



# MUNICIPAL NEWS

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## ***“The Committee of the Regions must be more incisive”***

On Thursday 16 February, Mr. Michel Delebarre, Mayor of Dunkirk, was elected President of the CoR for two years. One month later he accepted to answer questions for the Greek version of “Municipal News”. Here are his main statements:

”I believe in decentralisation and in the principle of subsidiarity defended by the CoR. [...] I am convinced that the CoR has an important role to play in the debate on the future of the EU.

Actually, we have two challenges to face. One is a political challenge: to strengthen the identity of the CoR as a political assembly able to help re-launch a debate on Europe in the EU’s regions and towns, where citizens live their daily lives. The second challenge is one of influence: the CoR has to be more incisive.

One day it will have to take the bull by the horns and say that it opposes a legislative proposal from the Commission that does not respect the principles of subsidiarity or good governance. But it will not be enough to say ‘no’; the other players in the legislative procedure, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, will also have to be convinced of the soundness of our reasons. [...] In order to do that, the CoR has to use the instruments that it already has better and in a proactive way”.



## ***Study visit to Brussels***

From 28 to 31 March, a 24-member Delegation from Cyprus, headed by the President of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, Mayor of Limassol, Mr. Demetris Kontides and constituted by Mayors, Members of the Executive Committee of the Union and Municipal Secretaries, visited Brussels.

The purpose of the visit was to familiarise the Delegation with the EU environment and has been organised by the Brussels Office of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities.

During the visit, the Delegation had meetings in the CoR, the CEMR, Eurocities, DG Regional Policy and the Permanent Delegation of Cyprus in the EU. It visited a landfill of waste in the city of Moen, as well as the Municipal Cultural Centre in Waregem. Finally it also met with representatives of the Municipal Council of the city of Kortrijk.

During these meetings, the members of the Delegation got to know better the organisations they visited and had the opportunity to discuss with several experts the latest developments in the EU on issues like public transport, public procurement, structural funds and cohesion policy, as well as future trends in the subjects of waste treatment and culture.



*From the meeting with the CEMR*

### ***Cyprus Municipalities and the Euro***

Cyprus is getting ready for one of the most important changes in the past decades: joining the eurozone.

The preparation of Cypriot Municipalities for this change has turned into a priority for the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, which participates actively in all actions concerning EU issues.

In order to further help Cypriot Municipalities to adopt the euro, and in parallel all of its systematic efforts on the issue- the UCM has recently published an informative flyer concerning all necessary information on the subject.



### ***Europe Day, 9 May***

This year's celebration of Europe Day gained special importance all around Europe through organising local events. In Cyprus the EC Representation, the EP Information Office and the Union of Cyprus Municipalities organised local events in all municipalities.

On 8 May a conference was organised at the offices of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities. During the conference, the President of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities Mr. D. Kontides, the Head of the EC Representation Mr T. Themistocleous and the Head the EP Information Office Mr. T. Georgiou presented the framework of events organised by the Municipalities of Cyprus.



On 9 May, promotional and information material on the EU was made available to all municipalities. In addition, a literature competition on Europe has been organised (with the support of the Ministry of Education and Culture) among secondary school students. A painting competition on Europe among primary school pupils also took place.

### ***Mr. Di Stasi's visit to Cyprus***

The President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe Mr. Giovanni Di Stasi, paid an official visit to Cyprus on 25 May, where he had several meetings with representatives of the national and local authorities of the Republic of Cyprus.



Mr. Di Stasi expressed his will to see the Cypriot issue resolved: “We can no longer accept situations in Europe where divided towns or ghost towns exist. This state of division is harmful to the quality of life of Cypriot citizens, whichever community they belong to,” he stressed.

During his meeting with the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Tassos Papadopoulos, the President of the Congress also raised the question of stronger involvement of Cypriot citizens and local authorities in resolving the situation there. “Our fellow citizens and the municipalities should perform a more active, constructive and complementary part in this process”.

