

European Alliance Group

Let's Get Europe Working in 2012

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



Mr Jerzy Zająkalla

The Danish presidency has put their emphasis on achieving growth, having a dynamic Europe, having a green Europe in its programme for the next 6 months. Now the key is how this translates into creating real jobs in our respective regions. Local and Regional authorities have a key role in trying to stimulate the conditions for the creation of growth and jobs, but they must be given the resources to do so.

The last number of years we have seen austerity measures which have not worked to date, now the European Union must deliver on ensuring that Citizens from Galway to Gdansk have the job opportunities they deserve. We need to focus on areas which we can deliver on; an example will be the European Alliance external meeting to be held in Poland in May entitled: Renewable Energies – from Policy to Reality. What we want to show is local examples of how we can both make a difference to energy supply, which is good for the environment and also delivers jobs.

Lastly, once again our focus this year in our political and information activities is on the young people so we are organising in the first half of this year a multiple choice and essay competition for secondary school students. Members of the CoR will have an opportunity to meet the students in the May CoR plenary.

European Alliance Group welcomes Croatia to the European Union



Following the positive outcome of the referendum on Croatia's accession to the EU, Cllr. Mrs Linda Gillham, Member of Runnymede Borough Council and Co-President of the CoR-Croatia Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and

the EA President Jerzy Zająkalla have expressed their deep satisfaction.

Despite the widespread pessimism on the economic crisis, the vote of the Croatian people gives us much hope, said Cllr. Mrs Linda Gillham. "Croatsians still see the EU as the most effective response to problems and misgivings: the people have voted for a better future, and, at the same time, they have paid tribute to the tremendous efforts that their government and Croatian local and regional authorities have done in modernizing their country and informing the citizens about the benefit of being part of the EU.

As chair of the CoR-Croatia JCC, I could only but witness the high degree of competence and commitment of my Croatian colleagues and I look forward to welcoming them as observers in the CoR.

The decision of Croatian citizens is of great significance, added the EA President Jerzy Zająkalla. "With this vote the people of Croatia have turned a page on the history of their country. They have said yes to European integration, with the conviction that the EU would bring peace, stability and prosperity in their region to our mutual benefit.

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Francesco Musotto, EA Member



European Alliance

My Region, My Landscape 2011 Primary Schools Art Competition



Since beginning our CoR / EA group art competition in 2009, European Alliance members are continuously amazed by the quality, imagination, and artistic portrayal of our Primary Schools children. Towards the end of 2011 and across 7 Member States, classes gathered, and gave beautiful impressions of their regions and their landscapes.

This was a true reflection of the diverse nature of the European Union, a union of beauty in rural or urban areas, whether these landscapes are created by nature or manmade, it's a reflection of us, the citizens of Europe, reflected so well by the young Children of our Regions. The booklet with all the winning entries is available on the EA group's website.



Mr Komskis meeting Lithuanian winners of the Primary Schools Art Competition

CoR continued dialogue with EUROMED partners at 3rd ARLEM plenary session

On 30th of January in Bari, Italy, the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) met in plenary to discuss the state of the territorial dimension in the Union for the Mediterranean.

Undoubtedly, members had a chance to debate over the current situation in the region following the Arab Spring.

The reports which have been dealt with in 2011 on water and desertification, the promotion of renewable energy, the role



of SMEs in local development, cultural heritage have been put to the vote before the ARLEM Plenary session

Mr. Francesco Musotto, EA member and deputy of the Sicilian Parliament, pointed out that it is extremely important to support our friends from the Southern shore of the Mediterranean in their democratic transition process. ARLEM, he added, could serve as an effective mean to enhance the level of cooperation and contacts while putting at the disposal of the Mediterranean members the expertise and experience of the CoR politicians and their local and regional authorities.

European Alliance group to hold meeting in Łubianka, Poland in May on *Renewable Energy – from Policy to Reality*

Renewable sources of energy – wind power, solar power (thermal, photovoltaic and concentrated), hydro-electric power, tidal power, geothermal energy and biomass – are essential alternatives to fossil fuels. Their use reduces our

greenhouse gas emissions, diversifies our energy supply and reduces our dependence on unreliable and volatile fossil fuel markets (in particular oil and gas). The growth of renewable energy sources also stimulates employment creation across local and regional authorities in Europe.

