



Local & Regional  
Europe

# 2014 European elections

## The local and regional governments manifesto



# About CEMR

An organisation committed to a local and regional Europe

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;

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.

**2. Providing a forum for debate and cooperation** between European local and regional authorities via their national representative associations.

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.

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 manifesto

## Adopted by the associations of local and regional authorities in Europe

This manifesto has been adopted the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2013 in Prague, by the elected representatives of the 57 CEMR sections and member associations unanimously.

### Associations of local and regional authorities (EU):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Austrian Association of Cities and Towns</li><li>• Austrian Association of Municipalities</li></ul>	Austria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Union of Belgian Cities and Municipalities</li><li>• Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities</li><li>• Association of the City and the Municipalities of the Brussels-Capital Region</li><li>• Union of Cities and Municipalities of Wallonia</li></ul>	Belgium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria</li></ul>	Bulgaria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Croatian County Association</li></ul>	Croatia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Union of Cyprus Municipalities</li></ul>	Cyprus
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic</li></ul>	Czech Republic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Danish Regions</li><li>• Local Government Denmark</li></ul>	Denmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Association of Estonian Cities</li><li>• Association of Municipalities of Estonia</li></ul>	Estonia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities</li></ul>	Finland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• French Association of CEMR</li></ul>	France
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• German Association of CEMR</li><li>• German Association of Cities</li><li>• German Association of Towns and Municipalities</li><li>• German County Association</li></ul>	Germany
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Central Union of Municipalities of Greece</li></ul>	Greece
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partnership of Hungarian Local Government Associations</li><li>• Association of Hungarian Local Governments and Representatives</li><li>• Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities</li></ul>	Hungary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Institute of Public Administration</li><li>• Local Government Management Agency</li></ul>	Ireland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Italian Association of CEMR</li></ul>	Italy

• Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments	Latvia
• Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania	Lithuania
• Association of Luxembourg Cities and Municipalities	Luxembourg
• Local Councils' Association	Malta
• Association of Netherlands Municipalities	Netherlands
• Association of Provinces of the Netherlands	
• Association of Polish Cities	Poland
• Association of Polish Counties	
• National Association of Portuguese Municipalities	Portugal
• Association of Romanian Communes	Romania
• Association of Romanian Towns	
• National Union of County Councils of Romania	
• Romanian Municipalities Association	
• Association of Towns and Communities of Slovakia	Slovakia
• Association of Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia	Slovenia
• Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces	Spain
• Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions	Sweden
• Local Government Association	United-Kingdom
• Convention of Scottish Local Authorities	
• Northern Ireland Local Government Association	
• Welsh Local Government Association	

### Associations of local and regional authorities (non-EU):

• Albanian Association of Communes	Albania
• Albanian Association of Municipalities	
• Association of Local Authorities of Republic of Srpska	Bosnia and Herzegovina
• Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	
• Association of the Units of Local Self-Government of the Republic of Macedonia	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
• National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia	Georgia
• Association of Local Authorities in Iceland	Iceland
• Union of Local Authorities in Israel	Israel
• Congress of Local Authorities of Moldova	Moldova
• Union of Municipalities of Montenegro	Montenegro
• Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities	Norway
• Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia	Serbia
• Swiss Association of CEMR	Switzerland
• Union of Municipalities of Turkey	Turkey
• Association of Ukrainian Cities	Ukraine
• Ukrainian Association of District and Regional Councils	

