



CONGRESS BULILETIN

15.05.2003

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General Assembly with a symbolic dimension

The opening ceremony of the 22nd General Assembly of the Council of the European Municipalities and Regions started with the EU anthem „Ode to Joy” and the presentation of the EU flag to the mayor of Poznań **Ryszard Grobelny** by the mayor of the Finnish city of Olulu, **Kari Nenonen**. A welcome by the Presidents of the Association of Polish Cities and the Association of Polish Counties was followed by a short concert by the **Polish Radio Chamber Orchestra „Amadeus”** conducted by **Agnieszka Duczmal**. The orchestra performed „Orawa” by **Wojciech Kilar**.

As the President of CEMR **Valery Giscard d'Estaing** could not be present in person at the conference, the viewers could watch on an outdoor screen the conversation that mayor Grobelny had held with him earlier. Valery Giscard d'Estaing said among other things that the fact of organising the Assembly in a non-EU member state just before the accession has a symbolic meaning. It is the first time in history that European countries have made a sovereign decision to unite.

Monsieur Giscard d'Estaing also emphasised the need to focus on „how can we make a bloc of 450 million inhabitants work? This is the third largest bloc in terms of inhabitants after China and India, far ahead of the USA, Japan or Russia. How can we ensure its rules are democratic, I mean by that for its inhabitants to have equal rights, for its decisions to be taken with transparency, rapidity and efficiency? (...) We are going to simplify the system, we are going to make it more efficient, closer to the citizens. (...) We must better organise their representation, better organise their consultation, and create much shorter circuits between the associations of local and regional authorities – like CEMR – and all the European institutions”.

Valery Giscard d'Estaing is of the opinion that the solution lies in finding the right balance between governance and proximity: „Local and regional authorities must be involved in global governance on one hand, but they must remain close to the citizens on the other. Thus we must find the right balance. And I believe CEMR will have much to tell us on this issue”.

Hanna Hendrysiak



Aleksander Kwaśniewski,
President of the Republic of Poland
to the participants of the Congress

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to the 22nd Assembly of CEMR. For the first time it is held in a country that has not been a EU member. I find it a token of recognition for achievements of Poland and appreciation of our efforts to facilitate the continent's integration.

I am happy that the honor to arrange for the event fell to Poznań, the capital city of Wielkopolska, known for its diligence, entrepreneurship, and hospitality. Entrusting Poznań with the privilege to host the meeting of local authority representatives from 28 states means that the reputation of a prudent city has gone far beyond Polish borders.

The proceedings perfectly coincide with celebrating the 750th anniversary of Poznań's location. Congratulations on the splendid jubilee! I am convinced that to the residents and authorities of the city it is a source of not only satisfaction but also new ideas and visions. I have been privileged to accept the Honorary Aegis, both of the anniversary and of the Congress.

Exchange of experience, sharing the capital of know-how and satisfaction with achievements is immensely inspiring, thus, meaningful to each and every European municipality. Sustainable growth of all the regions is in the interest of reach and poorer states; of those whose standing on the global market is strong and those that only strive for it. I am sure that the Poznań debate will make a valid contribution to the concept of cities' and regions' partnership.

To the hosts the Congress dispute has unique dimensions: it gives them an opportunity to present the centuries-old achievements and, most of all, the growth potential of „the city worth knowing”, the city that aspires to the title of the economic capital of Poland. I believe that Poznanians will seize that opportunity.

I wish you successful debates. Let this meeting truly foster building of our joint future in Europe that is strong, affluent, safe, and modern. Enjoy your stay in beautiful, old Poznań. I wish you all the best!

Emanuela Martini
Responsabile
informatica
AICCIRE
Rome
Italy



I have come from Rome and I am glad that I will be able to meet and talk to delegates from other European countries. Our organisation represents over 3000 local communities. I hope that the event will be a success.

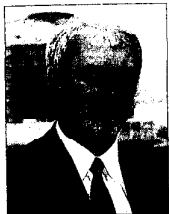
Håvard Alvers
Karlstads Kommun
Sweden

The question of what will make the General Assembly a success is very interesting. I hope that during the two or three days spent here we will obtain a positive answer. I hope that we, the representatives of local authorities, will become closer on a number of issues and work out a single position.

