

European Alliance Group

Achieving a "better Europe" with Local and Regional Authorities

■ *By Dr. Uno Silberg, President of the European Alliance group*



Dr. Uno Silberg

I welcome the priorities of the Cyprus Presidency to try and achieve policies towards a 'better Europe' during their Presidency, and with the Summit in November on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework looming it is now time to reiterate the role local and regional authorities have in trying to achieve a Europe which reflects and

responds the needs of our citizens with the instruments which the EU has at its disposal. Of course, the future budget of the EU is paramount in defining what we would hope to achieve in the future. As the CoR we need to ensure that local and regional authorities are central to delivering future funding, delivering projects and ensuring that badly needed jobs are delivered locally.

With this in mind our group is organising with our colleagues in the EFA group in the European Parliament a seminar during Open Days on Strengthening the Role of Nations and Regions in the Recovery Strategy where we will examine many issues central to the economic recovery process.

Our group is also launching the annual primary schools art competition, this year our focus is on "My Region. My Environment" where young children in nominated schools across Europe will portray their views on the subject.

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We look forward to seeing the winning entries towards the end of the year.



10th European Week of Regions and Cities

OPEN DAYS Brussels

8 - 11 October 2012

EU Open Day's seminar: the Role of Nations and Regions in the Recovery Strategy

The European Free Alliance group in the European Parliament and the European Alliance group in the CoR have joined forces to organise a seminar focussed on the Role of Nations and Regions in the Recovery Strategy. The seminar will address issues such as:

- Territorial added-value of policies focussed in Nations and Regions

- Fiscal independence of the Nations and Regions
- Decentralised Cooperation
- Innovation

The seminar will include examples from Scotland, the Basque Country and Flanders and speakers include Minister Keith Brown, Minister for Housing and Transport, Scottish Government, Mrs

Jill Evans, MEP, President of EFA, Prof. Koenraad Debackere, Professor and General Manager, KULeuven, Mr Gorka Espiau Idoiaga, Head of International Programmes at Innovalab and will be moderated by Mr Stewart Maxwell, MSP, Vice President of the EA group. More information will be posted on the EA group website: www.ea.cor.europa.eu



“EU local and regional authorities represent no less than one third of EU public expenditure in 2010 and about two thirds of EU public investments.”

Rhodri Glyn Thomas, EA member

EA member appointed Rapporteur on key opinion related to creating greater synergies between EU, national and subnational budgets

Mr Rhodri Glyn Thomas, Member of the National Assembly for Wales, EA Alternate Member to the Ad-hoc commission on budget was appointed as a CoR Rapporteur on an own-initiative opinion on ‘Creating greater synergies between EU, national and subnational budgets’. In times of austerity, it is especially important for the EU budget to lever as much co-financing as possible to achieve its objectives.

“EU local and regional authorities account for no less than one third of EU public expenditure in 2010 and about two thirds of EU public investments.”- said Mr Thomas.

It is why this own-initiative opinion could pave the way for the European Commission to issue a Green Paper that would explore possible concrete measures in this area in 2013.



Mr Rhodri Glyn Thomas

EA president Dr. Silberg visit to the ECB and financial institution

Since the breakout of the crisis, there is not a day that goes by without a newspaper underlining the key role of the EU and its financial institutions in guaranteeing the stability of the EU economy and eurozone.

Eurobond, Fiscal Compact, European Stabilisation Mechanism and then the primacy of politics over the power of the bank are all issues we have become familiar with.

Dr. Uno Silberg, President of the EA group, took part on 12-13 September

in a delegation of the ECOS commission visiting the European Central Bank (ECB) and the most influential financial institutions in Frankfurt.

The members visited the European Central bank (ECB), the Frankfurt Institute for Risk Management and Regulation, the Frankfurt Stock Exchange and the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA). The latter was recently established to reform the structure of supervision of the financial sector in the EU. Such visits have helped



Dr. Uno Silberg

members gain greater knowledge about financial matters and raise the awareness on the bold actions that the EU has taken and will have to take to counter the crisis.

EA members report on Armenia’s local elections

The CoR joined the Congress of local and regional authorities of the Council of Europe to observe local elections in Armenia on 9 and 23 September.

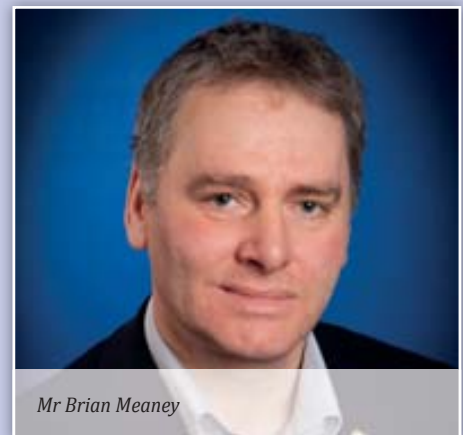
EA member and spokesperson of the CoR delegation, Mr Brian Meaney had a chance to observe the first round while EA Vice President, Mr Jerzy Zajakala and the whole delegation of the CoR attended the second round.

Despite some accidents reported before elections and fierce competition between the ruling party Republican Party of Armenia (RPA) and its former coalition partner, Prosperous Armenia (PAP) the electoral process ran smoothly and no

major shortcomings emerged from what the delegation could see.

The opposition seemed to engage less in the struggle for local governments as they claim they would prefer to save resources in view of the upcoming parliamentary elections. They also expressed their doubt over the possibility of changing the outcomes of a vote that could be determined by fraud.

