

Frédéric Vallier, Secretary General, CEMR, PLATFORMA and PFD Co-chair Local Authorities

Dear Mr Doens,
Dear co-chair,
Dear colleagues,

Thank you all for these lively exchanges of today: it was an honour to take part to the debate and listen to so many rich comments and analyses. We had some detailed regional feedbacks and a broader view of the variety of concerns and priorities for the new programming period under a brand new instrument, the neighbourhood, development, international cooperation instrument.

Local and regional governments and their associations, from partner countries and from the European Union, are eager to take part to the programming phase, along with our partners from the civil society organisations, and with the central governments. Through their many integrated responsibilities, local and regional governments are cross-sectoral and active in many different areas such as promoting inclusive and participatory societies, building resilience against disasters and crisis, fostering stabilisation and strong institutions, or managing natural resources, land and water.

EU support is essential to build and strengthen those institutions at local level, to ensure capacity-building for local and regional governments and their representative national associations, notably through decentralised cooperation. This will increase the capacity of the partner countries' national associations of LRGs as well. In that sense, creating stronger partnership between national associations in partner countries and the EU Delegations is key.

The EU support to those efforts is vital and will allow to achieve more effective results. It is crucially expected on key issues such as:

- The recognition of the local level as key democratic and strategic level of intervention,
- The promotion of the effective application of the 2013 Communication on empowering LRGs and their associations as autonomous and accountable development actors,
- The facilitation of the process for localising the SDGs;
- The participation and integration of LRGs and their associations in the political dialogue with national governments, regional organisations and related EU programming processes;
- The necessary guarantees and financial / procedural arrangements to ensure that LRGs and their associations can access adapted and targeted resources in the future MFF;
- The promotion of Local Authorities Roadmaps, developed at country level by EU Delegations, together with representatives of LRGs and their associations.

For all this, earmarked support for LRGs is essential to avoid any national political interest and have more flexibility in graduated countries for instance. This is why the EU needs to involve local and regional



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governments in bilateral, regional and thematic programming. Those three approaches are complementary.

After these promising exchanges of today, we, local and regional governments and representative associations, look forward to engaging further in our continuous partnership with the European Commission.

Director General, you can count on us to mobilise our constituencies in partner countries and in Europe to accompany the European Union in the different stages of its development policy.