

European Alliance Group

The new MFF must recognise that Regions are pivotal to delivering economic and social development to our citizens

says Nanette Maupertuis, President of the EA Group



Ms Nanette Maupertuis

The European Commission have moved slightly, giving more say to regions in the implementation of Cohesion policy but we feel this is only one step forward and not enough. Structural and Cohesion funds need to remain as place and people-based policies and needs to remain as such. We all have examples from our regions where regional funding has been successful, and this may not have been possible if the finance package was controlled Nationally. Let's keep the pressure on with the help of our friend in the European Parliament.

We welcome the focus by the CoR President on water and this builds on the great work of our member Karl Vanlouwe who suggested creating a "blue deal" for Europe which seeks to address problems caused by drought and flooding. The CoR / Commission led water forum in December is a step forward towards practical solutions.

We are also delighted that our member Magdalena Czarzyńska-Jachim is leading the discussion on cities and regions' contribution to the Simplification Agenda which will be on the agenda for this CoR Plenary.

A continuing worry for everyone is the ongoing instability across the world, the terrible war of aggression by Russia in Ukraine and we hope that peace and common sense will prevail, but we need the European Union and its Regions to remain resolute and work together to achieve our common goals.

We would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

EA Group Leads on the EU Simplification Agenda

EA Group member Magdalena Czarzyńska-Jachim serves as Rapporteur-General for the CoR's opinion on the EU Simplification Agenda. She presented a comprehensive and forward-looking text at CIVEX on 20 November 2025. The debate showed broad cross-party support, confirming the strong quality and relevance of the opinion.

The text positions the CoR at the centre of the Simplification Agenda, insisting that any reform must respect subsidiarity, proportionality and good administration. Simplification, it argues, must not remain abstract but improve how EU rules function in practice. A central element is the pivotal role of local and regional authorities (LRAs). As the level

closest to citizens and directly involved in implementing EU legislation, they bring essential insights into burdens and practical challenges. The opinion therefore calls for a stronger political role for LRAs and for their perspectives to shape all future efforts.

It also warns that simplification must not lead to centralisation. Proposals to consolidate EU funds in the next MFF risk weakening cohesion and agricultural policy, and the opinion firmly defends LRAs' involvement in fund management to ensure visibility and effective delivery. To improve access to EU funding, it proposes a single rulebook for all programmes, wider use of simplified cost options and stronger support for smaller

beneficiaries. With this text, the Group puts forward a clear and ambitious vision: a Simplification Agenda that truly empowers Europe's cities and regions.



Ms Magdalena Czarzyńska-Jachim

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EA Members defend regional-based Cohesion Policy at the EURW Plenary

Last October, the European Week of Regions and Cities – together with the accompanying CoR plenary – placed local communities and territorial cooperation at the very centre of Europe’s future. The Opening Session set the tone: Nanette Maupertuis, President of the EA Group, and Cllr Caroline Dwane, speaking for the Group, both underlined how EU policies become meaningful only when they improve people’s daily lives. Dwane highlighted how small, targeted investments — such as new bus routes in Portlaoise — can transform mobility, access to services, and local economic prospects. Their messages echoed throughout the week.

During the associated plenary debates, members repeatedly stressed the value of Cohesion Policy and the need to keep local voices at the heart of EU

decision-making. Tadeusz Truskolaski illustrated how cohesion funding has enabled Białystok to develop clean-air projects, business parks and jobs, showing the concrete impact of EU support on city development.

In the debate on the European Pillar of Social Rights, Sergio Pérez García and Magdalena Czarzyńska-Jachim called for policies that genuinely reach all citizens, including women, remote areas, and peripheral regions. And in the discussion on European Defence, Karl Vanlouwe pointed to Benelux cooperation as proof that regions can drive practical security initiatives.

Together, these debates reaffirmed a clear message: Europe’s strength comes from its towns,

islands, mountains and border regions — and investing in them keeps the Union cohesive, resilient and inclusive.



EA Group’s EU Regions Week workshop highlights challenges and benefits of cross-border cooperation



As part of the 2025 European Week of Regions and Cities, the EA Group organised a workshop on “The importance of fostering cross-border economic and

social development”, moderated by EA President Nanette Maupertuis.

Opening the session, Ms Maupertuis stressed that cross-border cooperation lies at the core of the EU’s mission to promote cohesion, solidarity and shared prosperity. For many territories, cooperation is not only economic but also a matter of social ties and territorial resilience.