# Key messages

## 9 messages to revive Europe

- **Continue prioritising youth employment.** Support specific and transitory programmes of youth work integration, in particular, through the “EU Starter” proposal. Strengthen the role of education as well as investment in innovation, R&D and sectors of high added value.  
*Section 1 of the Manifesto, page 9*
- **Monitor the implementation of the structural funds** thoroughly to achieve better territorial cohesion, in particular the application of the Partnership Principle and the Code of Conduct. Guarantee the strengthening of the subsidiarity principle and create a subsidiarity culture among the different levels of governance.  
*Section 2 of the Manifesto, page 11*
- **Opt for lighter and simpler regulation,** focusing on common agreed objectives rather than too detailed provisions, provide transparency when opting for the fast track procedure.  
*Introduction, page 7*
- **Respect the principles of subsidiarity** and proportionality, the wide discretion of the national, regional and local authorities in organising services of general economic interest, and to seek a balance between the requirements of the *competitive* and the *social* dimension of the “highly competitive EU social market economy.”  
*Section 3 of the Manifesto, page 12*
- **Define ambitious objectives for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions,** and develop renewable energy and energy efficiency by 2030. Respect the competences of local and regional authorities in the field of mobility in any EU initiative, to support municipalities and regions to implement sustainable mobility policies.  
*Section 4 of the Manifesto, page 14*
- **Increase the Europe for Citizens Programme budget** until the symbolic “1 euro per citizen” in order to enhance the ownership of the European Union citizenship, making special effort to reach the citizens in risk of exclusion and to support initiatives towards gender equality and the integration of migrants. Support local and regional authorities by providing legislative answers to fight against discrimination, especially that of the Roma community.  
*Sections 5, 6 and 7 of the Manifesto, pages 16, 18 and 19*
- **Stand for deeper integration and democratic legitimacy** for the European Union and initiate a Convention in order to draft a Fundamental Law of the European Union.  
*Section 8 of the Manifesto, page 20*
- **Support further enlargement** of the European Union and mediate deeper implication of all levels of local and regional authorities in the negotiation process.  
*Section 9 of the Manifesto, page 21*
- **Support integrated global approaches,** particularly in cooperation with partners in the Global South, to contribute to a more secure, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous global village.  
*Section 10 of the Manifesto, page 22*

# Introduction

In May 2014, Europeans have an appointment with democracy

The European Parliament is the only institution of the European Union whose members are directly elected by citizens. Around 70 % of the directives approved by the European Parliament are implemented at local and regional levels affecting them in a broad range of policy fields and crucial services for citizens. The elections of 2014 are therefore a unique occasion to encourage public debate about the future of Europe between the different levels of government and citizens. CEMR has a role to play as it is the largest organisation of local and regional government, representing over 100.000 local and regional authorities in the European Union.

These elections will take place in a context of Europe facing many threats and challenges and should be seen as the principal instrument for citizens to influence the future of the European Union. The adoption of the *Treaty of Lisbon* provided the European Parliament with more competences that allowed it to counterbalance other institutions such as the European Commission or the Council of the European Union. With genuine democratic legitimacy, members of the European Parliament will have great influence over the choice of the future President of the Commission by the Council and will proceed with his/her final election. For the first time, political

groups will present their candidates for the position of President of the Commission before the election itself, allowing for a stronger visibility and importance of the choice European citizens will make. The increase of euroscepticism in public opinion, coupled with hostility towards European integration, makes this democratic appointment between Europe and its citizens particularly important. It is now more important than ever to make these elections an opportunity for popular mobilisation and for renewed boost of enthusiasm towards our European project.

As the decisional level of democratic government closest to the citizens, local and regional governments have a particular role to play. We wish to contribute to the goal of providing meaning to the European project through an electoral campaign that integrates the territorial dimension, and there is still room for the improvement of the implementation of the subsidiarity principle. A clear structure regarding the co-operation mechanisms with regional parliaments is in most cases still missing, while resources and time for conducting subsidiarity checks are scarce. The creation of a subsidiarity culture amongst the regional parliaments with legislative powers and taking into account local authorities to establish a multi-level European system of checks and balances is



**Annemarie Jorritsma**

*Mayor of Almere,  
CEMR President*



**Frédéric Vallier**

*CEMR Secretary General*



neither there yet. In relation to the European decision making-process, we observe an increased use of the 'fast track procedure' (only one reading in the European Parliament), which leads to a lack of transparency. CEMR calls on the members of the European Parliament to ensure transparency and open discussions when they opt for one reading procedures.

Too detailed regulation at the EU level is sometimes not necessary while lighter and simpler regulation is needed. In certain areas, such as climate change and integration, there is not enough financial support to local and regional authorities to properly deal with their competences and EU directives.

CEMR wishes to express, within the framework of these elections and faithful to its founding values, a message of engagement and trust towards Europe on behalf of Europe's local and regional governments and their national associations.

### **Yes to a Europe close to its local and regional authorities**

Europe should not be seen solely as a distant, additional institutional level, embodied in the meetings of Heads of State and Government and in technocratic institutions. Above all, it should be an area of respect and freedom for the territories in all their diversity.

