



**Local & Regional  
Europe**

# **CEMR 2019 Work Programme**

## **Policy and Thematic Priorities**

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## Introduction

2019 will see the change of the leadership in the EU. The European Parliament election in May will be followed by a new Commission that will take office in November and the nomination of four new Presidents: of the European Commission, the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Central Bank, and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Policy. This will be an important moment to present CEMR and to promote our Manifesto to the new Members of the European Parliament and relevant Commissioners.

CEMR promotes the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as an overarching and global strategy**. Therefore, the draft work programme and the proposed priorities and activities are associated to the 17 SDGs.

### CEMR and SDGs: Developing a multi-annual CEMR Work Programme as of 2020

Taking the SDGs as the guiding objectives for CEMR in the next years will require adjustments to our objectives, of our positions and to our working methods. Therefore, we suggest the preparation of a multi-annual CEMR work programme during 2019 in parallel with the preparation of our next Congress in Innsbruck in May 2020 and to link the topics identified with the Innsbruck Congress programme. The next Retreat, foreseen in early November 2019, would be a milestone to exchange and discuss first ideas, foster more in-depth reflections and provide input to a draft programme. Depending on the state of its development, the multi-annual work programme would be adopted either by the newly composed Policy Committee in January, or at the meeting in Innsbruck in May 2020.

This programme shall be prepared in an inclusive manner and take into account the direction of the new EU leadership, and also be aligned with our major institutional partners, such as the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, CoR, UCLG, OECD, etc. Furthermore, it will be a more comprehensive document, reflecting the results of the assessment of CEMR's project work (currently done), our policy and thematic work as well as our communication work (planned in 2019) and CEMR's research and studies strategy.

In addition to the alignment of CEMR's work programme to the SDGs, we will provide a platform for exchange and knowledge, how the goals can be implemented at local level, what role local and regional governments can play. We will also strengthen our collaboration with the European institutions, in particular following up the European Commission's reflection paper "towards a sustainable Europe by 2030" (expected to be published before the end of 2018), and on the basis of the input report of the multi-stakeholder platform, and specifically the recommendations on "[delivering the SDGs at local and regional level](#)".

## Policy and thematic priorities



### 1. Promotion of Local and Regional Governments in the European Governance System to build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

It will be a priority for CEMR to continue to promote increased and better involvement of Local and Regional Governments in the European Governance System as our efforts are without doubt yielding concrete results.

We will follow-up the European Parliament resolution of July 2018, which recommends that CEMR becomes key partner of the EU institutions, and the recommendations of the Task Force on Subsidiarity and Proportionality for 'active subsidiarity'. We will also examine the recommendations of the Task Force on Subsidiarity and Proportionality, in particular, as regards

achieving 'active subsidiarity', and a more structured involvement of local and regional governments in EU policy processes.

Notably the publication of the European Commission's Communication on subsidiarity and proportionality in October 2018 identifies valuable ways to upgrade the involvement of sub-national governments in EU policy processes, especially in the early draft legislative stages. These proposals are an effective spring board for our work in this field in 2019.

CEMR will identify actions to advance the "governing in partnership" model under the current Commission mandate, including maximising the expertise drawn from our national associations to better inform EU legislative and non-legislative initiatives.

Our study on **national associations representing local and regional government**, to be published in 2019, will be a useful instrument to support CEMR's advocacy work. By highlighting how representative are national associations, explaining their tasks and role in the domestic political context, this study will highlight the role and significance, of national associations, both at the national level and the within the wider European context.

The elections to the European Parliament are an important moment to discuss Europe and the European Union at local level, and to communicate the views of the citizens to the European level. The **CEMR Manifesto** is the document that targets both levels, presenting and explaining local and regional governments' positions, and our offer to be partners when it comes to address the challenges that we are facing and to share ownership when it comes to achieving sustainable solutions.

