

The Co-Chairs

## **Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP)**

### **Activity Report 2016-2017**

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This summary reports on CORLEAP activities, as noted in the CORLEAP Action Plan 2016-2017, on related conferences and political events and on relevant publications and studies commissioned in support of those activities.

#### **CIVEX – thematic debate on the reviewed European Neighbourhood Policy**

5 February 2016, Brussels

The Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs of the European Committee of Regions (CIVEX) held a thematic debate on the reviewed ENP, with the aim of ensuring a strategic focus on ongoing and future CoR activities in this priority policy area. Mr Anar Ibrahimov, Chairman of the Committee of Human Rights and International Relation of the Ali majlis (Parliament) of the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, Azerbaijan and CORLEAP Co-Chair, outlined the Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy implementation and assessed CORLEAP activities in this context. He underlined the need for local and regional authorities to be associated to the building of more effective partnerships. Strengthened cooperation in targeted areas would prepare the grounds for increasing the benefits of the implementation of the ENP and its Eastern dimension for partner countries and EU Members States alike.

#### **CORLEAP conference on "Fiscal decentralisation: The conditions needed to make it a success"**

12 May 2016, Brussels

Although the benefits on the long term of decentralisation are not disputed, concerns have been voiced about short term risks, notably as concerns fiscal decentralisation. The conference looked at the factors which would steer the process of decentralisation into a success-story, including dissemination of information on funding opportunities for local and regional authorities and addressing the difficulties faced in answering call for proposals.

#### **CORLEAP Bureau meeting**

12 May 2016, Brussels

The CORLEAP Bureau exchanged on the roadmap towards the 5<sup>th</sup> EaP summit and the topic of the upcoming CORLEAP report on active citizenship. The Bureau also highlighted the importance of energy efficiency and appointed Mr. Emin Yeritsyan as rapporteur on "Energy efficiency: The role of local and regional authorities in Eastern Partnership countries".

### **Eastern Partnership Foreign Affairs Ministerial meeting**

23 May 2016, Brussels

The ministerial meeting confirmed that reform remained at the heart of the Eastern Partnership and the EU was committed to match each Partner's own ambitions on their reform path. CORLEAP was represented by the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of the European Committee of the Regions and CORLEAP Bureau member, Mr. Karl-Heinz Lambertz, who highlighted that territorial cooperation contributed to creating sustainable partnerships for the benefit of overall stability. He reiterated the call for empowering LRAs to deliver according to their potential.

### **6<sup>th</sup> CORLEAP annual meeting**

30 September 2016, Brussels

The EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy published in July 2016 called for the revamping of external partnerships and stated that the EU will support different paths to resilience in its neighbourhood, targeting the most acute cases of governmental, economic, societal and climate/energy fragility, as well as developing more effective migration policies for Europe and with its partners. This strategic environment provides opportunities for a new impetus for the Eastern Partnership, increased benefits from a local and regional perspective and a specific role to play for CORLEAP, as LRAs have an essential role in all the above mentioned areas. Those issues were addressed at the annual meeting. The CORLEAP report on "Developing civic participation as a way to strengthen local democracy in the Eastern Partnership countries" by rapporteur Paweł Adamowicz (PL/EPP), Mayor of the City of Gdańsk, was adopted. An exchange on energy efficiency took place in preparation of a second CORLEAP report. CORLEAP co-chairmanship was handed over to Belarus.

### **CORLEAP-EURONEST workshop within the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities on "Eastern Partnership territorial and parliamentary cooperation: Advancing economic development, entrepreneurship and research & innovation"**

11 October 2016, Brussels

The workshop discussed the strategies of regions and cities to foster growth, innovation and job creation and referred to illustrative case-studies from Poland and Ukraine. It also explored how legislative and regional/local policy-makers could contribute to stepping up cooperation for economic development and innovation and showcased the importance of decentralised system for economic and social development at local and regional level.

### **High-level conference on "Fostering sustainable development in Eastern Partnership countries"**

26 October 2016, Yerevan, Armenia

The conference in Yerevan celebrated the 20th anniversary of local self-government in Armenia, and included a panel on administrative reform and decentralisation as an effective instrument for sustainable development. The event was co-organised with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia and the European Commission, who launched two important initiatives in the field of sustainable municipal development: the Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) initiative and the second phase of the Covenant of Mayors East, targeting the

business sector and, respectively, energy efficiency. Participants stressed the important role played by CORLEAP in creating a network, sharing experiences and best practices for the promotion of local sustainable development, and stated that efficient and effective local administrations can achieve real changes on the ground, making economies more resilient and improving citizens' living conditions including new job opportunities at the local level.

### **Joint Conference with the Congress on "The role of local and regional authorities in promoting corruption and promoting good governance"**

28 February 2017

The joint conference of the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional Authorities addressed the challenges faced in implementing anti-corruption strategies and promoting cooperation at the sub-national level. The event highlighted the political benefits associated with action in the field of anti-corruption and the importance of supporting and coordinating the efforts of local and regional authorities, as corruption is costing governments billions of euros each year and also poses a major threat to governance and democracy in Europe, undermining the confidence of citizens in democratic institutions.