We are particularly committed to the principles of local democracy, local democratic governance and self-government, faithful to the principles and the spirit of our *European Charter of Municipal Liberties* of 1953, which resulted in the adoption of the *European Charter of Local Self-Government* in 1988.

Local and regional governments should be considered equal actors in European governance. They contribute to the implementation of European Union policies in their territories, especially in fields as important as cohesion, social inclusion, environment or climate. The *Treaty of Lisbon* has extended the principle of subsidiarity to local and regional governments but their recognition as key actors of European development needs to be better understood by the institutions of the European Union.

### **Opt for lighter and simpler regulation,**

*focusing on common agreed objectives rather than too detailed provisions, provide transparency when opting for the fast track procedure*

We are convinced, as elected leaders of sub-national governments, that a future model of development in Europe needs to tackle the economic and social crisis and that it can be only implemented through our territories, and through mobilisation of all actors: from citizens to economic leaders, entrepreneurs, the educative community and the local and regional administrations. The European Union should support this mobilisation in cooperation with by mayors and leaders of municipalities and regions.

### **Yes to a strong and united Europe of solidarity**

We believe in a European Union of solidarity, social justice and cohesion; based on a highly competitive social market economy. However, a balance should be sought between the requirements of the competitive and the social dimension in particular in relation to services of general economic interest. We want a united and strong Union closer to its citizens and its local and regional authorities in accordance to article 3 of *TEU*.

In a particularly difficult economic and social climate, in which isolation and tendencies toward national interests are very tempting, one of the first challenges is to promote openness and dialogue between Europeans at all levels, in accordance with the core values of the European project promoting human dignity, freedom, democracy and equality.

Openness, as well as dialogue and respect for diversity are also the keys to maintaining peace on our continent. We should not forget that the European Union, laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize 2012, was built upon the reconciliation of its peoples, which is a priceless legacy indeed.

It is necessary to work together in order to address legitimate concerns of citizens who expect a strong Europe, capable of ensuring favourable conditions for sustainable growth and fair development. In the current context, this entails a strong implementation of common policies in order to ensure quality public services and to fight against unemployment, especially youth unemployment.

To do so, we need strong and solid European institutions able to make decisions that deal with the challenges we face. We need an institutional framework capable of formulating a true common policy, not one only representing national interests of member states. We call on the future European Parliament and its members to maintain this spirit of cooperation and to this end we draw their attention to the following issues of mutual concern:

“ Citizens are expecting a strong Europe, capable of ensuring favourable conditions for sustainable growth and fair development. ”



# 1. Employment and social priorities

More than 5.7 million young people are without employment within the European Union, a number that is continually increasing. From a political, social and economic point of view, this is a disaster that needs to be addressed by all possible means. Youth employment is a core element towards sustainable economic recovery, especially for long-term economic and social stability for the whole next generation, for our society, and for Europe. Such discussion crosses all political or ideological boundaries. The increasing demographic change means we are becoming more and more dependent on our youth, which is being marginalised by the society it will one day be leading.

Therefore, we call upon the future European Parliament to continue prioritising youth employment and integration through its next legislature for the decisions taken here have a direct impact on the response by local and regional authorities in their communities. Local and regional authorities are at the forefront of the fight against unemployment and social care for unemployed and play a pivotal role in developing and implementing programmes of youth integration into the labour market or education. We call on the future European Parliament to support specific and transitory programmes of youth work integration, in particular through the EU Starter proposal supported by the CEMR.

Demographic change in Europe also means an ageing population. Rather than focusing on the negative aspects of this change, the European Parliament has the capacity to be at the forefront in promoting this as a unique opportunity in terms of economy, growth and sustainability. This is strongly linked to fostering intergenerational solidarity amongst the European population. Furthermore, the underlying need for social inclusion of all groups demands to be addressed, and in the time of crisis social inclusion needs to be strengthened. Although primarily a national responsibility, the European Parliament has a pivotal role to play by ensuring that the opinion of local and regional authorities on social inclusion is at the heart of all European discussions.