The manifesto will be used by CEMR to promote its views at European level. Member associations' involvement in the promotion campaign on the manifesto and its key messages is crucial to our goal of reaching MEPs, EU and national decision-makers.

Events and meetings between representatives from CEMR, its associations and key MEP candidates will also be set up before and after the elections. CEMR will also promote the visibility of the manifesto, both in the press and via social media.

We will also continue promoting our publication "**Europe 2030 – local leaders speak out**", maximising references of the publication's contributions in the on-going debates about the future of Europe. The need to strengthen citizens' feeling of belonging to the European Community via **twinning** and other exchange programmes are crucial; our advocacy will target the negotiations of the relevant future programmes (Rights and Values, Erasmus+). Special attention shall be given to young people, in particular, we aim to mobilise young elected representatives for our Committee and to get them involved in our policy work at European and international level.

Amongst its many communication tools, CEMR will continue to produce and disseminate its monthly briefing, **LOCAL INSIGHT**. Its purpose is to provide EU decision-makers with a local perspective on EU affairs and since its creation in 2017 its reach has grown substantially. It will feature interviews and opinion pieces from mayors, local and regional leaders, as well as MEPs and EU commissioners. We will also ensure extensive coverage of CEMR activities and messages in **EU Affairs media** and on **social media**.

**Objective: Advocate increased and better involvement of local and regional government in the European Governance System as core element of the CEMR Manifesto, targeting the new MEPs and relevant members of the new European Commission**



## **2. Connecting local and regional government with the world: strengthen the means of global partnership for Sustainable Development**

Many challenges at local level are experienced all over the world: climate change, environmental problems, migration, digitalisation, gender inequality, etc. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Goals provide the universal framework for

actions to make our planet a better place for the people, leaving no one behind, and nature by sharing ownership and responsibility between all levels of government and relevant actors. CEMR will advocate the **recognition of LRGs' role** in achieving the goals, facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience among its members and collaborate with UCLG and other partners in order to support local and regional governments in their actions. We will also continue to lobby the European Parliament in the negotiations on the European Commission' proposal for the "**Neighbourhood and the World**" programme to make sure that local governments will receive specific funding to support decentralisation reforms and international partnerships between local and regional governments within the geographic programmes or within the global challenges thematic programme.

**Objective: Raise awareness and strengthen recognition of local and regional governments' role to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; advocate their involvement in the future EU programme for decentralised cooperation.**



### 3. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Following our successful conference on equality, diversity and inclusion in 2018 and the adoption of our position paper and action plan, we will focus on its implementation, also taking into account the conclusions from the Bilbao conference across the various CEMR policy areas. These actions include, for example, the continued promotion of the European Charter for Equality of women and men in local life and the online Observatory; lobbying for local and regional level's importance for gender equality and for greater representation of women in decision-making, notably through a campaign and publication of a study; and mainstreaming the gender dimension in CEMR's policy work. We will also provide input to the preparation of the post-2019 EU gender equality strategy and strengthen our cooperation with European and international partners.

**Objective: Continue advocacy for gender equality action at local and regional level, mobilisation of signatories of the Charter; collaborate with partners at European and international level.**



### 4. Reduce inequality within and among countries, make cities, towns and municipalities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation



We will focus our advocacy work on the negotiations of the future **regional development and cohesion policy (2021-2027)** and our key messages that we have defined concerning the Commission's proposals. At the same time, we will continue monitoring the implementation of the current programme (2014-2020) in relation to the experience with the integrated territorial development tools, (integrated territorial investments, ITIs, and Community-Led Local Development, CLLD). We suggest to start reflections on the territorial development beyond European Structural and Investment Funds and EU boundaries. This shall cover urban, rural and territorial



issues and be linked to the revision of the **European Territorial Agenda 2020**. In this context, other elements can be addressed such as demographic change, depopulation, innovation, etc. We will continue our involvement in 8 of Partnerships of the Urban Agenda for the EU, and contribute to the European Commission's evaluation. We will contribute to the revision of the **Leipzig Charter for Sustainable Cities** (Leipzig Charta 2.0) to be adopted under the German EU Council Presidency 2020 and promote the **Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (rfsc)** as a tool for sustainable urban development.

