

European Alliance Group

Clear and decisive action needed to address the economic crisis across the EU

■ says EA group President Dr Uno Silberg



Dr. Uno Silberg, President of the EA group

As we begin 2013, we see unfortunately, the economic crisis affecting more and more people across our regions. More people losing their jobs, endless pressure on public expenditure which is leading to more services being cut at local and regional level, more services being cut to those who need it and the citizens in many Member States left paying for the mistakes of the banks. It is time for clear, coherent action at EU level to begin a process of reinvesting in projects which lead to job growth not only in cities but also in rural communities across the EU.

I also believe the EU must address the very serious problems that are affecting people, and one of these problems is youth unemployment. It is unacceptable that so many of our young people are out of work. In some Member States there are up to 50% of the young people unemployed and if we do not address these issues as a matter of urgency, we risk losing a generation.

For the EU to work it needs a solid budget and this is why I hope that we will soon have a Multi-Annual Financial Framework that will allow the EU to deliver jobs and growth across its regions and local authorities. Leaders need to take decisive action and agree a workable budget.

Of course many parts of the budget will be of interest and again local and regional authorities must make their voices heard in the debate. If I take the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP), I will be making a strong case that there must be equality in how the policy treats farmers; there should not be such huge differences across Europe. Indeed what we need is a strong CAP which will allow the EU to produce sufficient, high quality products for all our citizens.

As 2013 is the EU year of the citizen then it is time for us to take some very concrete and decisive steps to address their needs.

Annual CoR / EA group Secondary School Competition is launched.

The European Alliance group is organising its annual Secondary Schools competition during 2013, 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 a topic related to the European Year of Citizens 2013.

The project will begin at the end of January and finishes in July. Full members of the EA group will

CONTENT

Daiva Matonienė appointed deputy Minister for Environment in Lithuania

Creating greater synergies between EU, Member State and sub-State budgets report by Rhodri Glyn Thomas

Blue Growth opinion by Banaszak for adoption in January CoR plenary

Stability, Jobs and Growth are needed to finally deliver a Citizens European Union by Cllr Brian Meaney

My Region, My Environment 2012 Primary Schools Art Competition

Marc Hendrickx becomes first 'schepen' of Mechelen

COTER appoints KALEV as rapporteur on 'Clean power for Transport'

Upcoming events

2

3

4

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 July 2013 plenary session, representatives of the European Commission and European Parliament, having the chance to discover Brussels, the capital city, its history and present. More information will be posted on: www.ea.cor.europa.eu



"Maritime economy in the broad sense is not limited to regions and entities with direct access to seas and oceans. To a large extent, the maritime economy is also relevant to regions situated far from coasts and ports on account of the fact that, among other things, they manufacture marine equipment."

said Mr Adam Banaszak



European Alliance

Daiva Matonienė appointed deputy Minister for Environment in Lithuania

Daiva Matonienė has been appointed deputy Minister for Environment in Lithuania with responsibility for construction and housing, urban design and architecture, planning and geothermal sectors.



The European Alliance group President welcomed her appointment and said that Daiva is a very active member of the Committee of the Regions and that it was no surprise to members she has been appointed a minister. We wish her all the very best in her new role and look forward to continued good cooperation in the future.



Creating greater synergies between EU, Member State and sub-State budgets report by Rhodri Glyn Thomas

On the agenda for adoption at the January CoR plenary is Mr Thomas's own-initiative opinion on creating greater synergies between EU, Member State and sub-State budgets. Mr Thomas said: "Sub-national authorities across Europe play a key role in supporting public investments, accounting for over two thirds of the 7% of general government expenditure spent on average each year across Europe on public investments (including capital infrastructure), the vast majority of which falls within key priority areas (education, economic affairs, housing, communities and environment) for delivering Europe 2020s objectives. The EU Budget, in particular through the EU Structural

Funds programmes, adds clear value to this, providing a stable, seven-year funding pot, can be used to (i) focus local and regional efforts on medium to long-term investment strategies (ii) create a multiplier effect by aligning local and regional funds to deliver on these common priorities. "In my draft opinion I call for the European Commission to prepare a Green Paper on synergies during 2013, that should set out a number of principles (respect for fiscal autonomy, partnership, transparency, streamlining budgetary processes) to take forward this agenda, as well as proposing ways to address the numerous bottlenecks that currently make it difficult to achieve synergies in practice."



Blue Growth opinion by Banaszak for adoption in January CoR plenary

Member of Kujawsko-Pomorskie Region (PL), Mr Banaszak's opinion on the Blue

Growth is to be adopted during the January 2013 CoR plenary session, Blue growth: opportunities for marine and maritime sustainable growth. His opinion is based on the assumption that seas, coasts and oceans can play a key role in overcoming many current challenges and should be underpinned by "smart specialization" and it argues that growth in the blue economy offers new and innovative ways to help steer the EU out of its current economic crisis. Collectively maritime activities have the potential to provide 7 million jobs and generate 600 billion Euros by 2020. The CoR opinion recognises that additional effort at EU level can stimulate long-term growth and jobs, in the five key areas selected by the European Commission: Maritime, coastal and

cruise tourism, Blue energy; Marine mineral resources; Aquaculture; Blue biotechnology. It underlines other sectors such as maritime transport and the shipbuilding and also smaller maritime ports need to be taken into account, and the development of blue economy must be based on respect for the environment and the principles of sustainable development. Mr Banaszak draws attention to the fact that maritime economy in the broad sense is not limited to regions and entities with direct access to seas and oceans. To a large extent, the maritime economy is also relevant to regions situated far from coasts and ports on account of the fact that, among other things, they manufacture marine equipment.

