



**Mr Jerzy Zająkała,**  
Mayor of Lubianka

## Solidarity between citizens is vitally important says EA President

I would like to take this opportunity to pay homage to the victims of the air disaster near Smoleńsk in Russia, which led to the death of 96 prominent Poles, including Lech Kaczyński – the President of Poland, his wife, Ryszard Kaczorowski – the last Polish President-in-exile, minister, senators and parliamentary deputies, other high-ranking officials, the chief of Staff of the Polish army, religious leaders, representatives of the Katyń families as well as the courageous crew of the aeroplane itself. We honoured their memory with a minute's silence at the Committee of the Regions' April plenary session and at the meeting of the European Alliance Group. We also heard several moving accounts from various members of the Polish delegation, who discussed both the tragedy on 10 April 2010 and the Katyń atrocities, which saw the murder of over 25 000 Poles in April 1940 on the orders of the then Soviet authorities. We will never forget the victims of these tragedies and their memories will live with us for ever. Let us help and support each other at this difficult time. The first Katyń tragedy – a symbol of enmity, was shrouded in the mists of totalitarianism. The last one – is shrouded in a mist of unanswered questions. And yet, despite this, it has been possible

to sweep away the clouds which hang over Katyń. The symbolism of this tragedy has moved not only the Polish people, but has touched other nations, too. As Poles, we are grateful for the condolences and expressions of solidarity which we have received at this very difficult time. It is perhaps a paradox that this symbolism has begun a process of reconciliation and solidarity between Russia and Poland and shows how Europe can unite in solidarity. European solidarity should remain the most important element of EU integration.

I would like to stress the importance of teaching the younger generation about their history and to encourage their active participation in the social, political and cultural life of our continent. It would be useful if the sense of solidarity mentioned could be a model for them to follow in the future. The European Alliance Group is trying to ensure that young people do have this opportunity. Our annual European schools competition, organised this year for the sixth time, mobilises young people from municipalities and regions from right across Europe to find out about Europe and its institutions. At our June plenary session we will have the pleasure of meeting the winners of this year's competition, who stood out thanks to the high level of their work.

New challenges, opportunities and requirements have emerged with the advent of globalisation. Modernisation is vital in the EU if we are to maintain our traditionally high-standard of living and ensure that the new Member States reach this level too. The open discussion on the future of the EU's budget, in which our Group and the Committee of the Regions are actively involved as partners, provided us with the basis for our opinion on the future of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy after 2013. As a Group, we believe that agriculture represents an important source of employment, and can continue to do so in the future. I am in favour of maintaining the current structure of the 2nd pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy, which allocates separate resources for the development of rural areas. I would also like to stress that there is a need to increase the amount of 2nd pillar funds allocated to rural development as the current levels of funding are not sufficient to implement the necessary action in the area of development.

I would also like to stress the particular importance that our political group attaches to issues concerning the preservation of our cultural heritage and our natural resources. A fitting example of this approach is our Group's extraordinary session and seminar on 17-18 June 2010, which will be held in Tulcea in Romania, in one of Europe's most outstanding areas of natural beauty – the Danube Delta. As part of this event, we will be discussing the importance of EU strategies for the Danube Delta and the natural and cultural heritage of this region.

## European Alliance focusses upon: "The Danube Delta – a common european heritage"



On the invitation of the European Alliance member Emil Drăghici, Mayor of the commune of Vulcana-Băi, Romania, the EA group will discuss the Danube Delta and its role in fostering a common European heritage on the 18 June 2010.

The meeting will be held in the town of Tulcea on the Danube Delta and will discuss lessons learned from the Baltic sea area as well as focussing on the importance of biodiversity to the Danube as well as its cultural and historical importance.

More information is available on [www.ea.cor.europa.eu](http://www.ea.cor.europa.eu)



## Mrs Gillham opinion on Biodiversity to be adopted on 9-10 June.

**Linda Gillham's** opinion on the EU and the international biodiversity policy beyond 2010 welcomes the European Council's endorsement of a new ambitious vision and target aimed at "halting the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services and restoring them as far as feasible by 2020."