Moray Gilland, Head of Unit at DG REGIO, highlighted the value and challenges of cross-border work, citing examples such as joint waste collection between Belgium and the Netherlands in Baarle-Nassau and shared on-call doctor schemes in Northern Ireland. Such cooperation “takes time to build and develop” and “requires investment beyond the

financial.” He also introduced the Commission’s new Interreg proposal. Aodhán Connolly, Director of the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels, described the fragile but successful model of cross-border cooperation in Northern Ireland after Brexit, stressing the need for transparency, inclusiveness and mutual benefit. Monia Sanna, from the Collectivity of Corsica, outlined the specific difficulties of maritime cooperation, including barriers like the lack of mutual recognition of diplomas.

A debate followed with contributions from regions across Europe. Concluding, Ms Maupertuis recalled that cross-border cooperation is ultimately about trust, relationships and creating shared opportunities — a mission where local and regional authorities play an essential role.

Adam Banaszak Advocates Stronger Local Role in Future EU Civil Protection Policy in the MFF Debate

Mr Adam Banaszak, EA Member and Councillor of Inowrocław, and EA Rapporteur on the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), took part in the debate focusing on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) during the NAT Commission meeting on 19 November 2025. The European Commission has proposed an indicative financial envelope of nearly EUR 10.7 billion for the UCPM for 2028–2034, strengthening common EU funding for civil protection and health emergency preparedness. The proposal forms part of the broader package of sectoral regulations under

the next MFF, outlining the objectives, budget, and governance framework for the Mechanism.

During the discussion, Mr Banaszak stressed the need for a more inclusive and multi-level approach: “The Commission’s proposal sets out the right aims but falls short in empowering those best placed to achieve them. Local and regional authorities should play a stronger role, not only in implementing but also in shaping policy. Preparedness starts on the ground — with citizens, communities, local governments, and



businesses.” As Rapporteur, Mr Banaszak steers the EA’s contribution on the future MFF regarding EU civil protection, advocating for governance that fully empowers local and regional authorities to strengthen Europe’s resilience.

Mayor Iwaniuk Represents EA Group at 14th CORLEAP Annual Meeting in Yerevan

On 27 October 2025, Mayor of Terespol, Krzysztof Iwaniuk represented EA Group at the 14th CORLEAP Annual Meeting held in Yerevan, Armenia. The gathering brought together local and regional leaders from across the EU and Eastern Partnership countries to discuss key geopolitical and governance challenges shaping the region.

A central topic of the meeting was the European Union's New Black Sea Strategy, which outlines a strengthened, more strategic approach to a region facing heightened geopolitical tension. Against the backdrop of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and growing instability in the Eastern neigh-

bourhood, the strategy focuses on enhancing regional cooperation, protecting critical infrastructure, and promoting sustainable, resilient development. Participants emphasized the importance of reinforcing the EU's role in ensuring stability and prosperity across the Black Sea basin. The discussions also addressed the state of decentralisation in Eastern Partnership countries, highlighting both progress and persistent challenges in empowering local authorities. Delegates explored opportunities for deepening cooperation, improving governance frameworks, and supporting local-level democratic reforms.



Mr. Iwaniuk with the Mayor of Yerevan

Mayor Iwaniuk's participation underscored EA Group's continued engagement in international cooperation and its commitment to contributing to dialogue on regional security, governance, and sustainable development in Eastern Partnership region.

ARLEM Plenary in Sicily confirms Nanette Maupertuis as co-rapporteur for the Mediterranean Pact



New ARLEM rapporteurs

On 6–7 November, the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) held its

16th Plenary Session in Palermo, Sicily. The meeting gathered regional and local representatives from across the Mediterranean, including EA members Nanette Maupertuis and Emil Drăghici, as well as Cosmina Pandeale part of an ACoR delegation.

European Commissioner for the Mediterranean, Dubravka Šuica, also took part in the meeting, stressing that the Pact should become a real partnership between both sides of the Mediterranean, rather than a one-directional initiative from Europe. Discussions focused on the Mediterranean Pact, water resilience, and youth entrepreneurship among others.

During the meeting, the ARLEM plenary appointed EA Member Nanette Maupertuis as co-rapporteur for next year's ARLEM report, which will treat on the implementation of the European Pact for the Mediterranean. Speaking after her appointment, she underlined the expectations placed on this report: "There are high hopes from LRAs from all over the Mediterranean on this new Pact. Let's work for this Pact to give future perspectives to the new generations."

The opinion will look at topics such as islands, environment, youth, and the blue economy, and will be co-authored with Jamal Abo Obeid, ARLEM member from Al-Ramtha (Jordan).

