

European Alliance Group

Stepping stones towards sustainable recovery must include local and regional authorities

by Cllr Kieran McCarthy, President of the European Alliance Group.

Members of Committee of the Regions have been at the front of fighting the pandemic and are now on the frontline of local recovery plans. At any given CoR plenary meetings, EA colleagues continue to raise why EU funding must reach our local municipalities.

The recent State of the Union address by the European Commission President was a tour de force speech on the EU's place in the world but I felt it was a missed opportunity not to touch upon the role of LRAs and ultimately the role of EU citizens. Results will only be achieved by involving cities and regions. We need more local involvement and projects directed from the bottom up.

The same applies for achieving climate change targets. With the advent of CoP in Glasgow on the horizon we now need to ensure that locally and regionally determined contributions are included in achieving targets.

Finally, the Conference on the Future of Europe must really listen and act upon



Cllr Kieran McCarthy

citizens' concerns. Our group will continue to organise local dialogues with local and regional government as well as other institutions. So far we have held events in Ireland and in Bastia, Corsica. It is only by co-operating together and laying 'stepping stones' for progress that we can make a real difference.

Revitalising town centres: EA Group to promote best practices across EU regions in EWRC seminar

On 12 October in the context of the European Week of Regions and Cities (EWRC) the European Alliance Group will organise a seminar on best practises to revitalise town and city centres across EU regions.

Many of these centres have lost their 'focus of activity' and the pandemic has accelerated the shift to e-commerce and digital economy.

The green and digital transitions supported by the EU's recovery plan and cohesion policy provide an opportunity for the regeneration and transformation of city and town centres.

Local and regional policy makers, experts and practitioners will share examples of good practices and discuss innovative proposals that could further develop into an EU policy for regenerating town and city centres. Speakers include Minister of Economic Devel-

opment of Navarra Mikel Irujo Amezaga, Marc Hendrickx, Mechelen city councillor, Adrienne Rodgers, Cork City Director of Services,

Community and culture, and Anna Rzoszińska, Director of the Town Planning Department in Białystok.



19th EUROPEAN WEEK of REGIONS and CITIES 11-14 OCT 2021 Together for Recovery

Best practices of revitalising town centres across EU regions
Tuesday, 12 October, 9h30 (CET)

Exchange of experiences on urban regeneration with examples from Navarra, Cork, Mechelen and Białystok.

#EURegionsWeek

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"Regions must have a stronger voice in the EU. Their role and competences must be respected, including their identity, cultural and linguistic diversity. And the Conference on the Future of Europe is an opportunity to do that."

Karl Vanlouwe, member of the Flemish Parliament



European Alliance

EA Group holds extraordinary meeting to discuss Conference on the Future of Europe

On 16 September, EA group held an extraordinary meeting focused on the Conference on the Future of Europe. The meeting gathered representatives of the European Parliament, European political parties, civil society, local authorities' associations and a number of local and regional politicians from the EU and the United Kingdom.

Due to the diverse nature and background of the speakers, the debate showcased how the Conference is seen from different perspectives and corners of Europe, and presented the position of the European Parliament, civil society, pan-European political parties, as well as small rural communities and local government associations.

The participants also discussed concrete



Some of the speakers at the EA group meeting on the Conference on the Future of Europe

channels and ways in which EA group and like-minded entities can make our voices heard in this crucial phase of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

The debate proved to be very pertinent as

Citizens Panels have just started discussing concrete proposals and the second plenary (first to discuss thematic proposals) is due at the end of October. European Alliance Group has 2 delegates to the Conference's plenary session.



Mr Karl Vanlouwe

Vanlouwe's opinion on EU Counter-Terrorism Agenda due for plenary adoption

During the October CoR plenary, members are due to adopt the opinion on the EU Counter-Terrorism Agenda, drafted by our first vice president and member of the Flemish Parliament Karl Vanlouwe.

The opinion, adopted unanimously by CIVEX members in May this year, stresses the importance of cross-border and cross-sectoral cooperation in combating radicalization and terrorism. That includes stronger coordination, cooperation and information exchange between local

and regional authorities, Member States, police forces, justice systems, social workers, prevention organisations, formal and non-formal education services, religious counsellors, and security and intelligence agencies.

At the same time, the opinion argues, it is important to seek a balance between the right to security and physical integrity and other fundamental rights and freedoms, especially in the context of new technologies and the new challenges they bring.

Markauskas' opinion on sustainable blue economy and aquaculture adopted by NAT

On 17 September, the NAT commission adopted the opinion on strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture and blue economy by



Mr Bronius Markauskas meeting Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius

Mr Bronius Markauskas, mayor of Klaipėda district municipality in Lithuania.

Speaking on the opinion, Mr Markauskas said “I wanted to stress that the blue economy has a significant social and economic impact, not only on coastal and maritime regions, but also on the European Union as a whole, and can ensure a green and inclu-

sive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the most affected sectors, such as tourism and fisheries. In many countries, the blue economy has a huge positive impact on GDP. Also, aquaculture should be recognised as a specific policy area, with sufficient funding so that it provides an alternative to traditional fisheries. In my opinion, greater involvement

of local authorities would ensure better development of a sustainable blue economy by developing dynamic and sustainable blue economy ecosystems, promoting innovation, applying smart solutions and creating jobs.”