Stefan Mikołajczak
Head of Self-Government
Authority of
Wielkopolska
Voivodship



Wielkopolska residents' scope of knowledge on functioning of the EU and the citizens' input into joint projects are a guarantee of our success on the way to the Union. Besides contemporary achievements, the historical background makes people in our region open to the world. Practically, each of our municipalities, towns or communities has a twin partner in Europe. The population has identified its advantages and disadvantages. They are friends, and it is easier to overcome obstacles and succeed. The region officially has 10 winners. Our friends, self-government authority representatives from the European countries, have substantially helped us obtain structural and integration funds for Wielkopolska.



**Jan
Olbrycht**

The integration will benefit Polish municipalities primarily by providing them with the same possibilities as those already enjoyed by the municipalities in the current Member States. The most clear and most often emphasised opportunity is the possibility to make use of funds available within the framework of EU regional policies. Of greatest significance to the local authorities, however, will not only be the possibility of obtaining financial support but especially the chance to „spread their wings”, that is implement longstanding projects, improve and clarify the strategies, broaden (an essential and required process!) cooperation with other partners, create own monitoring and assessment systems – in other words improve governance. Equally important will be effective functioning within the network of European local authorities and joint efforts (eg. in the Committee of the Regions) to achieve a stronger position of local authorities in the system of managing public matters in the Member States.

**Hansjörg
Christmann**
Landrat
Landkreis
Dachau
Germany



I have arrived from Germany and it is wonderful that during this Assembly I will be able meet and share experiences with people from other towns and cities. I think it is very important that Europe should speak in one voice and that we work out a single stance here in Poznań.



**Michiel
van Daele**
Mayor of Tiel
Belgium

I hope to meet a lot of new people! Contacts with delegates from Central and Eastern Europe are very important for us and I would like to remind you that the European tradition of our assembly goes back to 1959. The time has come to bring more diversity to our contacts. If there is a lot of interaction, exchange of views and opinions among delegates I will consider the General Assembly to be a success. It is our duty to learn from one another.

Policy of cohesion

During the opening ceremony of the 22nd General Assembly of CEMR, Ryszard Grobelny, the host of the Congress, Mayor of Poznań and President of the Association of Polish Cities, addressed the delegates and guests with the following words:

Contemporary European policy doctrine is deeply rooted in the tradition of Greek polis, where matters vital to the municipality were decided by majority of the citizens. Political systems of present-day states of our continent emphasize participation of municipalities in political and social life and attribute a special role to local self-government authorities.

The sessions of the General Assembly of CEMR have coincided with a debate on the political future of Europe. Closely watching the proceedings of the European Convention, representatives of such authorities, should make every effort to make the process of forging the European Charter incorporate local and regional issues and to secure respecting the principles of the division of competence and subsidiarity.

It is of particular importance to such countries as Poland because although we have long self-government authority traditions, we have been developing contemporary solutions for slightly over 10 years only. Starting decentralization of public authority in 1989 we modeled it on standards in force in the European Union, though their official implementation in Poland was far ahead. Now, looking back at the process, I dare to say that the Polish local government reform was the first fully European reform in our country and, what is particularly important to

us, a successful one. That is why Polish self-government authority personnel, just like their peers across Europe, understand well how important it is to maintain the forged self-government standards, to secure them in the European Charter. That is why we should univocally object to naming us „Local or regional players”, for we are not a lobbying group opposed to somebody, we are a part of decentralized public authority, the part closest to citizens.

Soon the European Union will admit new countries. It is obvious that functioning in a greater group of states, states that have their own particular difficulties – also at the regional level – will make local authorities face numerous new challenges. The cohesion policy, so valid to the European Union's development, will require regional authorities' involvement. Opening borders, common market and free movement of labor and services can substantially restructure also local economy. It is important that in the – sometimes – difficult process local authorities find support and help in civic initiatives. To secure that, it is necessary to intensify cooperation with non-governmental organizations based on dialogue and mutual respect.

The debate on the future of Europe should recognize separate historical backgrounds and traditions of every country or region and, at the same time, respect that every one of us is a European, and that we are bonded with many centuries of shared history and tradition. The only way to this perception of Europe, being diversity in unity, leads through dialogue. Dialogue between us, inhabitants of our shared European home.

Political Committee

The opening ceremony of the 22nd General Assembly of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions followed the Political Committee's session.