Karl Vanlouwe chairs the 12th meeting of the CoR-UK Contact Group in London

EA Group Member Karl Vanlouwe, President of the CoR-UK Contact Group, chaired the Group's 12th meeting on 18 November 2025 at Europe House in London. As a key post-Brexit platform connecting local and regional politicians from both sides of the Channel, the Contact Group continues to maintain dialogue, foster cooperation and ensure territorial perspectives remain central to EU-UK relations.

Opening the meeting, Vanlouwe underlined the need for sustained engagement between the EU and the UK. The agenda reflected the breadth of current issues, beginning with an exchange with Sandro Gozi, Member of the European Parliament and Co-Chair of the EU-UK Parliamentary Partnership Assembly (PPA). He stressed the need for

closer links between the Contact Group and the PPA, noting that parliamentary cooperation must be complemented by local and regional input — an approach strongly supported by the EA Group.

On the future EU-UK Agreement on Gibraltar, Dr Joseph Garcia, Deputy Chief Minister of Gibraltar, briefed participants on negotiations and the importance of securing stability, mobility and economic continuity for the territory and its cross-border region. The Group reaffirmed its commitment to a balanced, forward-looking agreement. Participants also discussed potential renewed UK participation in Erasmus+, widely welcomed as a way to restore mobility and rebuild academic and youth links.



Mr Karl Vanlouwe, Chair of the Contact Group

Beyond chairing the meeting, Vanlouwe represented the CoR as an observer at the PPA, calling for permanent CoR presence to ensure local and regional perspectives are fully included. Through his leadership, Vanlouwe reaffirmed the EA Group's commitment to a close and constructive EU-UK partnership.

Kieran McCarthy: New Rapporteur on the EU Agenda for Cities

During the December COTER meeting, Cllr Kieran McCarthy was appointed Rapporteur on the EU Agenda for Cities. He highlighted the strong evolution of urban policy over the past decade, driven by the EU Urban Agenda, its thematic partnerships, and successful initiatives such as the European Urban Initiative, URBACT, Interreg and Horizon Europe, supported by EU Council Presidencies and the EIB.



Mr Kieran McCarthy

Tadeusz Truskolaski: New Rapporteur on the EU Defence Roadmap

During the November ECON meeting, Mr Tadeusz Truskolaski, Mayor of Białystok and 1st Vice-President of the EA Group, was appointed Rapporteur on the EU Defence Roadmap. He called for a more agile, forward-looking approach to strengthening Europe's defence capabilities, stressing the need to accelerate industrial transformation and swiftly integrate AI, quantum and other breakthrough technologies.



Mr Truskolaski with Mr López Miras chair of the Defence WG

The CoR to host an event for the 300 years of Pascale Paoli



The Committee of the Regions will host a special conference on 9th December 2025 to mark the 300th anniversary of Pasquale Paoli, event organised by the Collectivity of Corsica. Paoli, a leading figure of the enlightenment and the father of the short-lived Corsican Republic, is remembered for his pioneering constitutional ideas and his lasting influence on Corsican identity.

The programme will open with an introduction by the President of the Assembly of Corsica and of the EA Group, followed by a keynote presentation by

historian Antoine-Marie Graziani, who will explore Paoli's life, legacy and impact on Europe. The session will take place in room JDE51 of the Jacques Delors building, and will include a Q&A with participants.

After the conference, attendees will be invited to a free visit of an exhibition dedicated to Paoli's role in shaping Corsica and Enlightenment Europe. The exhibition aims to showcase the modern relevance of Paoli's political vision and the enduring inspiration he provides to new generations, and will be followed by a convivial gathering in the Atrium 5.

The European Alliance Group's Annual Primary School Art Competition Returns for its 17th Edition

The European Alliance Group is delighted to announce the start of this year's primary school drawing competition, "My Region, My Life". This engaging project gives young students a unique chance to explore their communities and express through art how their region influences their daily lives, memories, friendships, traditions, and culture, while connecting with broader European values.

The theme encourages children to reflect on their sense of identity and belonging, highlighting the connection between local roots and the shared European experience. Nine schools from Poland, Romania, Belgium,

Ireland, and Lithuania will take part, each bringing their own perspectives and creative ideas to the competition. Participants will submit drawings accompanied by short captions, allowing them to tell the story behind their artwork in their own words.

We are eagerly looking forward to seeing the imaginative projects these young artists have been preparing. The competition will culminate in an exhibition displaying the drawings and captions, offering the public and EU officials a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the talent, creativity, and regional pride of Europe's future generations.

