



#SolidarityWithUkraine

Regions join together in Solidarity with Ukraine

by Cllr Kieran McCarthy, president of the EA group



Cllr Kieran McCarthy

As we watch with tears of horror and pain the slaughter and indiscriminate murder in Ukraine caused by the authorities of the Russian federation, the regions of Europe are unanimous in their call for a ceasefire and in their strongest condemnation of the war.

This war must stop and the people of Ukraine will build their nation once again. In the meantime, the Cities and Regions of Europe are here to help. We can help with provisions in Ukraine and in the border regions. We can also help with hosting refugees until it is safe to go home. We welcome the setting up

of the CoR's info-support-hub to help regions connect needs and those who can help. This is a concept our group was actively calling for.

Ultimately though, we need to do more. Regions and cities are willing to help the European commission deliver on the €17 billion aid package to have real impact on the ground where it is needed. We are willing to mobilise our resources to ensure impact to help this terrible situation.

The Conference of Presidents of the European Committee of the Regions

met in Rzeszów, Poland on a fact-finding mission to assess the needs of local communities and help shape measures to address the Ukrainian refugee crisis. This was a necessary visit and Krzysztof Iwaniuk represented us for the visit.

The EU also need to take radical and quick action to ensure energy and food security for the future and the CoR will play its part in delivering the changes needed.

Today more than ever we need to be united in this crisis.

Kieran

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"To connect the EU with its citizens, we propose a network of EU liaison offices across the EU's regions (such as VLEVA in Flanders), as well as more respect for subsidiarity, including the possibility for regional parliaments to block EU legislation, linguistic diversity and self-determination."

Karl Vanlouwe, first president of the EA group and member of the Flemish Parliament

Iwaniuk: More support needed for Ukraine and border regions as well as no return ever to a Berlin wall scenario



Mr Krzysztof Iwaniuk (right) during the CoP visit to Poland

An emergency meeting of the Conference of Presidents from the Committee of the Regions took place near Poland's border with Ukraine on 6 April attended. The EA Group was represented on behalf of the President by Mr Krzysztof Iwaniuk,

Mayor of Terespol and the Member of the CoR's Working Group on Ukraine. The meeting concentrated focused on the impact of the Ukrainian war on EU's regional and local authorities. The main and strong call for support to the regional and local authorities via the European Union budget was highlighted in the presence of Ms Elisa Ferreira, European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms and Mr Younous Omarjee, chairman of the European Parliament's committee on regional development, and Tetiana Yehorova-Lutsenko, chairwoman of the Kharkiv District Council.

During the meeting, Mr Iwaniuk said that the Conference on the Future of Europe must take this critical situation into account. He

also highlighted a huge role to be played by the European Commission in geopolitical terms with the hope that the conflict will not spread. After the speech of both Commissioner and MEP, he thanked them for their declarations that Polish local and regional authorities won't be left alone. Mayor of Terespol, a border city with Belorussia said: "This border will never again be the same but we wouldn't like it to become a new Berlin Wall and we don't want to be cut off from our neighbours".

The meeting was hosted by the president of the Podkarpackie Region, Władysław Ortyl, and the mayor of Rzeszów, Konrad Fijołek. Many of LRAs were invited and participated in the meeting.

Ukraine dominates EA group meeting in Marseille

On 2 March, on the margins of the 9th European Summit of Regions and Cities in Marseille, EA group held a meeting with its former and current members and alternates as well as a number of young elected politicians and local councilors who came as part of CoR's respective programmes.

The meeting was dominated by a debate on the war in Ukraine, with members outlining what their communities have done to help Ukrainian refugees and launching passionate pleas for more assistance to the Ukrainian people. The members were unequivocal in condemning Russia's actions as unacceptable.



EA group meeting in Marseille



Mr Tadeusz Truskolaski

EA extraordinary meeting 2022 in Białystok

An EA extraordinary meeting in 2022 will be held on 6 May in Białystok, on the invitation of the President of the city 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 Voivodeship 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 Cities and Regions working together in Europe with the focus on solidarity with Ukraine.

CoR Plenary to adopt Gryffroy opinion on Renewable Energy Directive revision

On 28 April, the CoR Plenary will adopt the draft opinion of EA Group member Andries Gryffroy on the Renewable Energy Directive Revision.

The draft opinion highlights the pivotal role of local and regional authorities and regional SMEs in the production of renewable energy sources in order to achieve the 55% CO2 emission reduction targets set by European Climate Law as well as the need to ramp up investments in renewables in order to ensure greater diversification of EU energy supply.

The amendments to the Directive, aim at making it easier to integrate renewables in the grid and to set up local renewable energy communities

while enabling local innovation and promoting circularity models.

