

EU local leaders ready to work with the European Parliament to better communicate Europe on the ground and scale up cooperation on the Conference on the future of Europe



□□European Parliament's Vice-President for Information policy, Press and Citizens Relations, Othmar Karas, and Vice-President for Relations with the European Committee of the Regions (CoR), Klára Dobrev, joined the members of the Bureau of the CoR to debate how to better communicate the EU action and achievements to people in regions, cities and villages across Europe. They also discussed how to contribute to the Conference on the future of EU and scale up the cooperation between the only two EU institutions gathering elected officials.

"As regional presidents and local mayors we can offer our trust and expertise on the ground and our ability to reach out to our communities across Europe. We are ready to reinforce our cooperation with the European Parliament by jointly organising local dialogues to contribute to the Conference on the future of Europe. We are also looking at how to build concrete synergies between the EP pilot project Building Europe with Local Entities (BELE) and our Committee's upcoming Network of Local and Regional EU Councilors. Based on the cooperation agreement between our two institutions, we want to work to identify common concrete actions able to explain the added-value of the European Union", said [Apostolos Tzitzikostas](#), President of the CoR.

"I really appreciate the debate with the members of the Bureau of the Committee of Regions as it is exceptionally constructive. There must be an open minded approach on the Conference on the Future of Europe. We must not be afraid about possible outcomes, before we are even discussing. If a change of the European Treaties is necessary to empower Europe to act faster and to strengthen the trust of the citizens, we should work for it. It is our task as politicians to gain majorities for policies that are right and necessary. We have to engage deeply in the dialogue with the European citizens. Firstly, they can participate on our digital platform and we will encourage them to do so. But secondly it is of crucial importance to debate with the citizens face to face. Nobody is in a better position to do so and closer to the people than the Members of the CoR, the mayors representatives of local and regional authorities and we Members of the European Parliament", said [Othmar Karas](#), Vice-President of the European Parliament.

Vice-President [Klára Dobrev](#) added: *"The forthcoming Conference on the Future of Europe has a much higher stake than most of our deliberations. The outcome of the Conference will be decisive as to Europe remains a global power, or it will shrink into an ongoing playfield of selfish heads of national*

governments. No less than the future of our children and our grandchildren is at stake. It is inevitably crucial that the discourses about the future of Europe will be as much inclusive and embracing as never before. The Committee of Regions is the genuine representative of all regions throughout the European Union. For this reason, I found it gratifying at its recent Bureau-meeting that the Committee of Regions is also seeking a prominent role in the European discussions about the future of Europe. Our responsibility is enormous. If we want to deliver to our European citizens, we must offer them rewarding ideas about our shared future. The partnership of the Committee of Regions in this exercise will increase our prospects exceedingly!"

The discussion took place ahead of the [CoR Plenary session](#) which is hosting high level debates also on the Conference on the Future of Europe. On 5 May, regional and local authorities debate with [António Costa](#), Prime Minister of Portugal, and European Parliament President, [David Sassoli](#), while on 7 May [Herman Van Rompuy](#), former President of the European Council, will discuss with CoR members the Committee's contribution to the Conference on the Future of Europe, in his capacity as chairman of the High-Level Group on European Democracy recently created by the CoR.

On 9 May, the CoR will hold a local debate in Strasbourg to mark the territorial dimension of the Conference. The event, co-organised with the main French regional and local associations, will allow regional and local leaders to discuss with citizens how to bring the Conference to regions, cities and villages across Europe. The local event will be attended, among others, by Dubravka Šuica, European Commissioner for Democracy and Demography, Guy Verhofstadt, Co-Chair of the Executive Committee of the Conference on the Future of Europe, and Ana Paula Zacarias, Portuguese Secretary of State for European Affairs.

More details [here](#).

Background:

The Bureau is a group of CoR members that can be thought of as CoR's political driving force: it draws up its political programme and oversees its implementation. The Bureau meets before each plenary session to coordinate the work of the assembly and the commissions. It also gathers two times a year in extraordinary meetings in the EU country holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU.

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