

European Alliance Group

“Poland’s time to lead in the European Union”

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



This summer we will see the ambitious implementation of the programme for the Polish Presidency of the EU, a time to give guidance and direction to some of the difficult discussions which will be taken over the coming months. My personal belief as well as that of our European Alliance group is that Poland is prepared, and that this will allow the skills of diplomacy, the knowledge of Europe and the vision of Poland to lead the European Union.

The CoR members are fully prepared to participate in delivering these challenges and indeed I also acknowledge the efforts

of my group colleague Mr Francesco Musotto in preparing the outlook opinion requested by the forthcoming Presidency on: ‘The complementarity of national and EU interventions aimed at reducing the disparities in economic and social growth’.

The European Alliance group has to its core the belief that we need to engage with the youth across the European Union. It is therefore that I am delighted to welcome to the 30 June – 1 July CoR plenary 33 Secondary School students and teachers. This is the 6th time our group has organised the multiple choice and essay competition and their enthusiasm and interest in the European Union is wonderful to see. We encourage all CoR members to meet and engage in a discussion with the students.



The European Alliance Group welcomes winners of the Secondary School Competition to the June CoR plenary



For the 6th year running the EA group will welcome winners of its Secondary Schools Competition to Brussels for the 30 June

- 1 July 2011 CoR plenary session. The competition’s aim is to encourage young people to learn more about the European Union, the Committee of the Regions, and other EU institutions as well as each other’s regions. This year’s competition was for pupils aged between 14 and 18 years.

The two stage competition has consisted of a multiple choice quiz on the European Union

and an essay competition on “How would I increase participation in volunteering in my region? Two winners from each participating school will participate in two days trip to Brussels in June, to meet members of the CoR, representatives of the European Institutions, having the chance to discover Brussels, the capital city, its history and present. More information is available on www.ea.cor.europa.eu

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Cllr Roger Knox



European Alliance

Cllr. Knox opinion on European Plan for Research and Innovation: European 2020 Flagship Initiative Innovation Union to be adopted by CoR June plenary



The Innovation Union is a “flagship” in the Europe 2020. It aims at focusing Europe’s efforts – and co-operation with third countries - on major societal challenges like climate change, energy and food security, health and an ageing population. Mr Knox’s opinion shows that there should be recognition of the role played by regions and local authorities in encouraging innovation, particularly among SMEs and in the downstream product development.

Mr Knox believes that “Innovation Union” flagship initiative gives scope to improve how tasks and responsibilities are shared between support for excellence in basic and applied research at European level on the one hand, and support for innovation at a decentralised level on the other, in a bid to develop the necessary range

and he said that “he agrees the importance of strengthening synergies, coherence of EU policies on Cohesion and innovation is crucial”. According to Cllr Knox the next programmes for research and innovation funding could entail greater synergies with programmes aimed at developing regional capacities and facilitating participation by convergence regions in R&D activity, as part of a common strategic framework.

The Rapporteur called “for a clear and widely accepted definition of excellence”



After the conference organized in the CoR devoted to healthy lifestyles, on the 25th May 2011 Mr Banaszak acting in capacity of the Executive Chair of

Adam Banaszak meets the Commissioner on Health and Consumer Polices, Mr John Dalli

the Interregional group on Health met Commissioner Dalli. The meeting addressed the need of closer cooperation between the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions with respect to public health. The Joint organization of a conference

during the forthcoming OPEN-DAYS, which was the second topic discussed during the meeting, can be seen as a concrete result reflecting the will to tighten inter-institutional collaboration regarding public health.

Gdynia City Council President, Mr Stanisław Szwabski discusses reform of the EU budget with Commissioner Lewandowski

Mr Stanislaw Szwabski, the President of Gdynia City Council, Member of the Committee of the Regions, said in March to Commissioner Lewandowski that the EU budget review is very important for all citizens and for future generations. He also added the EU not only needs of leadership, but also needs the tools to act. Alongside the other activities financed by

the European Union, cohesion policy can and should continue to play a crucial role specially in reducing disparities between European regions. European Cohesion policy is a principal tool to help all regions to contribute to a sustainable and prosperous Europe. This is a basic instrument for achieving the pro-growth objectives across the European Union.



Mrs Daiva Matoniene's opinion on the future LIFE programme to be adopted

The CoR plenary session will adopt on 1st July the opinion of Mrs Daiva Matoniene, deputy mayor of Šiauliai City, Lithuania, on the future of LIFE, the main EU financial instrument for environment whose envelope amounts to € 2.17 billion for the period 2007-2013.