Clare County Cllr. Mr Brian Meaney, spokesperson of the CoR delegation underlined the importance for Armenia to ensure a proper functioning of the electoral process as this reflects the maturity of a country. This is even



Mr Brian Meaney

more important for Armenia as it is one of the six countries belonging to the Eastern Partnership currently well in negotiations for the signature of an EU-Armenia Association Agreement.

EA members discussed LRAs added value of the Eastern partnership in Chişinău

After the success of the first meeting in Poznan, Poland, last year, the Conference of local and regional authorities of the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP), that from now on would meet every year, had on 17 September its annual meeting in Chişinău.

The annual conference of the local authorities in the Eastern partnership, a platform for regular dialogue between local and regional authorities, aims at promoting the integration of the six Eastern neighbour countries to the EU.

In the debates EA members Mr Bronś and Mr Zagunis discussed with other

members of CORLEAP, about its role and the way it could contribute to make sure the partner countries are adequately involved in cooperation projects and regional development programmes.

Particularly, it has been underlined that CORLEAP could play a key role when it comes to promoting decentralisation and sharing experience aimed at the improvement of local democracy and governance.

Mr Jan Bronś, mayor of Oleśnica, and member of the CORLEAP Bureau believes that such regular meetings



clearly show the added value of the cooperation amongst local and regional authorities. It is through setting up tangible cooperation projects in areas of common concern that we can cement a stronger relationship of trust to our mutual benefit

Krochmal Opinion On SMEs Competitiveness to be voted at CoR Plenary

SMEs not only are the backbone of the European economy, they play a crucial role in reaching the EU 2020 objectives on growth and jobs

Although, EU action cannot be a substitute for initiatives at national and local level, it is important that EU establish an ambitious programme for the competitiveness of the enterprise and SMEs in the EU, enabling SMEs to compete in the global market, facilitating their access to financing and to research and innovation knowledge.

At the same time the high administrative burden which represents an impediment to SMEs development needs to be urgently addressed.

These are some of the key messages of the opinion of the EA member, Mr Krochmal which is due to be adopted at the 9-10 October Plenary Session of the Committee of the Regions.

Mr Krochmal, Member of the Municipal Council of Wołów, highlighted in his speech that SMEs are an effective tool to reduce



unemployment but he pointed out that the current action of some member States of raising contribution on labour costs to face the budgetary constraints, could be a self defeating one as this tremendously impact on the growth potential of our small businesses.

Banaszak appointed rapporteur on the European Commission communication on 'Blue growth'

During NAT commission meeting members nominated Mr Banaszak, European Alliance Group coordinator, as Rapporteur on the communication Blue Growth: sustainable growth from oceans, seas and coasts



2012's Primary schools art competition launched by EA Group

At the last EA group meeting members have decided to launch the second project of the EA group designed for children with ages between 6 and 12 years.

The theme of the drawing competition is "My region, my environment". The aim of the drawing competition is to engage children in a creative exercise to identify the role of environment in their regions through their imagination and

support their creativity and innovative ideas expressed through art.

Primary schools participating in the competition will be nominated by members of the EA group. The competition will be organized during the month of October, and an exhibition of the best drawings will follow in the Committee of the Regions during the November plenary session of the Assembly.



Local Members News: Transposing EU directive combating fraud a priority says EA member Marc Hendrickx

EU Directive 2010/24/EC gives governments the right across the European Union to recover debts, which have up to now stayed within national borders. But, of course, people and capital are mobile. It is of common knowledge that fraudsters make good use of the territorial limits to which the powers of the authorities are limited, ensuring that in some cases they become insolvent in countries where they have tax debts.

The EU directive has been transposed by the different governments in Belgium. In order to progress this issue

and following parliamentary questions by Marc Hendrickx (N-VA) the Flemish Minister for Finance says that Flanders will play an active role after the transposition of the Directive. In order to progress clearly in the effective implementation of this directive in Flanders there is a clear necessity for the local government also to cooperate, making it more effective as they would have more experience in implementing such measures.

Often what is necessary, in implementing EU directives, is the clear cooperation of different levels of governance as is the example in

this case between the Government of Flanders and the Local authorities, added Mr Hendrickx.



Mr Marc Hendrickx

Upcoming Events:

October			November			December		
1/10	Meeting of the NAT Commission		6/11	Seminar of the NAT Commission,	Ponzano, Italy	4/12	Meeting of the CIVEX Commission	
8-11/10	OPEN DAYS		12/11	Meeting of the CAFA Commission	Brussels	5/12	Meeting of the NAT Commission, Brussels	Brussels
8/10	Meeting of the CoR Bureau, Meeting of the EA Bureau,	Brussels	19/11	Meeting of ARLEM ECOTER Commission	Piuran, Slovenia	6/12	Meeting of the ENVE Commission, Brussels	
9/10	Coorganized workshop of the EA group in the Committee of the Regions and EFA group in the European Parliament Meeting of the EA group		22/11	Meeting of the EDUC Commission		7/12	Meeting of the COTER Commission, Brussels	
8-10/10	Plenary session of the CoR		28/11	Meeting of the CoR Bureau Meeting of the EA Bureau	Brussels	17/12	Meeting of ARLEM ECOTER Commission	Bethlem, Israel
24/10	Seminar of the COTER Commission		Valencia, Spain	29/11	Meeting of the EA group			
			29-30/11	Plenary session of the CoR				

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

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