Local and regional authorities have a strong role to play as employers' and service providers, employing over 17 million workers in the public sector. In this regard, the CEMR would be keen that the forthcoming revised Working Time Directive enables local and regional authorities to organise existing working time arrangements for its essential public services. Alongside this, the CEMR is keen that the review of the occupational pensions' directive respects the right for local and regional authorities to organise their own public pension schemes in a way that suits the public interest and the specific needs of

## **Continue prioritising youth employment.**

Support specific and transitory programmes of youth work integration, in particular, through the EU Starter proposal. Strengthen the role of education as well as investment in innovation, R&D and sectors of high added value.

their employees. We therefore call for the European Parliament to reinforce these key messages during its new term in office.

All issues pertaining to employment should be addressed through certain mechanisms, such as social dialogue both at local, regional, national and European levels: while strengthening the role of education as well as investing more in innovation, R&D and sectors of high added value.

This tool, as laid out in the *Treaty of Lisbon*, allows for structured dialogue between the most relevant actors in employment policy: employers, trade unions, and governments. The European Parliament, as the representative of all citizens, should promote social dialogue as a tool to achieve long lasting results in the field of employment in the European Union, and at the national and local levels.

“ All issues pertaining to employment should be addressed through certain mechanisms, such as social dialogue both at local, regional, national and European levels. ”



## 2. Territorial cohesion

The year 2014 will see cohesion policy entering a new funding period, and the implementation of new regulations will be very important for local and regional governments. We are particularly concerned to what extent member states will implement the new territorial instruments such as community-led local development or integrated territorial investments, and whether managing authorities will involve local and regional authorities in the management, implementation and evaluation.

A particular issue will be the integration of the different funds and the cooperation beyond administrative borders and sectorial approaches, in particular in relation to urban-rural partnerships. Indeed, both rural and urban areas are subject to dynamic change, disregarding administrative borders. Integrated approaches and effective governance systems at the level of functional economic areas including both rural and urban areas

are considered a plus for territorial cohesion. Further developments, such as the creation of metropolitan areas and inter-municipal cooperation deserve to be considered as functional areas – an approach which the new European Union cohesion policy is recommending for integrated development measures.

Therefore, we call on the future European Parliament to monitor the implementation of the structural funds thoroughly, in particular the application of the Partnership Principle and the Code of Conduct, and to collaborate with local and regional governments when it comes to achieve sustainable development of European territories.

### **Monitor the implementation of the structural funds**

thoroughly to achieve better territorial cohesion, in particular the application of the Partnership Principle and the Code of Conduct. Guarantee the strengthening of the subsidiarity principle and create a subsidiarity culture among the different levels of governance.

# 3. Public Services in the European single market

The European single market continues to be in progress, and economic growth is expected due to European regulations in the area of public procurement and state aid, and due to further development of e-services and e-commerce. Local and regional authorities are affected as service providers and employers, and are constantly adapting and modernising their services and organisation according to European legislation and requirements. However, we are concerned that the European legislator does not sufficiently balance the general and the economic interest when issuing rules on services of general economic interest. Furthermore, the specificities of local public services and their objective to serve the citizens are not sufficiently taken into account

We believe that the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality, as laid down in article 5 of the *Treaty of Lisbon* and its Protocol (Nº 26) on services of general interest which provides wide discretion to the national, regional and local authorities to organise these services, are not sufficiently taken into consideration.

We call on the future European Parliament to consider the diversity in Europe, the historical, political and cultural differences that are also reflected in the way services are provided to citizens. As long as they respect the principles of the Treaties of the European Union, local and regional governments, which are democratically elected and accountable to their citizens, should be allowed to organise their services in the way they consider to be the best for the interest of their citizens. European Union regulations should concentrate on services that really bear the risk to distort the internal market, which is in general not the case with locally provided services.

## Respect the principles of subsidiarity

and proportionality, the wide discretion of the national, regional and local authorities in organising services of general economic interest, and to seek a balance between the requirements of the *competitive* and the *social* dimension of the "highly competitive EU social market economy.

As far as upcoming negotiations of international trade agreements are concerned, CEMR advocates for an increase of the thresholds in the GPA (General Procurement Agreement), which remain unchanged for many years. Particular attention should be paid on the impact that these agreements may have on local and regional self-government, and that the above mentioned principles of subsidiarity and proportionality are not violated.

