

European Alliance Group

Success can only be delivered if we focus on regional and local place and people-based policies

by Nanette Maupertuis, President of the European Alliance Group

Whether you live in cities, villages, rural, mountain or Island regions, the EU programmes should be adaptable enough to allow for delivery of social and economic growth in your region. One size fits all at European and National level does not work. This is the message I delivered in the discussions on the future EU budget. Regions must be integral to the design and implementation of the future budget needs of the European Union.

I was also delighted to launch jointly with Herbert Dorfmann MEP and Euromontana the European Alliance for Mountains, a new cross-institutional initiative aimed at securing long-term EU support for mountain territories. I believe that this initiative is hugely important for those regions.

The focus of our CoR plenary on water is very welcome. Many of our regions are suffering either drought or flooding and we need to have a new "EU blue deal" as called for by our member Karl Vanlouwe. Too much or too lit-

tle water does not respect borders so we need to have cross-border and EU action.

Lastly we look forward to our meeting in Berceni (Prahova), Romania, on the theme of small municipalities close to urban areas, upon the invitation of the Mayor of Berceni, Cosmina Ramona Pandeale. Mulțumesc Cosmina.



President Nanette Maupertuis

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EA Group to hold its external meeting in Berceni, Romania

On the 11th and 12th September 2025, the EA Group will hold its external meeting and seminar in Berceni (Prahova), Romania, on the theme of small municipalities close to urban areas, upon the invitation of the Mayor of Berceni, Cosmina Ramona Pandeale.

At the start of this new mandate, the Group will adopt a political declaration to underscore the vital role of small towns close to big cities in fostering sustainable and long-term growth through tackling the challenges ahead; like depopulation and lack of services, while calling on EU institutions to place those territories at the core of their agenda.



Vanlouwe and Dwane-Stanley highlight local perspectives on the EU-UK relation 'reset'

Karl Vanlouwe, Vice-President of the EA Group, was elected Chair of the CoR-UK Contact Group and led its 11th meeting on May 15th. The Contact Group, which facilitates dialogue between EU and UK local and regional authorities, focused on the territorial impact of Brexit and the role of LRAs in shaping a renewed EU-UK relationship. Vanlouwe highlighted the importance of a locally driven co-operation framework built on trust, respect and ambition. Proposals included more frequent meetings, stronger collaboration with the EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly, and practical cross-border initiatives delivering tangible results.

At the CoR's 166th plenary, a dedicated debate on "The EU-UK relationship: perspectives for local and regional cooperation" was held with MEP Sandro Gozi, Co-Chair of the EU-UK PPA. Gozi identified three priorities for the 'reset': implementing existing agreements, building trust, and integrating the territorial dimension. Vanlouwe stressed the need to amplify local voices and called for a closer link between the PPA and the Contact Group. Caroline Dwane-Stanley underlined the importance of including local realities, especially in Ireland, and urged negotiators to focus on peace, frictionless trade, and restoring youth mobility

to rebuild cross-border ties and strengthen long-term cooperation.



Truskolaski debates Commissioner Zaharieva and calls for more inclusive and equitable European Research Area

At the 166th plenary session of the CoR, Tadeusz Truskolaski, First Vice President of the EA Group, joined a debate led by Commissioner Ekaterina Zaharieva on building a more robust European Research Area (ERA). Zaharieva emphasised the role of science in strengthening Europe's resilience and global competitiveness, particularly in emerging fields like AI. She outlined key priorities, including integrating science into the core of Europe's economy, breaking down structural barriers for underrepresented groups in research, and increasing financial investment in early-stage researchers. She also stressed the critical role of local and regional authorities

in promoting knowledge sharing and aligning strategies between the EU and member states.

In response, Truskolaski called for a more inclusive and regionally balanced ERA, advocating for greater support for smaller and less-developed areas. He highlighted the need to decentralize research infrastructure and ensure that innovation opportunities extend beyond major urban centres. Citing a successful example from his city of Bialystok, Poland, where local EU-funded initiatives support youth-driven innovation and start-ups, he argued that such efforts are vital to reducing brain drain and fostering local economic growth. Truskolaski concluded by stress-

ing the importance of incorporating local and regional perspectives to create a more equitable and cohesive ERA that benefits all European communities.



Nanette Maupertuis participates at the EU Annual Budget Conference

On 20 May, EA President Nanette Maupertuis took part in the Annual EU Budget Conference, representing the Committee of the Regions in her capacity of rapporteur for last year's CoR opinion on the post-2027 EU Budget.

Taking the floor during the session "A flexible budget for a changing world", Maupertuis underlined the crucial role of territories in delivering European priorities. "Everyone says they want flexibility," she noted, "but this flexibility also needs to apply on the regional and macro-regional level to ensure that funds go where they matter most."

Speaking on behalf of Europe's local and regional authorities, she called for an EU budget that is not only ambitious, but also responsive to territorial diversity, with simplification and subsidiarity at its core. Whether in cities, islands or mountain areas, regions must be

given the tools to turn European policies into tangible progress.

Additionally, on a previous debate at the CoR plenary session president Maupertuis advocated for stronger local and regional input in

the future EU Budget, urging for expansion of capacities, simplification of funding use, and integration of new spending priorities without cutting traditional policies. Calling for a genuine multi-level governance and partnership.