The meeting started with a discussion on the draft Resolution to be signed at the end of the Assembly. It was

emphasised that the Resolution should refer to the current international situation in Europe after the war on Iraq. Many of the participants said that being the representatives of their local societies, they feel responsible for making the voices of their electorate heard also on the European forum. Europe should be politically strong and integrated. The Resolution should also stress the underlying principles of local administration functioning (subsidiarity, proportionality and proximity). The adoption of the final version of the Resolution will be the responsibility of the participants of 22nd CEMR General Assembly.

The most important issue discussed during this session was the lobbying of European local authorities in the course of preparation of the European Constitution. The municipalities and regions should be able to influence the decisions made at the European level, particularly those which directly concern everyday life in their local societies. The Political Committee members agreed that

if the Constitution's preamble provides for the preservation of national identity and autonomy and if these values apply also to the local administration, its position will be strengthened.

In the talks with the European Commission concerning the position of CEMR in the future EU it was emphasised that CEMR should play a similar role in the EU that CLARE (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe) plays in the Council of Europe: CLARE has become one of three pillars, together with the Committee of Ministers and the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly.

The Political Committee members unanimously admitted new members, i.e. ZELS (the Association of the Units of Local self-government of Macedonia) as well as the conference of Towns and Municipalities of Serbia to be an associated

CEMR member.

Besides, the Political Committee members decided to establish within CEMR the Coordinating Committee, composed of 10 persons. The task of this committee will be to represent the European self-governments in the international self-government organisation that will be set up following the merger of IULA (International Union of Local Authorities) and UTO (United Town Organisations) in May 2004 in Paris.

At the end of the session the Austrian Association of Municipalities suggested to launch an Internet project (ICNW – International Communal Network) that would be of use especially for the new EU members. The aim of this project will be to promote the best solution of the problems occurring in small and medium-sized municipalities.

Joana Proniewicz, Alicja Stachowiak

There is no democracy without self-governments

The European Constitution is crucial for renewing Europe. The regional unions must be present at all levels of decision – making, said **Lord Graham Tope**, the President of the Commission for Constitutional Affairs and Governance, Committee of the Regions.

All participants present at the opening meeting stressed the importance of the moment in which the Council of European Municipalities and Regions General Assembly is being held; it is the eve of the EU enlargement by another 10 countries. Poland has been regarded as symbol of the uniting continent, which is now overcoming the divisions made after the World War II.

Council of European Municipalities and Regions pioneered in establishing the self-government legislation. The European Charter on Local Self-Government, ratified by 38 states, serves for our common benefit. There is no proper self-government without local self-governance, said **Herwid Van Staa**, President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. According to him, the democratic stability is vital for all of us. Any shortages of democracy are always reflected at local self-government level. Therefore, the Charter is an anchor in the European Constitution. The Charter is an important part of the EU law and should be respected by all states.

As a part of the preparations of the European Constitution, carried out by the European Convention, CEMR initiated a discussion on the role and place of the local authorities in this Constitution. The Convention wants to recognise a role of the self-governments in the Constitution, said Lord Tope. He added that the Charter on the Rights of Regions should be incorporated into the Constitutional Treaty. The Committee of

the Region is in favour of introducing the rules of competitiveness and subsidiary of local self-governments and it supports the monitoring whether the constitutional powers of local authorities are upheld. If the rules are violated, the authorities should have the right to appeal to the European Court of Justice. The Committee of the Regions is supposed to participate in these activities.

Each level of elective administration ought to enjoy the right to participate in the European policy and in the dialogue between the Council, Parliament and the Commission, ask questions in writing to the European Commission and obtain the observer status in expressing opinions. The Committee of the Regions together with CEMR wants to estimate the financial implications of the passed laws. Hence, the Constitutional Treaty should provide for an adequate role and the right to co-decide for the self-governments. The regional and local authorities are loyal to the EU, so they demand to be consulted at the early stage of drafting the laws in order to see what impact will the decisions have on the local level of administration and governance.

Michael Haupl, PhD, the Executive President of CEMR, the mayor of Vienna and the President of Association of Austrian Cities brought about the issue of the social peace, safety and equal life quality for all citizens. He said: this is an added value of the EU – the external peace and prosperity in every country. Since there is a consensus about the Economic and Monetary Union, there should be a provision concerning the establishment of a social union.

Barbara Kielezyk, Olga Kunze



Pinto Ladrí
Coimbra,
Portugal
ANMP
Head of
International
Relations Dept.

