

European Alliance Group

Local and Regional Authorities together making a difference

■ says European Alliance Group President Mr Jerzy Zajękała, Mayor of Łubianka



At the June 2011 Plenary our group hosted the winners of the CoR / EA group secondary schools competition, and I wanted to share this experience with you all. The 27 students and teachers from across the EU demonstrated an incredible knowledge of the European Union. They had an opportunity to discuss their concerns and aspirations with our members and indeed to meet the CoR President and many of you, their positive

experiences in Brussels will hopefully lead to a better understanding of the functioning of the EU and demystify the institutional process. On a personal level I found their linguistic skills and knowledge very impressive and I think Europe's future is in good hands with such students. I would encourage all members to continue engaging with the youth of today as indeed this is where the future lies.

The economic crisis continues to affect people across all parts of the EU and I believe that the CoR needs to outline a coherent strategy as to how the local and regional authorities stimulate the creation of jobs and growth. This is why I warmly welcome 'open days' again this year where local and regional experts have the opportunity to exchange ideas and projects and maybe more importantly come up with some strategies which will help our citizens have a bright future. Our motto now must be 'together we can make a difference'.



Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn,
EA group member Cllr Roger Knox

Key launch of 7th framework programme held in CoR

The Innovation Union is a key to achieving the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy for a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. In July Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn announced nearly €7 billion to start innovation through research under the

EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7). It is expected to create around 174 000 jobs in the short-term and nearly 450 000 jobs and nearly €80 billion in GDP growth over 15 years. EA group member Cllr Roger Knox, Rapporteur on the Innovation Union Flagship participated in the event and discussed with the Commissioner issues which related to innovation for stronger regions and opportunities for regional actors in FP7.

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The CoR plenary session will adopt on 12 October the outlook opinion of Mr Francesco Musotto, Member of the Sicilian Regional Assembly, on the complementarity of national and EU interventions aimed at reducing the disparities in economic and social growth. The opinion was prepared on the special request of the Polish Presidency. The rapporteur

insists that cohesion policy can and should continue to play a critical role specially in reducing disparities between European regions. Cohesion policy can help all regions to contribute to a sustainable and prosperous Europe. The Cohesion Policy provides an ideal instrument to deliver the concrete results required to create jobs, promote growth and show effects. In the end, regional and local investments lead to growth and prosperity not only for the region or municipality but for all Europe. According to the Rapporteur economic, social and territorial disparities that still exist in the EU can only be overcome through the principals of synergy, conditionality, additionally and complementarity of national and European interventions. The Cohesion Policy should not serve only to support the Europe 2020 strategy, as it has its own objectives established by the Treaty.

He said: *"I agree with the proposal to draw up a Common Strategic Framework that would include the structural funds and other European*



territorial cohesion funds including EAFRD which would replace the current approach of separate sets of strategic guidelines for policies and which should ensure greater coordination between them. The framework would also identify linkages and coordination mechanisms with other EU instruments such as programmes for research, innovation, lifelong learning, and networks. It should help to better coordinate the EU policies and EU and national policies."

The EA group welcomes the 9th edition of Open Days

The 9th European Week of Regions and Cities week of debates, discussions and seminars will be held from the 10th to the 13th October 2011. The EA group welcomes all participants to Brussels (and to the regional debates) and also welcomes that in the current economic climate that the debate is focussed on 'Investing in Europe's future: Regions and cities delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth'



in EU policies during its group meeting on the 11th October 2011. Guest speakers include the Vice Chair of the EP Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr **Janusz Wojciechowski**, MEP and Member of the Committee on Regional Development Mr **Ian Hudghton**, MEP. European Alliance group President Mr **Mr Jerzy Zająk**, has continuously outlined that achieving an urban-rural balance in development of EU policies is a must for the future coherent development of our regions.