We will also continue monitoring **local public investment**, advocate for enabling conditions in the context of EMU, and follow up on the Communication on the Investment Plan for the EU (expected to be released end 2018).

Concerning integration of **migrants and refugees** we will monitor the evolution of the EU Agenda on Migration as well as the negotiations of the future relevant programmes (AMF, ESF+). We will follow-up the work on the territorial impact of migration and the CEMR-OECD study on the role of multilevel governance and of local and regional government associations.

**Objective: Advocate CEMR's position during the negotiations of the regulations for the future cohesion policy; contribute to the revision of the European Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter for Sustainable Cities; advocate for enabling conditions for local public investments.**



## 5. Ensure quality education, lifelong learning, promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



People need to be equipped with the necessary skills and trained for jobs in today's workplaces, which are more and more impacted by digitalisation. Local and regional governments as employers have to remain attractive for skilled people and keep up with the requirements of the citizens and businesses as users of their services and of public administration. Our societies become more diverse and this should also

be reflected in our public administrations. Specific actions are needed to tackle the challenges such as demographic change, integration of migrants, promotion of gender equality, atypical forms of work, etc. CEMR can facilitate exchange of experience and good practices for topics that are relevant for its members.

In our role as social partner in the **European Social Dialogue**, we are implementing our 2-year work programme (2018-2019), which focusses on the 'localisation of the European Semester', the implementation of the framework for well-being at work, the implementation of our guidelines for migration and anti-discrimination; promotion of gender equality and follow-up our gender equality guidelines. Furthermore, it is planned to evaluate the work of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee, which will have been working for 15 years in 2019.

Progress in **digitalisation** still depends on the necessary infrastructure and access to fast internet. Local and regional governments as providers of digital services have to make the necessary adjustments of the organisation of their processes, their services and communication. They also need to prepare for further innovations, such as robotics and artificial intelligence and how they can be used in their environment. The preparation of an orientation paper on digitalisation aims to identify the key elements from the perspective of local and regional governments and how they should be addressed. Furthermore, CEMR will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience on relevant issues, such as the Review of the directive on the re-use of public sector information (PSI Directive), Digital Europe Programme, use of Artificial Intelligence by LRGs, Once-Only Principle in public administration, smart cities and communities, etc.

Broad dissemination and promotion of our position paper on the future of **public services** to advocate our views and proposals what should be done in the future in three areas: public procurement, state aid and international trade agreements.

**Objective: Facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience on relevant issues; promote local and regional government as major employers towards EU institutions; raise awareness for our position and mobilise support for our proposals.**



**6. Take urgent actions to combat climate change and its impacts; Ensure access to sustainable and modern energy for all; sustainable consumption and production patterns; Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**



Promoting the vision of a **fossil fuel free society in 2050** and of a transition society will be necessary in order to achieve the objectives of the Paris climate agreement. Local and regional government can contribute considerably to achieve these goals, they can take actions, raise awareness and mobilise support among the citizens. In cooperation with our partners at European and international level, we propose commitments and concrete actions in an orientation paper to be implemented as of 2019.



We will promote our recommendations concerning the next **Environmental Action Programme** towards the European Commission, prepare for evidence-based lobbying concerning the **Plastics Strategy**, follow up legislation on **water** issues and monitor the implementation of the **circular economy** package. In the area of urban mobility, we will continue our work on the **clean mobility package**, in particular on the clean vehicle directive and provide input to the Commission's guidance document on urban access for vehicles.

**Objective: Define commitments and actions to achieve the Paris agreement on climate objectives, including linked policy issues in the area of environment, mobility, circular economy, etc.; advocate our positions in relation to EU legislation and policy initiatives.**