### **CORLEAP Bureau meeting**

22 May 2017, Minsk, Belarus

The CORLEAP Bureau received updated information on 5<sup>th</sup> EaP Summit preparations, expressing the readiness to contribute to the strategic communication towards the summit from a local and regional perspective. Members further discussed about the role of local and regional authorities in economic growth and job creation. The meeting was held in Minsk upon invitation of the CORLEAP Co-Chair, Mr Aleksandr Popkov, Chairman of the Standing Commission for Regional Policy and Local Self-Government of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, Vice-President of the Council for Cooperation of Local Self-Government Bodies.

### **Eastern Partnership Foreign Affairs Ministerial Meeting**

19 June, Luxembourg

CORLEAP was represented by Pawel Adamowicz, CORLEAP Bureau member and rapporteur. He emphasized that LRAs were well placed to support the emergence of a strong civil society and to help ensure the democratisation and modernisation of local communities. The effectiveness of the EU's involvement with the Eastern Partnership countries required a stronger involvement with local communities, as they are becoming increasingly active. He called for existing EU funding schemes, in particular TAIEX and Twinning, to be further adapted to target the needs of local and regional stakeholders and national governments were called on to facilitate project registration.

### **7<sup>th</sup> CORLEAP annual meeting**

30 September 2017, Brussels

CORLEAP members discussed about the Future of Eastern Partnership seen from the local perspective, reflecting on CORLEAP's engagement within a mainstreamed multilateral architecture in view of shaping CORLEAP's Action Plan 2018-2019 after the EaP Summit. In support of CORLEAP's contribution to the Summit deliverables, three thematic debates addressed the topics of good governance, energy efficiency and communication. The CORLEAP report on "Energy efficiency: The role of local and regional authorities in Eastern Partnership countries", by rapporteur Emin Yeritsyan, President of the Union of Communities of Armenia, was adopted and CORLEAP aligned its logo with the new visual identity of the Eastern Partnership. CORLEAP co-chairmanship was handed over to Ukraine.

### **CORLEAP-EURONEST workshop within the framework of the European Week of Regions and Cities on "Improving governance and preventing corruption in the EU and EaP countries"**

12 October 2017, Brussels

The fight against corruption should remain a priority for national, regional and local governments, in order to foster economic growth and increase citizens' trust in public institutions. The workshop highlighted the challenges of the fight against corruption and addressed strategies and practices, while crossing each other experiences on results achieved.

### **CORLEAP conference on "Innovation and regional development: Agents for growth in Eastern Partnership countries"**

24 October 2017, Yerevan, Armenia

One year after the reference event in Yerevan, where the European Commission launched two major initiatives in the field of sustainable municipal development, the conference could take stock of the progress achieved. The event was co-organised with the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Development of the Republic of Armenia, in close cooperation with Good Local Governance Programme South Caucasus, implemented by GIZ on behalf of German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The conference came timely in the context of a vast territorial reform in the Republic of Armenia and high level events related to digital affairs and e-governance, creating the background for addressing the implications for LRAs.

### **5th Eastern Partnership Summit**

24 November 2017, Brussels

The two thematic reports adopted by CORLEAP were distributed and their recommendations presented in the statements of the CORLEAP co-chairs. Karl-Heinz Lambertz, CoR President, and Volodymyr Prokopiv, Head of Kyiv City Council, emphasised the need for a structured engagement with local and regional authorities and their associations to be pursued across all four Eastern Partnership priority areas. In the Summit Declaration, CORLEAP is presented as a stage for the role of local and regional authorities to advance the objectives of the EaP at the level of governance closest to citizens. Also, the importance of good governance at all levels is highlighted.

## **Events supported by CORLEAP**

The work of the EaP Platforms - Platform 1 (Democracy, Good governance and stability); Platform 2 (Economic integration and convergence with EU policies); Platform 3 (Energy Security); Platform 4 (Contacts between people) - was followed throughout the reference period.

### **15<sup>th</sup> EaP Platform 1 meeting**

22 April 2016, Brussels

The meeting focused on the mid-term review of the Platform 1 Work Programme. CoR/CORLEAP proposed together with the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA), to include an item on local democracy on the agenda of the next meeting with the objectives to raise the awareness on CORLEAP activities and the role of LRAs in delivering EaP objectives. The proposal was well received.

### **16<sup>th</sup> EaP Platform 1 meeting**

5 December 2016, Brussels

Based on the CORLEAP-ALDA proposal, the agenda was largely dedicated to local and regional democracy. Participants were informed about relevant activities within the framework of CORLEAP, with focus on the recently adopted CORLEAP report on "Developing civic participation as a way to strengthen local democracy in Eastern Partnership countries". A political statement was made in support of CORLEAP, on behalf of the incoming Belarus co-chairmanship. The aim of the meeting was to collect views on how the Platform 1 could contribute to the EaP summit, and local democracy/good governance at all levels was retained as a topic to be mentioned in summit conclusions.