European Alliance to hold Open Days debate: Developing a coherent Urban - Rural balance in EU policies

The European Alliance group will hold a debate on the development of a coherent Urban - Rural balance



European Alliance Group delegation visits OÜ Kose Vesi in Estonia

Following the successful experience of discussing the Role of Regional Parliaments in EU policy development which was held in Palermo earlier in the year, the European Alliance group decided to continue with organising focussed study visits in its members' regions and communities.

On the 16 September, upon invitation of the EA 1st Vice President, Dr Uno Silberg, a small delegation of EA members visited Estonia. The topic of the study visit was Innovation and Environment. The event included some presentations on Water Management in Estonia as well as a visit

to a water management project OÜ Kose Vesi guided by manager Mr Margus Proos.

Visits of this kind have allowed the EA members to get to know other regions' peculiarities and strength and to discuss key issues which are included in the European Alliance group Political Priorities. EA President Mr Jerzy Zająkła highlighted that it was important to ensure that EU policies clearly takes into consideration the local and regional dimension and water policy is fundamental to all local authorities across the EU, therefore he was happy to see how the Estonian local authorities implement the policy.



EA group members visiting a waste management facility in Kose, Estonia

Winners of the EA / CoR Secondary Schools Competition meet members of the EA group in Brussels



The EA group's first project, the "Secondary Schools Competition" has come to an end in June. After the nomination of winners, the EA group has awarded the young students with a two days visit to the European Union Institutions in Brussels, meeting the members of the EA group, and participating in the plenary session of the Committee of the Regions. The group of winners has been welcomed and presented to the Assembly of Local and Regional Authorities by the President of the CoR, Ms Mercedes Bresso. To learn more about decision

making in the European Union, the students have been invited to visit the European Parliament.

The second day of their trip has been dedicated to Brussels, as headquarters of several European Institutions, and capital of Belgium.

The members of the EA group were impressed by the preparation of the students. Members and participants considered the project a huge success, committing themselves to future continuation of such events.

1st conference of LRA's of Eastern Partnership and the EU (CORLEAP)

The kick off of the annual Conference of Regional and Local Authorities of the Eastern Partnership and the EU (CORLEAP) took place on 8 September in Poznań (Poland).

18 representatives of the CoR, an equal number of representatives from the Eastern neighbouring countries and observers coming from the civil society gathered to discuss the importance of a sub national dimension of the eastern partnership and looked at instruments and ways to boost territorial cooperation and local development via concrete projects.

The members adopted some recommendations, including the commitment to



Mr Jan Bronś

prepare an action plan for future work and exchange good practices about the projects of LRAs, which have been submitted to the Eastern Partnership Heads of State and government, the President of the European Council, the EU High representative for Foreign affairs. Mr Bronś and Mr Meaney are the European Alliance group representatives on CORLEAP

The EA group launched a new drawing competition for children



Following the success of last year's primary school Art competition, 'My Region, My Christmas' a new drawing competition was launched by the EA group in September. This year's theme is 'My Region, My Landscape' and is for primary school children aged between 7 and 11 years. The members of the EA group hope this will promote European cultural diversity, mobility and regional identity in the European Union. The idea is that via the young people depicting their regional landscape through art we will be able to appreciate different regional traditions and activities. Each full member of the EA group will be able to nominate one primary school and the prizes will be colouring pencils and a camera for school use. The winning artworks will be converted into postcards and included in a booklet.

COTER: Cohesion policy for rural areas after 2013 to be held in Poland

The next COTER meeting will be held in Warsaw (Poland) on 19 October and will be followed on 20 October by a seminar entitled: Cohesion policy for rural areas after 2013

The Union of Rural Communes of the Republic of Poland, where Mr Zająkała, President of the EA Group is the member of the Board, will co-organise the seminar. The objective of this event which will be held under the Polish Presidency to the EU is to discuss the issue of development challenges of rural areas within the European Union and Cohesion Policy after 2013. The participants will also discuss what development approach is most favourable to real and sustainable

development of cities and rural areas. EA Group calls for major importance to be given to support the rural areas and their role in the cohesion policy. Cohesion policy is well placed to deliver an integrated development approach, which can address issues within and between the various combinations of urban and rural areas.