The rapporteur suggests the future programme keeps a similar structure to the current one and underscores that preserving biodiversity should remain high in the EU environmental agenda with its objectives being integrated into other EU policy areas.

The rapporteur calls for more flexibility in using EU resources taking into account local conditions as well as for the simplification of administrative procedures.

The European Commission will adopt at the end of 2011 a proposal for a new regulation which would be applied from 2014 onwards. Mrs Matoniene opinion would enable the CoR to anticipate the European Commission's proposal and provide a political position at an early stage on an issue which is of major relevance for LRAs.



European Alliance Group welcomes positive Commission recommendation on accession of Croatia to the EU

The co-chair of the CoR – Croatia JCC Cllr Mrs Linda Gillham has warmly welcomed the positive decision of the European Commission towards Croatia's accession to the European Union. In a meeting earlier this year of the JCC in Vukovar, Croatia Mrs Gillham had reiterated the fact that she and members of the JCC wished to see speedy completion of accession negotiations and 'we are now delighted that this has been achieved'.

On an additional point and in the town of Šibenik, Croatia, co-chair of the CoR – Croatia JCC Cllr Mrs Linda Gillham delivered one of the opening speeches of the event and focused on a number of key issues including the importance of the CoR Croatia JCC in building up knowledge and the sharing of experience between local and regional authorities members in both the EU and Croatia, also on the importance of the Adriatic-Ionian macro-region, and lastly

she made a clear statement on the wish to see Croatia as a full member of the European Union as soon as possible and with no further delays.

During the meeting she had the opportunity to meet with Mrs Jadranka Kosor, Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Croatia where she expressed the hope that Croatia will join the European Union during the course of 2013.

Former EA Member is appointed Minister for Housing and Transport, in the Scottish Government

After the recent resounding Scottish National Party elections where they achieved an overall majority in Government the EA group is delighted to see that former CoR and EA group member Keith Brown MSP is the new Minister for Housing and

Transport in the Scottish Government. European Alliance group members wish him the very best in his new role.





EA President observed local elections in Moldova

The EA President Jerzy Zajakala took part in a joint CoR- CoE/ Congress joint delegation to observe local elections in Moldova on Sunday 5th June. A total of 898 mayors of the localities (municipalities, sectors and villages) and 11,740 local councillors were elected in the local elections. Moldova's territorial structure is constituted by thirty-

two districts, three municipalities and two autonomous regions.

The EA President welcomes the cooperation with the Congress when it comes to observing local elections outside the EU as part of a "joint effort aimed at bringing these countries closer to the EU as well as at ensuring stability in the region".

Dr Uno Silberg concerned over tensions after local elections in Albania

The EA Vice President, Dr Silberg took part in a joint CoR-CoE congress joint delegation to observe local elections in Albania, which took place on 8th May.

Dr. Silberg declared that from what he could see, "elections were held in accordance to European standards and that transparency was ensured".

However, he expressed his disappointment over the long waiting time to count the



votes and the political tensions which were reported before and after the elections.

In Tirana, according to the result of recounting votes, Luzlim Basha from the ruling party won the election by only 80 votes. President Barroso who was due to visit Albania to speak on the EU perspective of the country decided to postpone his visit due to the political instability.

Deputy of the Sicily Regional Parliament Mr Musotto takes part in ARLEM works in Porec (Croatia)

The EA member and deputy of the regional Parliament of Sicily, Mr Francesco Musotto will participate on 8th July in the meeting of the ARLEM commission on economic social and territorial affairs which will be held in Porec, Croatia, upon the invitation of Mr I. Jakovčić, County prefect of Istria.

The representatives coming from the EU and the southern shores of the Mediterranean will discuss the role of SMEs in the Mediterranean as well as the preservation and enhancement of cultural heritage.

The discussions will contribute to the elaboration of two reports which will be further discussed at the next meeting of the commission and adopted at the next ARLEM plenary session taking place in Bari in January 2012.



European Alliance group appoints Mr Szwabski to CoR – Montenegro JCC



The European Alliance group warmly welcomes the setting up of the CoR – Montenegro Joint Consultative committee, as it provides local and regional authorities with a clear forum to exchange experiences in preparing Montenegro towards EU accession.

The EA group appointed CIVEX coordinator and President of Gdynia City Council, Mr Stanisław Szwabski as a member of the group.

Upcoming meetings:

June

- 29 EA Group Bureau
Conference of Presidents
CoR Bureau
- 30 EA Group meeting
CoR Plenary

July

- 01 CoR Plenary
- 04 COTER meeting
- 05 ECOS meeting
- 06 SUDEV (ARLEM)
- 07 CoR-EESC PMG
- 08 ECOTER (ARLEM)

