



European Committee  
of the Regions

## Europe starts in Tuscia

Oltre le città, dentro l'Europa

17 December 2020, Montalto di Castro (Viterbo), Italy



Event type	Date	Initialising member	Audience
Online Local Dialogue	17 December 2020	Sergio Caci (IT/EPP)	Around 60 viewers on Zoom and Facebook
Organiser	Municipality of Montalto di Castro European Committee of the Regions	Partners	European Parliament
		Themes	Bringing Europe closer to people, post COVID-19 recovery, tourism



## Speakers

- Sergio Caci – Mayor of Montalto di Castro and CoR member (IT/EPP)
- Antonio Tajani – Chair of the Constitutional Affairs committee and former President of the European Parliament (IT/EPP)
- Massimo Mallegni – Senator, responsible for tourism for Forza Italia party at national level (EPP)
- Giulio Marini – Responsible for tourism for Forza Italia party in the Lazio Region (EPP)
- Silvia Nardi - Executive for culture and tourism, Municipality of Montalto di Castro
- Mario Fiorentini - Councillor of Valentano and member of the [Young Elected Politicians programme](#) of the CoR
- Stefano Bigiotti - Mayor of Valentano and member of the YEP programme
- Gaetano Armao - Vice-President and regional minister of the Region of Sicily, CoR member (IT/EPP)
- Donato Toma – President of the Region of Molise and CoR member (IT/EPP)
- Salvatore De Meo – Member of the European Parliament and former Mayor of Fondi (IT/EPP)



## Key messages

The Local dialogue in Montalto di Castro (Viterbo, Italy) was the first of a new generation of digital local events organised before and during the **Conference of the Future of Europe** (to be launched in 2021). Due to the pandemic, the European Committee of the Regions reshaped the Citizens' Dialogues format bringing the debate online.

Speakers discussed on the post-pandemic scenario, with a special focus on **how to restart tourism** and use the Recovery plan to make the sector more sustainable. In particular, the local dialogue shed light on Tuscia, a geographical region that includes most of Tuscany and Umbria as well as parts of Lazio.

Three CoR's members, two Members of the European Parliament and two YEPs and three Italian politicians took part in the event. However, only one woman was included in the panel.

**Mayor Caci** highlighted that the European initiatives to restart tourism after the pandemic must start from local rural communities. The MEP **Antonio Tajani** mentioned the importance of using the Recovery plan to help the tourism sector, also through the financing of infrastructures, and requalification of tourist areas. **Silvia Nardi** showcased the cultural activities organised by the Municipality of Montalto di Castro, and said that in the future it will be important to boost the proximity tourism. **Stefano Bigiotti**, mayor of Valentano, YEP, stressed the need for infrastructure and for sustainable mobility. Moreover, he said that the Recovery plan should be based on subsidiarity, and small cities should be at the basis of recovery. President **Donato Toma**, CoR member, mentioned the importance of exchanging best practices and highlighted the importance of the activity of the Italian delegation to the Committee.



## Press/Social media coverage

Media coverage

[Ansa.it 1/2 – TotalEU isNews – laProvincia – Civonline](#)

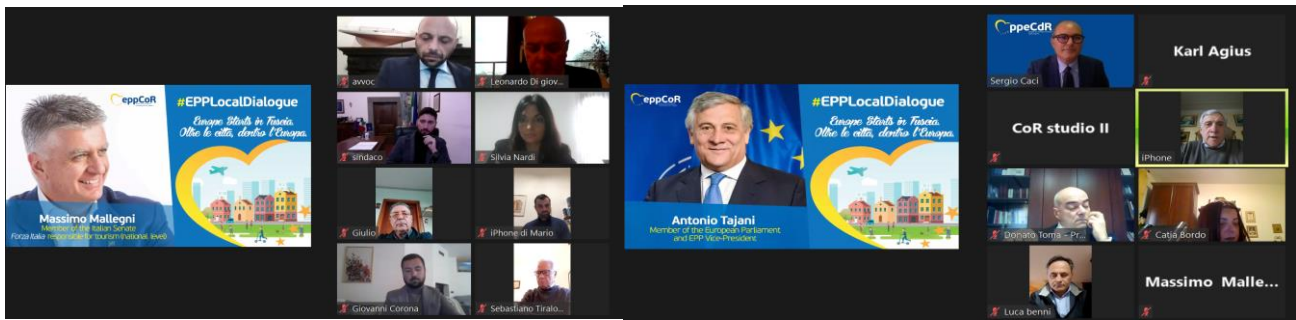
Website

[FutureofEurope](#)

[CoR Events – EPP](#)

Social Media

[#Eulocal](#)  
[#EPPlocaldialogue](#)



## Momentum

In mid-February the European Committee of the Regions has embarked on a new 5-year mandate with the renewed ambition of bringing Europe closer to its people. This commitment is reflected into the recently adopted Communication Plan 2021, which pushes also for an increased investment in digital communication tools/channels. The event in Montalto di Castro could be considered as a prototype for a new generation digital local events. The post COVID-10 recovery and the restart of tourism are two of the biggest concerns among citizens in Italy.

## Political commitment

- The messages collected during the Local dialogues would be integrated in the CoR's contribution to the Conference on the Future of Europe.
- The promotion of more gender balanced panels should be taken into account for future local dialogues.
- The panel represented all level of governance, from the very local to the European one, showing a good partnership between institutions.
- Sending out invitations to schools and target audiences, as well as the presence of a Q&A session or live surveys during the debate, could boost the citizens' participation.

## Accountability

The local, regional, national and European level of governance were represented during the debate thanks to the participation of 3 CoR's members, one Italian senator, 2 Members of the European Parliament and 2 YEPs. Among them, the presence of one president (Donato Toma) and one vice-President of Italian Regions (Gaetano Armao), as well as one former president of the European Parliament (Antonio Tajani), helped to grow the political interest in the event. Moreover, the participation of two YEPs helped to promote the programme, both to citizens and to other young elected politicians.

## Link with CoR/EU Agenda

The local administrators involved in the dialogue stressed several times the importance of using the resources coming from the Recovery plan following a decentralized approach. The local communities should be at the forefront of Europe's economic response to the COVID-19 crisis. Especially in a country like Italy, which is experiencing a predominantly young out-migration from rural areas, investing part of this budget for revitalizing the cultural and touristic scenario could be a key instrument for future success, both in terms of employment and revenues.

## Lessons learnt for future events

Tourism constitutes over 10% of EU's total GDP and provides over 27 million jobs. The EU annual regional and local barometer highlighted that following the travel restrictions, border shutdowns and lockdowns introduced in many countries and regions, tourism became the worst affected of all major economic sectors. According to the barometer, Tuscany could be one of the region most at risk because of tourism seasonality.

The CoR has been working for some time to use the crisis as an opportunity to make tourism more sustainable. During the December 2020 plenary session, the Assembly adopted an opinion on this topic.

The need of a strong involvement of local and regional authorities in shaping the national Recovery plans, stressed several times during the debate, is fully in line with the CoR's political message.