CIVEX reports on #EURegionsWeek

CIVEX secretariat is delighted to report on the commission’s contribution to this year’s edition of the #EURegionsWeek - the largest European event dedicated to our regions and cities and their optimal development.

- **Funding for local and regional authorities in Mediterranean partner countries**;
- **Multi-level governance and active subsidiarity for sustainable recovery and resilience**;
- **Green regions and cities in resilient and sustainable Eastern Partnership economies**

are the titles of the workshops organized by CIVEX in the context of European Week of Regions and Cities which took place from the 11th October to the 14th October 2021, attesting to the multitude of topics that are at the heart of the CIVEX Commission's portfolio, namely decentralized cooperation with Mediterranean neighbourhood, multi-level governance and subsidiarity, as well as Eastern Partnership.

Following the successful closing the #EURegionsWeek, the conference on Cities fostering democracy in the European Union – urban perspectives for the Conference on the future of Europe organised with the support of the CIVEX Secretariat culminated in the adoption of conclusions which will provide a valuable input for the Conference on the future of Europe.

More details on these events can be found below.
On the 12 October 2021, ARLEM (European Assembly Euro-Mediterranean), which is part of the CIVEX Commission, organized a workshop entitled "Funding for local and regional authorities in Mediterranean partner countries" to inform local and regional authorities about the available funding. The objective of this session was to inform about the possible financing for local and regional authorities of the Mediterranean partner countries in the South and in the Western Balkans by giving an overview of an upcoming study on this topic which is set to provide local and regional authorities with an explanatory brochure. This study was presented by one of the main authors of the current study, Mrs. Katarzyna Sidło, whose presentation was followed by one from Mr. Stefano Dotto who represented the European Commission and Paul Hickey, representing the EIB. This workshop has been a very informative session thanks to the high quality of the presentations.

Full video of the event is accessible here.
#EURegionsWeek also provided a great opportunity for the European Committee of the Regions and the Conference of Regional Legislative Assemblies of the EU (CALRE) to join forces in organising a workshop on Multi-level governance and active subsidiarity for sustainable recovery and resilience, highlighting the importance of coordination between all levels of government for a successful recovery and the role played in this process by the EU regional legislative assemblies.

The first panel of this workshop entitled 'Trade-offs between strong regional powers, leadership and multi-level governance in the recovery agenda' was moderated by Mark Speich (DE/EPP), Secretary of State for Federal, European and International Affairs in North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany), and chair of CIVEX commission of the European Committee of the Regions. Pointing out that 'cities and regions have... been in the frontline of social and economic recovery measures', Mr Speich noted that 'in some cases, regions and cities have made full use of their competences; in other cases, we have seen tendencies to a centralization of response measures, which may have put the principle of subsidiarity into question'.

Mark Speich (DE/EPP)

The debate opened with a video message from Mr. Karl Heinz Lambertz (BE/PES), Chair of the European Committee of the Regions Subsidiarity Steering Group, and President of the Parliament of the German-speaking Community of Belgium, urging for consideration of regional diversity in EU policy making as a prerequisite to sustainably anchoring the EU in the minds and hearts of the people where they live. Describing the subsidiarity principle as 'part of the European Union's DNA', Mr Lambertz called for this concept to be ascribed its specific content by the EU institutions, national, regional and local levels all working together.
The first panel of the workshop was further enriched by the expertise of Mrs Simona Piattoni, Professor of Political Science at the Department of Sociology and Social Research of the University of Trento; Mr Serafín Pazos-Vidal, author of a publication on Subsidiarity and EU Multilevel Governance: Actors, Networks and Agendas; and Mrs Dorothée Allain-Duppré, Head of Regional Development and Multi-Level Governance Division Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE) at OECD. Also contributing to this debate via video messages were Ms Francesca Campolongo, Deputy Director of the ‘Growth and Innovation’ Directorate and the Head of the ‘Finance & Economy’ Unit of the European Commission Joint Research Centre, and Mr Klemen Zumer, Head of Linking the Levels Unit, Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services (EPRS) of the Secretariat of the European Parliament.