Stability, Jobs and Growth are needed to finally deliver a Citizens European Union says Cllr Brian Meaney

I wholeheartedly support the priorities of the Irish Presidency of the EU Council for the forthcoming months, which are **“For Stability, Jobs and Growth”**. The focus of the presidency is on a: People-centred recovery, designed to last; Investment in job-friendly growth and Europe’s resources and finally Europe and the world: a win-win engagement with our partners.

During the EU year of Citizens we need to focus on the needs of people across the regions in Europe and there is no greater need at the moment than creating jobs, helping people out of the economic struggle that has now engulfed their lives. A clear example of this is in the area of youth unemployment and the recent figures of over 50% youth unemployed in some Member States is not acceptable. I hope that the youth guarantee will be agreed in the early stages of the Presidency at least as a small step in the right direction but clearly more initiatives need to be agreed.

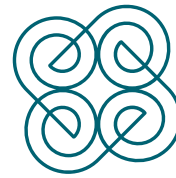


Cllr Brian Meaney

I will be focusing mainly on Energy policy, especially energy efficiency and climate change. I also see an urgent need to address the problems with the Emissions Trading Scheme. The carbon market is clearly in need of stronger regulation to address the oversupply of emissions permits and the consequent excessively low carbon prices. On Energy Efficiency I welcome the Presidency's focus on new and

developing technologies, indeed this is of interest to the European Alliance group as we held our 2012 external meeting on this subject in Łubianka, Poland.

We hope that the Irish Presidency will be able to deliver a number of key areas which remain blocked at EU level and finally we can begin delivering a real European Union which focuses on the Citizens needs.



Uachtaránacht na hÉireann ar Chomhairle an Aontais Eorpaigh
Irish Presidency of the Council of the European Union
eu2013.ie



My Region, My Environment 2012 Primary Schools Art Competition closed

This year's CoR – EA group art competition has focussed around the theme 'My Region, My Environment'. Towards the end of 2012 and across 7 Member States, classes gathered and took part in the drawing competition. The topic of the art works was environment, the importance of natural and physical surrounding and the role it plays in people's life.

The strength of the EA project is given simply by the fact apart that it supports

the children's creativity in expressing their point of view through art, it also gathers classes in different regions of the European Union to think about significant questions of common interest.

The results have been impressive, depicting the diversity of landscapes in European regions but also the similarity of the elements considered important by children when speaking about environment.

Irrespectively of country and region, children consider environment an important place to connect with family and friends. It represents for them the ground of the social environment. They have already realised that the quality of life in their communes and towns is dependent on them. It was also very reassuring to see the children's awareness on the responsibility to protect their proximate environment.

Members' duty now is to shape and influence environmental policy of the European Union

in order to assure a clean and sustainable environment for young generations.

The booklet with all the winning entries is available on the EA group's website at: www.ea.cor.europa.eu



Marc Hendrickx becomes first 'schepen' of Mechelen

The municipal and provincial elections in Flanders resulted in a stunning victory for the N-VA (or New-Flemish Alliance), the democratic nationalist party to which CoR-member Marc Hendrickx adheres as a Member of the Flemish Parliament since 2009. In his hometown Mechelen, with a population of 83.000, one of the largest Flemish cities, Marc Hendrickx led the N-VA to an historical breakthrough. For the first time in history N-VA ranked as the strongest party of Mechelen, with 23% of the votes.

Never to shy away from his responsibility, Mr. Hendrickx forged a stable local coalition with the liberal, green and christian-democratic parties of Mechelen. He was appointed to the position of first 'schepen' (i.e. alderman or executive councillor), competent for key municipal domains such as civic affairs, communal integration, education and justice. He becomes also deputy-mayor of the city.

The EA group President Dr Uno Silberg congratulated Mr Hendrickx on his appointment as 'schepen' and deputy mayor and wished him the very best in these very important functions. He added that the N-VA members were very active members members of the CoR and EA group and from the election results it is clear that the party is also addressing the needs of the local citizens.



Mr Marc Hendrickx



Dr Saima Kalev

COTER appoints KALEV as rapporteur on 'Clean power for Transport'

The Members of the COTER commission appointed Dr Saima Kalev, Member of Jõgeva Rural Municipality Council, as rapporteur on the 'Clean power for transport package'. The package includes a communication and a

legislative proposal for alternative fuel infrastructure development, aimed at developing the use of electricity, hydrogen and LNG power, which is very important for cities using the latter e.g. for urban transport. An exchange of views is foreseen in the next COTER commission meeting on the 26th February 2013.

Upcoming Events:

February		
11/02	Meeting of the CIVEX Commission	Brussels
18/02	11 th meeting of the ARLEM Bureau	Brussels
19/02	4 th ARLEM plenary session	Brussels
19/02	Meeting of the ENVE Commission	Brussels
20/02	Meeting of the ECOS Commission	Brussels
21/02	Meeting of the NAT Commission	Brussels
25/02	Meeting of the EDUC Commission	Brussels
26/02	Meeting of the COTER Commission	Brussels

March		
1/03	External Meeting of the CoR Bureau	Dublin, Ireland
6/03	Meeting of the Ad Hoc Commission on Budget	Brussels
21/03	External seminar of the NAT Commission	Drenthe, The Netherlands
22/03	Meeting of the CAFA Commission	Brussels
April		
10/04	Meeting of the CoR Bureau	Brussels
10/04	Meeting of the EA Bureau	Brussels

11/04	Meeting of the EA group	Brussels
11-12/04	Plenary session of the CoR	Brussels
19/04	External Seminar of the COTER Commission	Porto, Portugal
23/04	Meeting of the ECOS Commission	Brussels
24/04	Meeting of the ENVE Commission	Brussels
25-26/04	External meeting of the EDUC Commission	Espoo, Finland
29/04	Meeting of the CIVEX Commission	Brussels
30/04	Meeting of the NAT Commission	Brussels