Gryffroy, who is also a member of the Flemish Parliament, calls for enhanced cross border cooperation and more joint projects on renewables around between bordering regions and across sea basins to ensure better integration and decarbonisation of energy systems,

In the presentation of the opinion, Mr. Gryffroy stressed that EU territories are different so is their potential to produce energy from renewables. Hence legislation should take into account specificities of each Member States and regions, their different starting points, favoring a bottom up approach rather than a top down.



Mr Andries Gryffroy

He also underlines that it is necessary to be open and inclusive towards all technologies and safeguard the principle of technological neutrality in order to achieve climate neutrality and decarbonize our economy in a cost efficient manner, and at the lowest social and economic costs.

Cohesion: EU policies must be “island-proofed” in order to take into account their natural, geographic and demographic constraints



Ms Nanette Maupertuis

On 5 April the European Committee of the Regions and the Islands Commission of the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) have co-organised a high-level conference to discuss the island

perspective in the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Local and regional leaders of European islands, including Corsica, Sicily and Sardinia, stressed the need of more particular consideration in the debates of the Conference on the Future of Europe (COFE) and called for long-term strategy for EU islands to reduce regional disparities.

Presidency of the Assembly of Corsica and EA Group member, Nanette Maupertuis, while recalling the objective of the Union to promote economic, social and territorial cohesion and the need to pay particular attention to regions which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps such as islands, cross-border and mountain regions, pointed out that

the application of the relevant article is far from satisfactory.

“Despite numerous initiatives and actions, art 174 of the Treaty has not been fully implemented. It is crucial EU policies take into account insularity with the introduction of new indicators and compensatory measures that take into account the additional cost impacting on citizens living in islands.

Ms Maupertuis has proposed to draft an opinion in order to look at ways as to how cohesion policy can cater for the specific needs of these territories, though more tailored approaches, in order to achieve a balanced development and a fair recovery across the EU regions.

Kieran McCarthy's opinion on the New European Bauhaus to be adopted by the CoR plenary

On Wednesday, 27 April Committee of the Regions' plenary session is due to debate and adopt an opinion by EA president and Cork City Cllr, Mr Kieran McCarthy, which addressed the local and regional aspects of the New European Bauhaus (NEB).

In the opinion, Cllr McCarthy outlines how the NEB is a key opportunity to harness the creative potential of regions and municipalities, and thus create sustainable solutions that will make the Green Deal a success. That being said, he raised a number of issues with the Commission's communication for example on the question of how local and regional authority's engagement will be ensured

Moving forward, Mr McCarthy calls on the NEB to become a real movement that involves LRAs and not just another top-down project. "It must be a project for everyone, not just the few. To be successful, this exercise must be socially, culturally and territorially inclusive."

The opinion was adopted unanimously at the SEDEC meeting in February.

The European Free Alliance and the EA group outline more common actions for 2022

During a meeting of the European Free Alliance Party including MEP's, youth branch and Coppieters foundation held on the 9th February it was agreed to cooperate further with the CoR European Alliance group on areas of mutual benefit. The first of these was for the Conference on the Future of Europe where a joint letter was agreed to encourage more citizens participate. Members also agree to

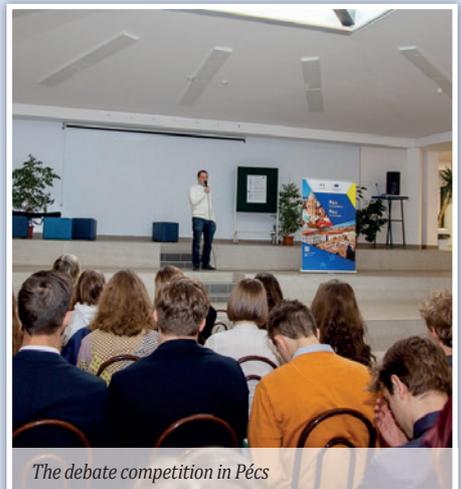
reinforce key messages during the CoFoE.

Secondly on a variety of thematic issues including cross border cooperation, energy, transport, youth to name but a few it was also agreed reinforce common actions.

Log in to www.ea.cor.europa.eu for more information.

József Kóbor organised debate competition for students on the future of Europe

On 9 and 10 April, our CIVEX coordinator and Green Commissioner of the city of Pécs József Kóbor organised a debate competition for students on the topics of sustainability and the future of Europe. The competition gathered more than 120 participants, divided into 28 teams coming from Hungary and Romania who debated how to ensure economic growth while protecting the environment.



The debate competition in Pécs

The event was part of the Committee of the Regions' series of local dialogues organised in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

EA Group external meeting and seminar

Cities and Regions working together in Europe

#StandWithUkraine

European Alliance

European Committee of the Regions



6 May 2022
Białystok, Poland