Drăghici promotes increased EU support for Moldova's accession reforms

The final debate of the 166th plenary session centred on Moldova's EU accession process. Keynote speaker Cristina Gherasimov, Deputy Prime Minister for European Integration of Moldova, highlighted the role of local and regional authorities in facilitating Moldova's accession and stressed the need for exchange between LRAs to facilitate Moldova's smooth accession. She detailed Moldova's public administration reform strategy, which aims to improve the country's local governance bases and thereby facilitate increased cooperation amongst them. Ms. Gherasimov concluded that engaging with Moldova's reform efforts will bolster the EU's security, urging sustained support to ensure that Moldova's reforms

are undertaken from the bottom up and leave no one behind.

Emil Drăghici commended the country's clear commitment to European integration and urged the EU not to mistakenly delay Moldova's accession, stressing that postponing progress would send a hostile message. Mr. Drăghici emphasised that Moldovan authorities are engaged in aligning local governance with EU norms and generating lasting reform at the local level, arguing that these bottom-up efforts must be recognised by the CoR. He conclusively advocated for cross-border partnerships that will prepare Moldovan local authorities for EU membership, stressing

that we must: 'seize this moment and open wide the doors of our Union to Moldova'.



Scholzen and Maupertuis highlight housing challenges in rural and touristic territories

The final debate of the 166th plenary session, debating the role of cities and regions in the EU Affordable Housing Plan, Irene Tingali, Chair of the European Parliament's Special Committee on the EU Housing Crisis, described the crisis as deeply connected to socio-economic inequalities and worsened by chronic underinvestment in public housing. She argued that adapting the EU's regulatory framework is essential to unlock new financial and legislative tools for local and regional housing provision. The subsidiarity principle, she insisted, should no longer prevent EU legislation in this area. EA Group member Liesa Scholzen responded by underlining the specific challeng-

es faced by rural areas. She stressed that "opportunities to stay" must be created to make rural areas attractive and liveable. That means investing in key services such as employment, childcare, education, healthcare, and cultural life. Without this, rural depopulation will continue, placing greater pressure on urban housing and worsening the broader crisis.

President Nanette Maupertuis echoed this territorial perspective, calling for stronger EU support for local and regional authorities in touristic and island territories. These areas face unique market pressures that risk pricing out residents. She urged close cooperation with

local communities to ensure housing remains affordable, while respecting subsidiarity and reinforcing partnership at the EU level.



EA Group members discuss decentralisation and energy transition at Enlargement Day

Enlargement Day at the CoR brought together delegations of local and regional authorities (LRAs) from EU candidate countries with CoR members to discuss accession processes, cross-border cooperation, and the implementation of local reforms. EA Group members actively



contributed to the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) and Working Group (WG) meetings focused on each candidate country's progress: Mr. Krzysztof Iwaniuk joined WG Kosovo, Mr. Anthony Murphy took part in JCC Albania, Ms. Caroline Dwane-Stanley contributed to WG Turkey, Mr. Tadeusz Truskolaski participated in JCC North Macedonia, Mr. Andries Gryffroy in JCC Montenegro, and Mr. Mantas Varaska in WG Ukraine.

An enlargement plenary session followed, focusing on decentralisation and climate action as essential pillars of the enlargement process. Mr. Truskolaski encouraged candidate LRAs to "be bold" in implementing decentralisation reforms, sharing his own experience from Poland's EU accession. While acknowledging initial challenges, he stressed that decentralisation is vital for building strong local governance capable of implementing EU programmes: "We will continue to help you."

Caroline Dwane-Stanley addressed the barriers to green energy transition, highlighting that many households are eager to participate but held back by financial constraints. She called for funding mechanisms that ensure an inclusive and equitable roll-out of renewable energy.

EA Members Participate in High-Level Events to Promote Regional Leadership

Members of the European Alliance Group have recently taken part in several major international events, underlining the crucial role of regions in shaping inclusive, resilient, and sustainable policies. In Nice, EA President Nanette Maupertuis opened the Mediterranean session of the United Nations Ocean Conference, alongside Renaud Muselier and the President of Rabat-Salé-Kénitra, and with the presence of also NAT coordinator Adam Banaszak. She stressed that the Pact for the Mediterranean, led by Vice-President Dubravka Šuica, must fully involve island and coastal territories on both shores, as they are on the front line of environmental and climate challenges.

In Rzeszów, Poland, EA Vice-President Tadeusz Truskolaski represented the CoR at the EU Industry Days, moderating a session on "The Role of Regions in Strengthening European Industry." He called for stronger partnerships between central and regional authorities and highlighted the strategic importance of regional innovation and cooperation, especially in border areas.

Meanwhile, in Geneva, EA NAT coordinator Adam Banaszak took part in the UNDRR Global Platform, presenting inclusive disaster risk reduction strategies. Sharing examples from Poland and the EU, he emphasised that resilience

efforts must leave no one behind, reminding all that "Crises don't discriminate—but our systems often do."



Europe Day at the Committee of the Regions

Europe Day brings an annual celebration of European peace and unity, commemorating the anniversary of the Schuman Declaration which laid foundations for European Cooperation on the 9th May, 1950. The EU institutions mark this celebration every year by opening their doors for public visitation and engagement.

This year, the EA Group once again welcomed visitors from our interactive stand in the CoR.

Visitors engaged with us in lively discussions on regionalism, subsidiarity and the role of the CoR in EU policymaking. We particularly enjoyed sharing postcard prints from our annual primary schools art competition, created by students across the EA Group's local regions. Many thanks to everyone who came along and contributed to such a special day – we are already looking forward to the next one!

