

## European Alliance Group

### Let's embrace the possibilities of green jobs

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



Mr Jerzy Zająkła

Europe seems to be evolving from one crisis to another over the last number of years, and it will not be the first or last time you will hear me say that local and regional authorities must be given resources to create the conditions for job creation in their respective regions. Without these resources

we will not create possibilities for SME's to create the badly needed jobs. Following this theme in May our group held a meeting in Łubianka, Poland which focussed on the theme of *Renewable energy – from policy to reality* where we examined areas such as solar energy, wind energy, biomass energy amongst others. What struck me at this meeting is the genuine possibilities which are there to not only create jobs but also have a clear benefit to the environment.

Also this May we held our annual Secondary Schools Competition where we had students from across Europe visit Brussels, visit the CoR plenary and also have a discussion with members. It never ceases to amaze me the linguistic skills and knowledge of these students. Our future will be bright if we can encourage them to get involved in active political life. I wish all our readers a very pleasant summer.

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### WINNERS OF THE EA/COR SECONDARY SCHOOLS COMPETITION VISITED THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Communicating with youth about the functioning of the European Institutions and increasing solidarity between generations has been the aim of the 7th edition of the secondary schools competition organized by the EA group.

Similarly to previous years, the participation of students from the nominated secondary schools has been very high,

representing the interest of the young generation towards the European project.

The winners of the competition have been awarded with a two days study trip to the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, which took place in the period of 2-4 May.

Members of the EA group have received an insight on the activities of several secondary schools in different member states of the EU, while students could follow from closely the functioning of one of the advisory bodies of the European Union, the Committee of the Regions, participating in the meeting of the EA group and attending the plenary session of the Assembly of Local and Regional Authorities.

The conclusions of the competition have been very positive from both sides, the students presenting the youth generations' perception on dealing with issues related to active ageing, and members involving the youth to the European level when searching for solutions on increasing solidarity between generations. The study trip was a true win-win situation for all participants' benefit, foreseeing the future continuity of the competition. For more info, visit: [www.ea.cor.europa.eu](http://www.ea.cor.europa.eu)



*“It is also crucial that governance models to be developed in a way sub national authorities can carry their task without depending exclusively on central governments”*

*Brian Meaney, EA member on Bosnia Herzegovina*



**European Alliance**

## Clare County Cllr Meaney in Sarajevo to discuss integration of Bosnia Herzegovina in the EU

Clare County Councillor and EA group member, Brian Meaney took part on 22 May in a delegation of CoR members, led by the CoR President Mercedes Bresso, visiting Sarajevo to discuss the recent developments in the integration process of Bosnia Herzegovina to the EU.

Unfortunately, the political stalemate in the country risks slowing down the process of the country towards EU accession. Moreover, Bosnia Herzegovina

has not currently agreed on an integration programme and a lack of coordination between state and entities remains rather poor.

Nevertheless, the CoR members of the Western Balkans working group, which met upon invitation of the Canton of Sarajevo, expressed confidence on Bosnia Herzegovina's capability to secure accession in the near future and positively noted that the willingness of Bosnia's different political entities to work together.

The developments of State institutions as well as the decentralisation in Bosnia Herzegovina were also part of the discussions. During the meeting of the Working group on Western Balkans which was attended by many local politicians, Cllr Brian Meaney, while he urged Bosnia Herzegovina to sort the internal issues and prove fully its commitment



*Mr Brian Meaney*

towards the integration progress in the EU, he added that it is also crucial that governance models are developed in a way sub national authorities can carry their task without depending exclusively on central governments.

## Neighbourhood policy top of EA Group agenda, Musotto and Brons lead discussions in ARLEM and CORLEAP steering committees

The EA group in the CoR considers as vital to renew efforts to develop a local and regional dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy and follows very closely the activities of ARLEM and CORLEAP, the two bodies, composed by the CoR members and elected representative of the neighbourhood countries that aim at giving a territorial dimension to the Union for the Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership.