New legislation on public bodies VAT and tax exemptions in the public interest should take into consideration the specific needs of local and regional authorities, in particular when it comes to public-public co-operations.

Furthermore and in relation to data protection, CEMR notes that the proposed regulation aims to guarantee citizens' rights and boost Europe's digital economy. However, we are keen that the obligations put upon Local and Regional Authorities and the public sector do remain proportionate to the actual societal benefit of bringing in more complex rules.

“The obligations put upon Local and Regional Authorities and the public sector do remain proportionate to the actual societal benefit of bringing in more complex rules.”



# 4. Climate change, energy transition and sustainability

Preserving our natural resources and developing a circular economy are shared responsibilities between public authorities at all levels, the private sector, and citizens. The 7<sup>th</sup> European Union Environment Action Programme provides a comprehensive framework for European environmental policies for the coming years, and particularly reiterates two core principles: the “polluter-pays” principle and the rectification of pollution at the source. CEMR invites the future European Parliament to ensure that these principles will guide future environmental policies at the European and global levels, starting with the current review of the European Union policy on air and the European Union waste legislation. On this last issue, we hope that the European Parliament will make sure that the reviewed targets for municipal waste will be proportionate and realistic, and accompanied with adequate support, for instance for municipalities lagging behind.

The economic crisis, the preservation of competitiveness, and the security of energy supply are major concerns for political decision-makers and private companies. Nevertheless, we are convinced that economic growth and protection of our envi-

ronment and our resources are not contradictory priorities. Local and regional governments are already implementing a vast array of actions for climate protection and sustainable energy, leading to green growth and job creation, as shown by the Covenant of Mayors. They need strong political signals from the European Union in order to consolidate their efforts. We call on the future European Parliament to demonstrate its determination to define ambitious objectives for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and to develop renewable energy and energy efficiency by 2030. We are expecting a renewed energy and climate framework which would allow, rather than hinder, municipalities and regions to fully exploit the potential for a local and regional energy transition.

Europe will host the United Nations conference on climate change in 2015 in Paris, which will be the last chance before long to reach an ambitious global agreement on climate. All institutions and stakeholders have to mobilise to seize this opportunity to lay the ground for a change in the world’s development paradigm. Local and regional government reiterated their commitment to climate protection in the *Nantes*

## **Define ambitious objectives for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions,**

and develop renewable energy and energy efficiency by 2030. Respect the competences of local and regional authorities in the field of mobility in any EU initiative, to support municipalities and regions to implement sustainable mobility policies.



*Declaration of Mayors and Subnational leaders on Climate Change* adopted in September 2013, which will guide local and regional actions towards Paris 2015. We hope to find an ally in the European Parliament to fight for a comprehensive and ambitious international climate agreement which empowers local and regional governments to act.

Transport is a key tool for the economy and the cohesion of our territories as well as for our citizens. In this respect, support from the European Union is, of course, always welcome when it comes to promoting innovation, incentives to shift towards more sustainable modes of transport. New proposals on urban mobility have

been published in December 2013 and we hope that the European Parliament will first respect the competences of local and regional authorities in the field as well as push for a framework enabling municipalities and regions to implement sustainable mobility policies providing the necessary resources to do so.



# 5. Europe for citizens

As the closest level of governance to the citizens, local and regional authorities have a particular responsibility to involve Europeans in this endeavour.

Especially through town twinning and partnerships, local and regional authorities play a major role in the mutual understanding and the building of a common history. Local and regional authorities are the source of many initiatives fostering mobility, youth exchanges, and the sharing of experiences. These initiatives are the essential vehicle for the development of European citizenship. Surprisingly however, in 2013, the *European Year of Citizens*, we have seen the budget for the *Europe for Citizens* programme further reduced. The financial and economic crisis has had a bad impact on the citizens, who have raised doubts and questions about the future of the European project. Accordingly, we call the Parliament to stand for a budgetary allocation of at least 1 euro per inhabitant of the EU for the *Europe for Citizens* programme at the end of

the next legislature, making a special effort to also reach those citizens in risk of exclusion. This could help to close the gap between citizens and the European Union through local visibility, while supporting more solidarity and equality between our peoples.