The second panel, moderated by Mrs Antje Grotheer (DE/PES), a Vice-President of Bremen City Parliament (Germany) and a member of the CoR CIVEX commission, looked at the topic of Assessing the functioning of multi-level governance in the context of the recovery and resilience agenda - the perspective of EU Regional Legislative Assemblies.

The panel discussion opened with a video message from Gustavo A. Matos Expósito (ES/PES), President of the Parliament of the Canary Islands and President of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE), speaking from
the Canary Islands, where a powerful volcanic eruption in La Palma Island has caused great material, economic and environmental damage, pointing out the creation of a Mixed Commission for reconstruction composed of different government levels, including the local level, as a clear example of the 'commitment between all the government levels as the proper way towards reconstruction'. 'The answer of the EU has also been immediate,' he said, translating into something as essential as a ‘trust of citizenship in its institutions’.

![Gustavo A. Matos Expósito (ES/PES)](image)

**Gustavo A. Matos Expósito (ES/PES)**
President of the Parliament of the Canary Islands and President of the Conference of European Regional Legislative Assemblies (CALRE)

Attendees to this workshop also benefitted from the insights and interventions of Ms Blanca Martín Delgado (ES/PES), President of Extremadura Regional Assembly (Spain); Mr Karl Freller, Vice-President of the Bavarian State Parliament, Germany (via video message); Mr Roberto Ciambetti (IT/ECR), president of the Regional Council of Veneto, member of the European Committee of the Regions; and Mr Piero Mauro Zanin, President and Member of the Regional Council of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, member of the European Committee of the Regions.

Responding to SLIDO questions, most participants were of the view that:

1/ **The key to a sustainable recovery lies in a partnership approach as an expression of active subsidiarity** (characterized by involving the sub-national level while keeping the current framework of competences),

2/ **The main obstacle to the functioning of multi-level governance and effective implementation of active subsidiarity is the top-down control of national governments**

More information about this workshop and a link to the video recording can be found here:
A joint Corleap – Euronest Workshop on "Green regions and cities in resilient and sustainable Eastern Partnership economies" took place on 14 October within the EURegionsWeek. The workshop looked into the issue of economic recovery of the Eastern Partnership countries from several angels: green transition, resilience of local communities, sustainable economic growth.

MEP Andrius Kubilius, Euronest co-chair, opened the session underlining the acute economic challenges facing the whole EaP region, to which a joint answer must be found. Ms. Diana Jablonska from DG NEAR presented several programmes implemented by the European Commission in the EaP countries, among which EU4Environment, Covenant of Mayors East and Mayors for Economic Growth, and the new Economic and Investment plan. Mr. Thorfinn Stainforth from the Institute for European Environmental Policy offered an academic insight
into cities and regions' role as key actors for sustainability. "Urban and regional challenges are known – said Mr. Stainforth – These are low capacity and insufficient involvement in national planning". Mr. Constantin Cojocaru, Corleap Co-chair from Moldova, went through the main specific challenges faced by the local and regional authorities in the Eastern Partnership region, and called the EU to be very attentive towards the local needs when planning external financial support. Ms Kata Tüttő (HU/PES) shared her experience in managing green and sustainable initiatives in Budapest.

A video testimonial from Georgia offered further examples of some successful green projects. Full video of the event is accessible here.

The conference "Cities fostering democracy in the European Union – urban perspectives for the Conference on the future of Europe", co-organised by the European Committee of the Regions, Eurocities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) on 14 October, was also a success, providing a platform to local and regional leaders for setting out their expectations for the Conference on the Future of Europe, sharing their experiences on strengthening local democracy, and discussing examples of innovative participative exercises, green projects, digital services to citizens or integration of communities. The event culminated in the adoption of conclusions expected to serve as an input for the Conference on the future of Europe.

The event had the opportunity to hear the president of the Committee of the Regions, Mr Apostolos Tzitzikostas, Mr. Dario Nardella, President of Eurocities, and Mr. Christoph Schnaudigel, Co-President of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

The recording of the whole event is available [here](#).