent developments in the labour market and European regulations.



“ We have a unique opportunity to ensure that public procurement rules are better adapted to their objectives. Simpler rules will render easier the tasks undertaken by public authorities and facilitate the access of small enterprises to contracts, as these are often able to offer more cost-effective solutions. ”

**Emile Eicher,**  
Mayor of Clervaux and President of  
the Association of Luxembourg Cities  
and Municipalities (SYVICOL)

### **We have called for the European regulations on public procurement to respect the principle of subsidiarity and the free will of local and regional authorities**

The future of our public services or services of general interest within the context of the single market was at the heart of the European debate in the past years. CEMR and its members are opposed to overly complex European regulations on public procurement when these fail to respect the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. These regulations in fact circumvent the local and regional level with regard to the decision-making process.

In particular, CEMR defends the right of local and regional authorities to freely determine the way in which they manage public services (direct management, delegation, concession, public-private partnership, etc.).

Moreover, CEMR recommends that any EU regulation on public procurement be responsible as well as flexible in terms of being able to choose a supplier with the best financial offer without overlooking environmental and social considerations.

#### **What is next?**

- The draft directive on public procurement is expected to be voted on by the European Parliament in 2013. CEMR will therefore continue to work towards simplified and increasingly flexible public procurement rules.



### **We have strengthened the participation of national associations of local and regional authorities in the social dialogue**

As a representative organisation recognised by the European institutions, CEMR has created a focus group on local and regional governments as employers in order to coordinate the voice of local and regional employers within the European Social Dialogue Committee.

### **We have launched the "Future of the workplace" project as a part of the European social dialogue**

CEMR and the European Federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU) worked together to carry out reflections on the future of the workplace in local and regional government administrations, in the context of the European social dialogue.

The project, which ran over the course of one year, aimed at supporting the creation and maintaining of quality public services through a sustainable workforce. Another of its objectives was to develop the social dialogue between trade unions and employers' associations in local and regional administrations both at national and European level.

“ While we are all concerned by the consequences of the crisis in our cities and regions, we need to deliver good quality services for our citizens. These services need to be delivered with the help of highly-skilled professionals, the exchange of best practices and social dialogue in order to find sustainable solutions for our communities. ”

**Steve Comer,**  
Councillor at the Bristol City Council

#### **What is next?**

- The project findings were presented at a conference in Prague, in the Czech Republic, on 15 October 2012. A publication was also produced, presenting a number of recommendations to develop a European action plan for employment within municipalities and regions. CEMR will now focus on the reorganisation of public services at the local and regional level.

# How we work

## A representative and democratic political organisation

The main governing bodies of CEMR 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 admission of new members. It is composed of around 170 members elected for three years. Each national delegation is assigned a given number of seats based on the country's population.

The **Executive Bureau** includes CEMR's president, two co-presidents, the executive presidents, the vice-presidents and the secretary general.

The Bureau follows up on Policy Committee decisions and, between Committee meetings, is responsible for CEMR's work and policy.

Elected in December 2010 for three years, CEMR's current president is Wolfgang Schuster, former mayor of Stuttgart. His most recent predecessors were Michael Häupl (2004 – 2010) and Valéry Giscard d'Estaing (1997 – 2004).

The **president** is elected by the Policy Committee. He/she represents CEMR and chairs statutory meetings.

The two **co-presidents** are elected by the Policy Committee.

The **executive presidents** are nominated by the president and approved by the Policy Committee. They assist the president in representing CEMR.





The secretary general is responsible for the effective management of the Secretariat General, which is made up of around 20 staff members. He advises the governing bodies and implements their decisions. The secretary general is elected by the Policy Committee for a six-year term. Frédéric Vallier has held this post since February 2010.

### **Our budget**

Approximately 85% of CEMR's budget comes from its members' annual subscriptions, which vary from one country to another as they are cal-

culated according to GDP and population. The subscriptions amount to a total of about €1.7 million. CEMR also benefits from a European Commission grant amounting to some €240 000 per year, which CEMR has received for the past several years for actions undertaken under the "Europe for Citizens" programme.

CEMR also takes part in projects such as PLATFORMA, the Covenant of Mayors and the Observatory of the Charter on Equality of Women and Men in Local Life.

# How to participate

## Become an active player in local and regional Europe

CEMR is your organisation of European local and regional government. As such, we depend on the participation of local and regional elected representatives and experts to help further develop our ideas, fuel discussions and make the voice of municipalities, regions and their leaders heard by the European institutions.

CEMR's work and activities are organised within two complimentary pillars: influencing European policy and legislation (lobbying strategy) and exchanging experience and knowledge (knowledge strategy).

CEMR's working structures aim at ensuring the coherence and consistency of these two pillars. The committees and thematic platforms feed into political debates, the focus groups concentrate their efforts on

specific legislative initiatives, while the observatories and thematic networks allow for the exchange of information and experience.

**Committees** and **thematic platforms** are more permanent bodies and are composed primarily of local and regional elected representatives. They participate in political debates with the European institutions and contribute to CEMR's role as the voice of European local and regional authorities and their national associations.

**Example:** equality of women and men in local life, sustainable territorial and local development

“ In order to develop our ideas and build a common discourse, we need to get as many actors as possible involved, particularly local and regional elected representatives. I would therefore like to invite you to join our networks, platforms, committees and observatories. ”

**Frédéric Vallier,**  
Secretary General of CEMR



**Focus groups** are composed of a small number of experts and their duration is generally limited in time. They are each responsible for a specific task and actively feed into CEMR's lobbying work vis-à-vis the European institutions.

**Example:** cohesion policy, twinning, air quality, public procurement, local and regional government as employers

**Thematic networks** are open to a larger number of experts and elected representatives with experience in a specific field. These aim at exchanging knowledge and experience and at contributing to European-level discussions.

**Example:** diversity and integration, inter-generational dialogue

**Observatories** are composed of experts both internal and external to CEMR. Those participating work together with the help of our members to conduct surveys and studies within CEMR's network, in order to contribute to the drafting of reports and analyses used in our lobbying activities.

**Example:** crisis and decentralisation, equality of women and men in local life

Each working structure is chaired by a CEMR member association, with a second one taking on the role of vice-chair. Each structure benefits from the support of a member of the CEMR Secretariat General.

The structures meet physically from time to time but, in order to avoid costly travel and to enable broader participation, meetings are often organised back-to-back with statutory meetings or by using new technologies.



[www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)



## **CCRE-CEMR**

Square de Meeûs 1  
1000 Brussels  
Tel. +32 2 511 74 77  
info@ccre-cemr.org

**[www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)**



Europe  
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With the financial support of the  
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