We also call the candidate to the European parliament to revise this policy and help to allocate the necessary resources for relevant strands of the programme. To date, large networks of twinned towns and technical cooperation are favoured at the expense of on-the-ground activities of citizens and small municipalities, which further contribute to their feeling of exclusion from European governance.

Local and regional governments have cooperated closely with the European Parliament in the past through our friends of CEMR Network. Many members of the European Parliament are experienced local and regional leaders and understand the challenges and tasks undertaken

## **Increase the Europe for Citizens Programme budget**

until the symbolic “1 euro per citizen” in order to enhance the ownership of the European Union citizenship, making special effort to reach the citizens in risk of exclusion and to support initiatives towards gender equality and the integration of migrants. Support local and regional authorities by providing legislative answers to fight against discrimination, especially that of the Roma community.

by municipalities, cities and regions. We especially value the contribution of the intergroup URBAN and the role of the Vice-President in charge of relations with local and regional authorities and their representative associations. As leaders of local and regional governments we also support exchange programmes that enable cities and regions to learn from each other; programmes such as INTERREG and the Erasmus of local and regional representatives should be strengthened and consolidated.



# 6. Europe of equality

Equality of women and men is an essential value in every democracy and also a factor for development of our society. Despite the progress made during last decades, many challenges still remain, for instance women still earn on average less than men, remain under-represented in decision-making positions and take larger responsibilities of unpaid household work.

As local and regional actors, we have an essential role in promoting equality between women and men. CEMR has provided local and regional authorities with the opportunity to make a public commitment to gender equality by signing the *European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life* launched in 2006. The Charter presents fundamental principles and values of equality between women and men and also reflects the complexity of this issue by exemplifying how local and regional authorities can work to improve equality in different fields of their competencies.

The Charter has been signed by almost 1400 local and regional authorities in 29 countries. In order to follow-up this work CEMR has established an Observatory in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Charter. It is essential to provide a platform of exchange for local and regional authorities on equality-issues to ensure sustainability in this work.

To reach the European Union targets on smart, sustainable and inclusive development, it is of vital importance to give priority to gender equality issues, to fight for the recognition of equal rights, and to put forth efforts ensuring that all citizens can take part in shaping the future of Europe. We invite the future European Parliament to support initiatives aiming to ensure sustainability of actions that are carried out in this field including gender mainstreaming and to support local and regional authorities achieving equality by providing legislative answers to fight against gender-based discrimination.

“ We invite the future European Parliament to support local and regional authorities achieving equality by providing legislative answers to fight against gender-based discrimination. ”

# 7. Europe of diversity and integration

Integration of migrants is a challenge mainly for the local level, as it occurs in cities and towns. Proper coordination of different levels of government is the only way to succeed when it comes to integrate foreigners and local authorities often suffer from a lack of resources. We call on future members of the European Parliament to work in close partnership with local and regional authorities to put in place appropriate policies to guarantee a holistic approach to address this issue.

Communities living under the auspices of European Union citizenship have been attacked and the fundamental freedom of movement guaranteed by the Treaties has been

put in question. Another approach is then needed to properly address the integration of the Roma community through the establishment of an EU tailor-made programme. Local authorities are often not provided with the necessary means to deal with integration in general, and non-EU migrant remain in detention centres where their right are not respected or are expelled and stuck in other countries different from the one of origin just for having looked for a better life. Therefore we call on the future members of the European Parliament to fight against populist and xenophobic approaches that have been rising in many countries in the last years due to the economic crisis.

“ We call on the future members of the European Parliament to fight against populist and xenophobic approaches that have been rising in many countries in the last years. ”



# 8. Europe of treaties

It is becoming more evident that Europe is facing not only a financial, economic and social crisis, but also a crisis of its fundamental values. Europeans are experiencing a decline in conviction of the European project, a loss of faith in democratic institutions and a decrease of confidence in representative democracy at all levels of governance. The community of European citizens is losing the battle against selfish national interests. The European Union, founded to end once and for all the centuries of mutual wars our continent has faced, is at risk of becoming the casualty of resurging political nationalism and economic protectionism.

The crisis has made the institutional balance of the European Union out of date and a reform of the Treaties is inescapable if the Union is to prosper. Local and regional governments wishing for a united Europe call on the future members of the

European Parliament to build on the bottom-up strategy towards more integration and democratic legitimacy for the EU formulated by Altiero Spinelli, one of the founding fathers of the European Union, and carried forward by the Spinelli Group in the European Parliament.