### **17<sup>th</sup> EaP Platform 1 meeting**

27 April 2017, Brussels

CORLEAP, represented by Mr Karl-Heinz Lambertz, was invited to present its main events, as building up the narrative towards the summit. Mr Lambertz called for recognition of the contribution of sub-national authorities to the Summit deliverables and the acknowledgement of their commendable efforts in various fields, such as energy efficiency and fighting corruption.

## **Other events**

### **Ukraine Week in the European Parliament**

29 February – 2 March 2016, Brussels

The president of the European Committee of the Regions and CORLEAP co-chair, Markku Markkula, was invited to present the activities of CORLEAP to the participants. The event brought together MEPs, MPs from EU Member States and Ukrainian MPs to share experiences on good parliamentary practice, law-making and representation.

### **Workshop "dialogue between Citizens and Institutions" on local democracy in Belarus**

24 April 2016, Brussels

The workshop was organized by the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA) at the European Parliament in Brussels. CORLEAP was represented by Mr Pawel Adamowicz.

### **Promoting local democracy and citizens' participation**

7 June 2016, Gdansk, Poland

On the initiative of Pawel Adamowicz, Mayor of the City of Gdańsk, member of the CoR and CORLEAP, a survey was conducted by ALDA with organizations and institutions that represent civil society issues and have local offices in Eastern Partnership countries. The survey examined issues to be covered by an upcoming CORLEAP report and its findings were discussed at Gdansk in July with the occasion of a partner meeting for the establishment of a Local Democracy Agency<sup>1</sup> in Odessa, Ukraine.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Eastern Partnership Days**

8-10 November 2016, Brussels

CORLEAP activities were presented at the opening event on 8 November and in the experts' workshop on "Key mechanisms of support for regional development. European dimension" on 9 November.

### **Opening of Local Democracy Agency in the Republic of Moldova**

3 March 2017, Cimislia, Moldova

Ms Tatiana Bădan, Mayor of Selement, Cimișlia Raion, President of the Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova and CORLEAP member, conveyed a message of support on behalf of CORLEAP at the inaugural event of the first Local Democracy Agency established in the Republic of Moldova.

### **VET and Skills: Contributing to socioeconomic and regional development of Ukraine**

4 April 2017, Kyiv, Ukraine

The cooperation between CORLEAP and the European Training Foundation in support of decentralised Vocational Education and Training was presented at the conference.

### **Week of Democracy**

15-16 September 2017, Gdansk, Poland

The city of Gdansk and ALDA organised an event within the "Week for Democracy" with the aim to enhance the cooperation between civil society and local authorities in Ukraine.

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<sup>1</sup> LDAs are locally-registered NGOs, established in the framework of the support programme of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to strengthen local democracy and human rights and promote sustainable development in line with European values. They act as promoters of democracy and local self-governance, offering an operational platform of debate, capacity building and shared cooperation between civil society and local authorities.

### **6<sup>th</sup> ordinary session of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly**

1 November, Kyiv

CORLEAP was represented by Ms Pauliina Haijanen (FI/EPP), City councilor of Laitila, who welcomed a more streamlined multilateral EaP architecture as opening up new opportunities for mutually reinforcing activities and even closer relations between CORLEAP and EURONEST.

### **Opening of Local Democracy Agency in Mariupol**

8 December 2017, Mariupol, Ukraine

Mr Pawel Adamowicz (PL/EPP), Mayor of Gdansk and CORLEAP Bureau member participated in the opening of Local Democracy Agency in Mariupol.

### **PLATFORMA Eastern Neighbourhood workshop**

18 December 2017, Chisinau, Moldova

CORLEAP was represented by Andris Jaunsleinis (LV/ALDE), who outlined political aspects of CORLEAP activities ahead of Riga Summit, the content of the CORLEAP Action Plan 2018-2020, as well as the efficient ways of negotiating with central authorities that an association of LRAs can follow. A member of CORLEAP secretariat also participated in the workshop with a presentation of CORLEAP activities, focusing in particular on EU financial instruments available to the EaP LRAs.

### **Studies:**

#### **[Preventing Corruption and Promoting Public Ethics at the Local and Regional Level in Eastern Partnership Countries](#)**

**Publication date:** 20.02.2017

**Author:** Clara Volintiru (LSE/ASE), Sergiu Gherghina (University of Glasgow), Eleanor Knott (LSE), Radu Muşetescu (ASE)

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#### **[Energy efficiency: The role of local and regional authorities in the Eastern Partnership countries](#)**

**Publication date:** 01.12.2016

**Author:** Karolina Zubel (main author) (LSE Enterprise Ltd, United Kingdom, and CASE – Centrum Analiz Społeczno – Ekonomicznych – Fundacja Naukowa, Poland).

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#### **[New Approach to the European Neighbourhood Policy](#)**

**Publication date:** 30.06.2016

**Author:** CASE Poland - Malgorzata McKenzie, David Dyker, Katarzyna Sidlo, and Christopher A. Hartwell.

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