In her opinion, the EA coordinator in the ENVE commission urges the European Commission, to set in the upcoming EU 2020 Biodiversity strategy clear and measurable and achievable targets and specific sub targets such as land use, spatial planning, agriculture and fisheries.

According to Mrs Gillham, local and regional authorities should be fully involved in the policy development and implementation of the new strategy. In fact, local and regional authorities can contribute to halting biodiversity loss by putting into place effective measures for climate change mitigation and adaptation such as green roofs, managing green open spaces, tree planting and raising public awareness as well as they should set as a good example when applying local development plans. However, they often lack of adequate financial resources and technical expertise.

## Tramś appointed to Turkey Working Group

At its last meeting, the members of the Committee of the Region's European Alliance Group appointed **Mr Marek Tramś**, Starosta Polkowicki, as a member of the working group on Turkey. The working group focuses on inter-institutional cooperation between local and regional authorities in Turkey and the EU. The working group's activities are

expected to concentrate on the progress made in the accession negotiations begun in October 2005. "I am delighted that I will be able to promote dialogue and cooperation with the political representatives of Turkey's local and regional authorities. And I hope that Turkey will carry out the effective political and constitutional reforms needed to bring her more in line with international and European standards. I would like to add that so far only limited progress has been made in combating corruption and organised crime. As a member of the Committee of the Regions I particularly regret that Turkey does not yet fully comply with EU standards on cultural and religious diversity, protection of national minorities and respect for their rights, equal rights for women in political life, and that appropriate legal and practical action has yet to be taken" said Mr Tramś following his appointment.

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



Members of the EA group consider communication with young generations a priority. In order to bring young people closer to the European Union, a competition between secondary schools has been held in seven member states around Europe.

The aim of the competition was to teach to students how the European Union and its institutions work, focusing on the work of the Committee of the Regions, and highlighting the role of 2010 as European Year of Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

Students had to participate in a two part competition, resolving a quiz on the European Union and writing an essay on the topic "In your view, how should the European Union act to combat poverty in the regions?"

The winners of the competition from each country are invited along with their teacher for a two day stay in Brussels to visit the Committee of the Regions and take part in a series of activities and meetings as well as observe the CoR's plenary assembly at work in June.

## "New" Western Balkans Working Group meets in June

The Working group on Western Balkans, with new membership, will meet on 1<sup>st</sup> of June in Brussels. The working group aims at facilitating the path of the candidate countries (Bosnia, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and Kosovo) to the European Union by assisting and giving them the necessary support.

Clare County Councillor, and EA full member in the Working group, **Brian Meaney** is convinced the place of these country is the European Union. "Criteria for accession are strict and should be applied to all in the same way but the involvement of the CoR and local and regional authorities could provide these countries with invaluable contribution and support in their administrative capacity building" he said.

## FYROM Working Group to meet in July

**Mr Witold Krochmal**, Mayor of Wołów (PL) has been appointed a member of the EU-former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Joint Consultative Committee. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was created following the collapse of Communist Yugoslavia. This country, with a population of 2 million, declared its independence after a referendum in September 1991. In December 2005 the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

was accorded candidate country status; accession negotiations, however, have yet to begin with the country. Mr Krochmal said: "The EU-former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Joint Consultative Committee was created in order to monitor internal reform and to promote political dialogue with representatives of local and regional authorities from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The Committee of the Regions should take part in this process, within the scope of its powers. One of the CoR's missions is the promotion of devolution as part of the process of democratic consolidation in this region, inter alia by ensuring the protection of minorities and interethnic cooperation."

## Dr Uno Silberg opinion on business registers to be adopted on 9 June Plenary Session

Business registers examine and store company information, such as information on a company's legal form, its seat, capital and legal representatives, and they make this information available to the public.

In his opinion the EA Vicepresident calls on the European Commission to propose a legal framework which would replace current voluntary agreements between business registers. A system of interconnected business registers with a common database and standardised entries would help companies obtain information on their partners. His opinion is for adoption during the June CoR plenary.