We invite the future European Parliament to initiate a Convention in order to draft a Fundamental Law of the European Union. This fundamental law should define a new institutional equilibrium based on enhanced democratic representation of Europe's citizens and respected by the member states. It should be based on genuine powers and competences delegated to the European Commission, on governing in partnership among all levels of government and on increasingly tighter economic, fiscal and political integration of those Member states that wish for an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe.

## **Stand for deeper integration and democratic legitimacy**

for the European Union and initiate a Convention in order to draft a Fundamental Law of the European Union.



# 9. Europe of enlargement

Following the fifth wave of European Union enlargement in 2004 and 2007, several countries expressed their aspirations for European Union membership. Whilst Croatia joined on 1 July 2013, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro are official candidates together with Turkey. Potential candidates include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Kosovo (under UNSCR 1244). Iceland remains a candidate country although the negotiations have been suspended for the time being.

Citizens in these countries repeatedly affirm their support towards unifying our continent and enhancing its stability and sustainable prosperity. They can bring to the European project what it lacks most nowadays: faith in united Europe and in further integration.

The accession process, in particular the harmonisation of national legal systems with that of the European Union and the negotiations of the terms of accession, include several thematic areas of concern to local and regional governments. They have to implement on the ground a substantial part of European Union legislation, especially in the areas of public procurement, regional development, transport, environment,

energy, education, social policy and employment. Whilst local and regional governments seek to play an active and recognised role in the European multi-level governance system, they must also undergo comprehensive reforms and preparation for the European Union membership.

Stronger emphasis on the monitoring of candidate countries before accession could guarantee a better integration after accession whereby strengthening of sub-national governments and further decentralisation in candidate and potential candidate countries contributes to fundamental social, political and economic stability in future parts of the European Union.

We call upon the future European Parliament to continue its support to further enlargement of the European Union and to mediate deeper implication of all levels of governance in the negotiation process, including the local and regional governments. Their preparation for accession and their involvement throughout the course of the negotiation process is a unique opportunity to construct a stable and cohesive future Europe with firm roots in local democratic governance.

## Support further enlargement

of the European Union and mediate deeper implication of all levels of local and regional authorities in the negotiation process.

# 10. Europe of international solidarity and cooperation

European citizens form part of a broader global community where the shared values of peace, security, freedom, justice and solidarity are far from being achieved. For many years, local and regional governments, as well as their associations and networks have positively contributed to these ideals. Thanks to the lobbying work of PLATFORMA, the voice of Local and Regional authorities active in development and cooperation, the value of development cooperation led by them gained momentum in 2013 with the publication of the communication on empowerment of local authorities in partner countries, and with the adoption of a new report of the European Parliament on decentralised cooperation. The next five years will be all about proper implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of the communication and the report.

We trust that the future European Parliament will remain our ally in guaranteeing that local and regional governments in both the North and the South can effectively contribute to a more secure, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous global village.

In particular, 2015 will mark a turning point for international solidarity and development cooperation with the adoption of a new global framework guiding future strategies of poverty eradication and sustainable development. Given the catalyst role of towns, cities, provinces and regions in guaranteeing a decent life for all by 2030, notably through the basic services they offer, their voices will have to be heard in the definition of this framework. For the same reason, we wish this agenda to be a transformative one. It must go beyond the traditional concept of aid and development assistance, while integrating more comprehensive objectives and instruments. European local and regional governments have already adopted integrated approaches to inclusive and sustainable development.

We call on the future European Parliament to keep supporting and promote these integrated approaches on a global scale, particularly in its cooperation with partners in the Global South.

## **Support integrated global approaches,**

particularly in cooperation with partners in the Global South, to contribute to a more secure, inclusive, peaceful and prosperous global village



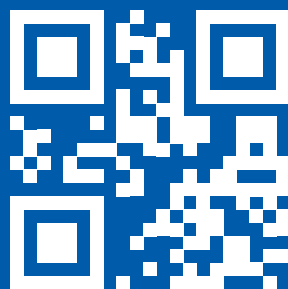
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## The manifesto in your language

The manifesto is available  
in English, French, German,  
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