On 30 May Mr. Brons participated in the bureau meeting of the CORLEAP which is composed of six members of partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus,



*Mr Jan Brons*

Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) and six members of the CoR, representing the European Union.

During the meeting, members agreed on an Action Plan aiming at promoting further integration and political association with Eastern Partners. The progress achieved in the bilateral agreements between the EU and the partner countries on deep and comprehensive Free Trade Area and on visa liberalisation will also be discussed during the second meeting of the CORLEAP which will take place in Chişinău (Moldova) in September.

On 11 June, Mr. Musotto member of the Parliamentary assembly of Sicily

participated in the ARLEM Bureau meeting in Rabat, Morocco.

The ARLEM Bureau debated about the state of regionalisation and decentralisation process in the Mediterranean and the implication of the Arab Spring in the region, which has to a certain extent already triggered reform and institutional change. An integrated strategy for the Mediterranean region with a look to Macroregional approaches was also at the centre of the discussions. The result of the discussions will fit into the draft annual report on the Territorial dimension in the Mediterranean to be voted beginning 2013 at the next ARLEM plenary assembly.



*Mr Francesco Musotto*

## The Committee of the Regions adopts the opinion of Mr Adam Banaszak, Member of the Kujawsko Pomorskie Regional Council on Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

On the agenda for adoption at the July CoR plenary is Mr Banaszak's opinion on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism. Mr Banaszak said "I am pleased to note that this proposal represents a step towards simplifying and streamlining legislation. I agree with EC proposal that in order to reinforce the EU's integrated disaster response capacity, a shift is needed from an ad hoc approach to measures planned sufficiently

in advance, together with an integrated policy on exercises and training courses, consideration for the cross-cutting nature of disaster prevention measures, and facilitation of further cooperation between participating states". He also reiterated that "I also agrees that civil protection measures are a fundamental Member State competence and that the mechanism should not affect Member States' responsibility to protect people, the environment and property on their territory".

The proposal merges Council Decisions on the Civil Protection Mechanism and the Civil Protection Financial Instrument, which provides funding for the actions under the Mechanism. It proposes the establishment of an Emergency Response Centre, built on the existing Monitoring and Information Centre and the development a coherent planning framework for response operations (through reference scenarios and mapping of existing capacities and development of contingency plans for their deployment). It also proposes the



Mr Adam Banaszak

establishment of a European Emergency Response Capacity in the form of a voluntary pool of pre-identified capacities made available by Member States and the development of complementary EU-funded capacities, where this has been considered more cost-efficient than Member States' individual investments.



Mrs Linda Gillham

## Cllr Mrs Linda Gillham elected New Mayor of Runnymede

Runnymede is a small district Council with a population of 80,000 people on the County of Surrey about 40km from London. Surrey is semi rural with a few large towns but many smaller towns and villages. Many residents commute into London, mainly by train or work in the high technology industries. There is very little unemployment and it is a fairly wealthy area. However there is always a need to provide more housing as many people want to live here. In Runnymede most of the urban area has been built on and the area is mostly "green belt" or lies in the flood plain of the River Thames. Outside the M 25 motorway around London there are too many cars and high levels of pollution and congestion on the motorways and surrounding roads but it is still a beautiful place to live.

In 1215 King John sealed the Magna Carta in front of the Barons on the Meadows at Runnymede by the Thames. Today the meadows remain but there is a memorial to the Magna Carta and to JF Kennedy on the site. In 2015 Runnymede and England will be celebrating the 800th anniversary of

this event which is so important to English Law. The Council is working with National Agencies to create a visitor and education centre as a legacy as well as many other local and national projects.

I was honoured to have been made Mayor of Runnymede in May 2012. The Mayor of Runnymede is a ceremonial role for one year starting in May. As an Independent Councillor I am in the opposition party but we still take the Mayoral role every 7 years. The Mayor performs many tasks during the year, celebrating the work of volunteers and societies in the Borough and County. I attended many street parties celebrating the Queen's Jubilee and lit a beacon on a hill along with many other municipal authorities on the Bank Holiday Monday night.