On 25 May Mr. Di Stasi also met the President of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities Mr. Demetris Kontides and other representatives of the Cypriot Local Authorities with whom he discussed cooperation of the Local Authorities with the Congress as well as the issue of the composition of the National Delegation of Cyprus to the Congress.



*From the 25 May meeting*

### ***CoR Forum: Debate Europe – Going Local***

The impact of EU communication policy in Europe's regions and cities was the main theme of the CoR plenary session that took place in Brussels on 14-15 June.

Commissioners Margot Wallström, and Danuta Hübner and Finnish Minister of Regional and Municipal Affairs Hannes Manninen addressed the plenary, which also discussed industrial policy, SME policy, maritime safety, waste recycling, clean transport, protection of minorities, lifelong learning, multilingualism and digital libraries.



In parallel to the plenary session, the CoR and the European Commission's communication directorate general (DG COMM) hosted a two-day practical forum for directors of communication and editors of local and regional authority titles, focused on how Europe can better serve the needs of media in its regions and cities.

Commissioner Wallström and CoR President Michel Delebarre also took part in a structured dialogue on communication issues with representatives of European and national associations of local and regional authorities.

The chief editor of “Municipal News” and Secretary General of the Union of Cyprus Municipalities Mr Athos Germanos has participated in the forum, where he presented the experience gained from editing the Greek and English versions of “Municipal News”.

On Thursday 15 June, Mrs Mercedes Bresso, presented her report on Plan D and the White Paper during a debate on communication in regions and cities.

Finally, Commissioner Hübner took part in a topical discussion with members, focusing on the current state of play regarding preparations for the new generation of structural funds' programmes due for launch in January 2007.

### ***Consultation on the Restructuring of Local Self-Government in Cyprus***

The Ministry of Interior is determined to proceed with the restructuring of Local Self-Government in Cyprus. It is now focusing on the necessary structural changes in order for this reform to modernise -and at the same time strengthen- its role, via the development of sustainable own resources and towards the upgrade of the framework of provided services and of the quality of citizens' lives.

The above important declarations have been made by the Minister of Interior of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr. A. Christou, in an interview for the Greek version of “MUNICIPAL NEWS”. He also assured that the consultation of



the Ministry with the Union of Cyprus Municipalities, for the revision of the institutional framework for the Municipalities, is guaranteed. Among others, Mr. Christou noted:

“Local Self-Government constitutes the cell of democratic organisation and functioning of each society. The MoI is determined to advance the restructuring of Local Authorities and it is now focusing on the necessary structural changes.

At present, it would not be wise to give a timeframe for the revision of the relevant legislation. In any case it is ensured that consultations with the Union of Cyprus Municipalities will take place.

A great proportion of EU legislation will have to be applied by the local authorities, and this fact creates certain needs.

The administrative structure of Local Self-Government as well as the size of local authorities in Cyprus require changes. These elements will be taken into consideration in the framework of the more general study on the modernisation of Local Self-Government to which I have already referred”.

## USEFUL CONTACTS AND LINKS

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<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/nicosia/>

- The portal to European Union law  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm>
- Summaries of EU legislation  
[http://europa.eu/scadplus/scad\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/scadplus/scad_en.htm)
- Official Journal of the European Union  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOIndex.do?ihmlang=en>
- EUROPE DIRECT Information Network  
[http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm)
- Court of Justice of the European Communities  
<http://curia.eu.int/en/transitpage.htm>
- European Economic and Social Committee  
[http://eesc.europa.eu/index\\_en.asp](http://eesc.europa.eu/index_en.asp)
- European Ombudsman  
<http://www.ombudsman.europa.eu/>
- Quick Tender Search  
<http://ec.europa.eu/comm/europeaid/cgi/frame12.pl>
- Historical Archives of the European Union  
<http://www.iue.it/ECArchives/EN/Index.shtml>
- The Bulletin of the European Union  
<http://europa.eu/bulletin/en/welcome.htm>
- DG Health & Consumer Protection  
[http://ec.europa.eu/health/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/index_en.htm)
- DG Regio  
[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm)
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