The adoption of the opinion is foreseen at the December Plenary Session.

Truskolaski’s opinion on EU Competition Policy adopted by ECON



On 29 September 2021 the ECON members discussed and adopted the opinion on EU Competition Policy drafted by our ECON coordinator Mr Tadeusz Truskolaski. This is the first account of competition policy developments under the Commission led by President von der Leyen, covering developments that took place during 2020.

EU competition policy has been crucial in preserving and fostering European values such as fairness, rule of law and trust within the European economy.

The draft opinion highlights a number of issues arising from the uneven and inefficient distribution of public aid and stresses the importance of a level playing field for businesses in the Single Market, especially SMEs. Mr Truskolaski also called on the European Commission and the Member States to step up their efforts to promote technology transfers, especially to less developed, peripheral and island regions.

Gryffroy appointed rapporteur on Renewable Energy Directive Revision

On 9th September, Andries Gryffroy, European Alliance Group coordinator in the ENVE commission, was appointed CoR rapporteur on the Renewable Energy Directive revision.

This directive is part of the comprehensive legislative package adopted by the European Commission in July, called FIT for 55, that aims at overhauling major policies on climate, energy, transport, environment in order to meet the 55% CO2 reduction climate target.

In the course of a preliminary debate in the ENVE commission, Mr Gryffroy who is also member of the Flemish Parliament and energy spokesperson for the New Flemish Alliance Party (N-VA), said that “new legislation should be flexible enough to take into account the different starting points and conditions in urban as well as rural and peripheral areas”.

The opinion will be discussed and voted at the next ENVE commission meeting on 23-24 November.



EA Group to hold an extraordinary meeting in Białystok



EA Group will hold an extraordinary meeting on 5-6 December in Białystok, on the invitation of the city’s mayor Mr Tadeusz Truskolaski. Located in northeastern Poland, on the banks of the Biała River and in the green lungs of Poland, the capital city of the Podlaskie Voivode-

ship is – with a population of around 730000 people - the tenth-largest city in Poland and the largest city in northeastern Poland. The meeting will be followed by a seminar on the role of innovation and small and medium-sized enterprises in regional development.

Nanette Maupertuis elected President of the Assembly of Corsica

Following the last Corsican elections that took place in June, Nanette Maupertuis, Vice-president of the EA Group was elected 7th President of the Corsican Assembly.

Professor of Economy at University of Corsica and former member of the Executive Council responsible for on European affairs

and tourism, she has become the first woman in Corsica to hold this function.

She ran in the list of Gilles Simeoni, President of the Executive and leader of the party Femu a Corsica who obtained an unprecedented win and the absolute majority of seats.



Ms Nanette Maupertuis



Mr József Kóbor

Kóbor appointed Green Commissioner of Pécs city

The European Alliance group member, Dr József Kóbor, has been appointed “Green Commissioner “ of the Hungarian city of Pécs, in which he sits as elected city councillor.

The City of Pécs has recently carried major investments to electrify public transport and aims to continue improving its green creden-

tials through environmentally friendly projects with help of EU funds.

Mr Kóbor, who is also one of the EU Climate Pact ambassador and member of the Committee of the Regions Green Deal Working Group has been playing an active role in promoting EU policies and instruments at local level to make the EU greener and climate neutral.

EA members and EFA parliamentary group debate future of Europe at EFA study days in Corsica

On 20-23 September a delegation of the European Alliance Group took part in the European Free Alliance (EFA) study days in Corsica, which gathered Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), EFA pan European Party Bureau members.

The main topics for discussion were the Corsican perspective and role of Corsican Nationalism following the outstanding results of nationalist parties at the most recent elections and the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Members were received by Gilles Simeoni, President of the Executive Council of Corsica, and Nanette Maupertuis, President of the Corsican Assembly who are also members of

the EA group.

A joint EA/EFA public event on the role of stateless nations in the future of Europe took place in Bastia with the participation of high level speakers, including Oriol Junqueras, former MEP and Catalan political prisoner, Jordi Sole, President of the EFA group in the European Parliament, Gilles Simeoni as well as the European Alliance members Karl Vanlouwe and Nanette Maupertuis.

“The EU is too much focussed on Member States, we call for a stronger role of regions within the EU and the respect of their identity as well as their cultural and linguistic diversity, stressed Karl Vanlouwe, 1st Vice President of the EA group, recalling EU’s



EA Group delegation in Bastia

motto “ In varietate Concordia.”

Nanette Maupertuis, said that conference on the future of Europe risks becoming merely a communication exercise and we have to make sure that it brings tangible results for citizens, and that multilevel governance mechanism enhancing involvement of local and regional authorities in decision making should be strengthened.



During the July CoR plenary session, Emil Drăghici, EA Group Bureau member and mayor of Vulcana-Băi (Romania) met Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for Promoting our European Way of Life and stressed the importance of educating young people about the European Union, its values, history and diverse cultural heritage.