This year I have chosen to use my position of Mayor to raise the profile of bees and other pollinators which are so threatened. I hope to make residents more aware of how they can help bees by planting nectar rich plants and will raise some money to buy these plants for schools and youth groups who are prepared to plant them in school gardens. I have already met many bee keepers in the area and far more people who are interested in helping to provide food for our pollinators. This is a very popular cause."

# European Alliance group adopts Łubianka declaration: Renewable Energy – From Policy to Reality



At its external meeting in Łubianka, Poland, the EA group discussed the subject of Renewable Energy – From Policy to Reality, where the group examined various issues around renewable forms and gave examples of current and emerging technologies across the EU.

The meeting also adopted the Łubianka declaration: Renewable Energy – From Policy to Reality which gave very strong messages as to achieving the targets set by the EU, the financing of renewable energies, the potential job creation and

the socio-economic issues which need to be considered.

Members also had the opportunity to visit the historical city of Toruń and also visited a renovated windmill in Łubianka and saw the developments of solar panels on individual houses in Łubianka.

The meeting was hosted by the Mayor of Łubianka, Mr Jerzy Zająkała, who is also President of the European Alliance group. He added: this very important meeting is held in a crucial time for the

EU, we are looking at issues to help reach climate change targets and increase use of renewable energies. We are also examining the issue of green jobs that can be created with renewable energies. Our declaration was presented by our 1st Vice President to the EU Council President Van Rompuy on the 14<sup>th</sup> June. We have made this issue a priority for our group and we hope the EU can launch new initiatives to encourage and promote the use of renewable energies, bringing the policy to a clear reality.

## EA Members to study alternative energy sources

The EA group members' commitment to take action in order to facilitate the transition to a low carbon economy is also reflected in their active participation in study visits and meetings aimed at raising awareness and showing successful case studies on the potential of renewable energy sources.

The EA group members, led by the EA coordinator in the ENVE commission

and Councillor of Runnymede, Mrs Linda Gillham, took part on 11<sup>th</sup> June in a delegation visiting geothermal energy plants in the Łódzkie Region.

During the study visit in Poland, Cllr Gillham together with Brian Meaney and Stewart Maxwell had a chance to see best practices examples and specific investment projects using geothermal energy. Mrs Gillham highlights the potential of such plants which not only could make local communities less dependent from fossil fuels but also they could help boost the local tourism industry since water coming from

geothermal plants could often be used for setting up leisure centres and activities.

This delegation follows the study visit, the EA member and Clare county Cllr Brian Meaney organised in Ireland in April on the use of sustainable biomass and the main EA groups seminar on renewable energy in Łubianka (Poland) where experts in the field, coming across different EU member states, were invited to present the opportunities and the uptake of different renewable energy sources in their respective countries.

## Upcoming Events:

### July

- 17/07 CoR Bureau meeting, Brussels
- 17/07 EA Group Bureau meeting, Brussels
- 18/07 EA group meeting, Brussels
- 18-19/07 Plenary session of the CoR, Brussels

### September

- 7/09 Extraordinary CoR Bureau meeting, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 17/09 Joint Consultative Committee on Montenegro, Montenegro

- 17/09 Meeting of the CORLEAP, Chişinău, Republic of Moldova
- 19/09 Meeting of the ECOS Commission, Brussels
- 20 - 21/09 External meeting and seminar of the ENVE Commission, Pescara, Italy
- 24/09 Meeting of the CAFA, Brussels
- 25/09 Meeting of the CIVEX Commission, Brussels
- 26/09 Meeting of the COTER Commission, Brussels
- 27/09 Meeting of the EDUC Commission, Brussels

### October

- 1/10 Meeting of the NAT Commission, Brussels
- 8-11/10 OPEN DAYS
- 8/10 Meeting of the CoR Bureau, Brussels
- 8/10 Meeting of the EA Bureau, Brussels
- 9/10 EA group meeting, Brussels
- 9/10 EA Workshop, Brussels
- 9-10/10 Plenary session of the CoR, Brussels

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

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