The European Alliance external meeting will discuss EU renewable energy policy and also give some success stories from local and regional authorities across the European Union. More information on: www.ea.cor.europa.eu

Annual CoR / EA group Secondary School Competition is launched

The European Alliance group is organising its annual Secondary Schools competition during 2012, a competition which engages the young students to get involved in the European debate

In the two stage competition pupils will need to be successful in a multiple choice quiz on the European Union and the Committee of the Regions. The students will also write an essay on the European Year for Active Ageing.



The project starts end of January and finishes in May. Full members of the EA group will nominate the secondary schools from their region to participate in the competition. Two winners from each participating school will be awarded with a two

days trip to Brussels, where they will meet members of the Committee of the Regions during the May 2012 plenary session, representatives of the European Commission and European Parliament, having the chance to discover Brussels, the capital city, its history and present.

ENVE Commission to visit during 2012 North Tipperary and Clare sustainable energy solutions

On the invitation of Clare County Councillor and EA member Brian Meaney, the ENVE commission will hold a study visit in April 2012 in North Tipperary and Clare, Ireland on Sustainable Energy and Enterprise Development Solutions in Rural Communities.

The study visit will concentrate on two unique projects in rural parts of Ireland. The first project, co-funded under the EU Commissions CONCERTO Programme, a unique

eco-village has been developed (100% supplied by renewable heating system with the largest solar array in Ireland), 400 buildings have received significant energy upgrades, with energy savings of between 35-60%, up to 3.5MW biomass heating systems have been installed.

The second project, the Clare Wood Energy Project is an integrated project involving Local Development Companies, Local Authorities, Forestry



Mr Brian Meaney

and Agricultural Advisors and Private Individuals. It has resulted in significant investment in biomass heating systems and also the development of a number of local wood fuel supply companies.

EDUC external meeting and conference to be held in Šiauliai in 2012



Mrs Daiva Matonienė

Mrs Daiva Matonienė's proposal to organise an external meeting and conference on "Sports for All – interregional cooperation" in Šiauliai, Lithuania has been adopted during the 10th meeting of EDUC commission in Sofia on the 28 September 2011. The proposed venue is a hotspot for Lithuanian sport and scene of the world's most important sport event, the 5th "Šiauliai 2012" TAFISA games

which will take place at the same time as EDUC meeting.

Šiauliai is the fourth largest city in Lithuania. Situated in the north of the country the city dates back to the 13th century. Today Šiauliai is an important industrial and cultural centre also giving a significant amount of attention to sport and sports events.

The event will be aimed at encouraging grassroots' sport activities. As 2012 will be the European Year of active ageing and intergenerational solidarity citizens will be reminded that sports are indeed for everybody.

European Alliance Rapporteurs appointed



Mr Brian Meaney

Cllr Brian Meaney has been appointed rapporteur on **Energy efficiency in Cities and Regions** including a focus on the differences between Rural districts and Cities

Mr Adam Banaszak has been appointed rapporteur on the proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a **Union Civil Protection Mechanism**



Mr Adam Banaszak

Upcoming Events:

February

- 14/02 Forum on "European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations", Brussels
- 15/02 EA group meeting, Brussels
- 15-16/02 Plenary session of the CoR, Brussels
- 27/02 Meeting of the EDUC Commission, Brussels

March

- 5-6/03 External meeting and seminar of the COTER Commission, Lisbonne, Portugal
- 22/03 Meeting of the CoR Bureau, Copenhagen, Denmark

22-23/03 5th Summit of regions and cities, "The European urban fabric in the 21st century", Copenhagen, Denmark

26/03 Meeting of the NAT Commission, Brussels

28 - 29/03 External seminar of the EDUC Commission, Kielce, Poland

April

18/04 Meeting of the CAFA Commission

23/04 Meeting of the EDUC Commission, Brussels

24/04 Study visit of the ENVE Commission, Tipperary, Ireland

Important dates EA/CoR Secondary Schools Competition:

7 – 24 February

Members nominate the schools along with contact persons at the local /regional authority and the school

27- 29 February

Nominated secondary schools receive the instructions of organizing the competition

1 – 23 March

The Secondary Schools competition takes place in every nominated school

26 – 28 March

List of winners to be sent to the EA secretariat

29 March

Announcement of winners in every nominated secondary school

2 – 4 May

Winners visit to the Committee of the Regions, Brussels