I hope that during the General Assembly we will manage to solve many problems of political nature. We should consider what is and what will be the role of local authorities in Europe particularly now when the EU is undergoing enlargement. In my view, of great significance is the lack of borders on the European continent but even more important is the issue of the role to be played by the citizens of Europe.

Olgierd R. Dziekoński
Member of the
Board and
Treasurer of the
Union of Polish
Metropolises



Development of civic societies in the 21st century relies on the level of science and culture. Although according to the solidarity and subsidiarity principles all local authorities are equally important in the EU, some municipalities have greater obligations due to their location, historical background, development level. In Poland, i.e. a country on the outskirts of the EU, metro areas will play a vital role in shaping the state's development potential. They will also impact the whole continent more and more strongly. Density of creative capacity in metro areas is the highest and their self-governments become responsible for not only their municipalities but also for the country. It is a new challenge and we have to face it.

Bożena Ronowicz
Mayor of
Zielona Góra



The European Community focuses its objectives on local authorities because they are closest to citizens. That is why shaping Eurocitizens is the most important and education is the most effective way to achieve that goal. We allocate 40% of our city's budget to education. There are vast areas formerly managed by state-owned farms in Łutuskie Voivodship. People there do not know how to get Union's support, although without the funds the villages will not make any headway. On the other hand, it is teachers, pupils and students that make the running in opening societies to Europe. It is the young, knowledge-hungry people, and not politicians (!) that run the most effective pro-European campaign. They know that EU is their great opportunity and that their opportunities can be channelled into better life of future generations.

23rd General Assembly of CEMR in Innsbruck

Members of the Policy Committee of CEMR during the presentation on 14 May were presented four cities applying for the right to organize the next General Assembly of CEMR in May 2006. During the opening ceremony **Kari Nenonen**, Mayor of Oulu, handing over CEMR flag to **Ryszard Grobelny**, Mayor of Poznań, said that Innsbruck was going to be the city.

Short descriptions of the candidate cities follow.

ARHUS, a port city by Arhus Bay in eastern part of the Jutland Peninsula, is the second biggest city of Denmark with nearly 300 thousand residents.

History of the city dates back to Viking times. Since 948 it has been a seat to a bishopric (since 1567 – Lutheran). Aarhus was granted the city rights before 1441. During the Reformation its role deteriorated. In the 19th century it regained significance owing to industry, including shipbuilding. Today it is an important trade and industry center. Sectors that are growing include shipbuilding, engineering, metal processing, transportation (railroad engines, for instance), paper, glass, chemical, textile, and food. Aarhus is one of main seaports of Denmark, there are ferry lines to Oslo, Copenhagen, and Kalundborg. The city has a university established in 1928 and a tertiary music school. International and domestic press dubbed Aarhus the best Danish city in organizing congresses and conferences.

TURIN is a big city in northern Italy, at the foothills of the West Alps. From 1861 to 1865 Turin was a capital of the Duchy of Sardinia and Piemonte, currently it is the province's administration center. It is located by Po River. The population is 962 thousand people, and in the whole metro area – 2.3 million. The city is a major industrial as well as culture and science center. Turin has a university founded in 1405, a school of technology, and a number of science institutions. There are numerous production plants of transport means and the city is the headquarters of Fiat. Other well-developed sectors include engineering, metal processing, chemical, and electronics. Turin is an important tourism center: the historical downtown with a Roman layout of streets, is very picturesque, well-preserved, full of charming plazas and tree-shaded boulevards. Besides a Roman gate, remains of a medieval stronghold and a Roman cathedral, almost all of major historical buildings of Turin date back to the 17th and 18th century, when the city

was the duchy's capital. Turin has the biggest congress center in Italy. In 2003 the city will host 20th Winter Olympics.

INNSBRUCK: a city in west Austria, at the foothills of Karwendel massif, by Inn River. Its population is 114 thousand people, it is a capital of Tyrol. It was founded in the 12th century at a crossing through Inn River (hence its name: „Bridge on Inn”). The city rights were granted in 1239.

It is a popular tourism center; globally renowned winter sports place, Winter Olympics of 1964 were organized there. The second biggest congress center in Austria. Dubbed the best conference city in the world. Every year about 400 thousand persons participate in various meetings.

Important communication junction on North-South and East-West routes of Europe. It is a culture and science center, has a university founded in 1669, and a university library – less than a century later.

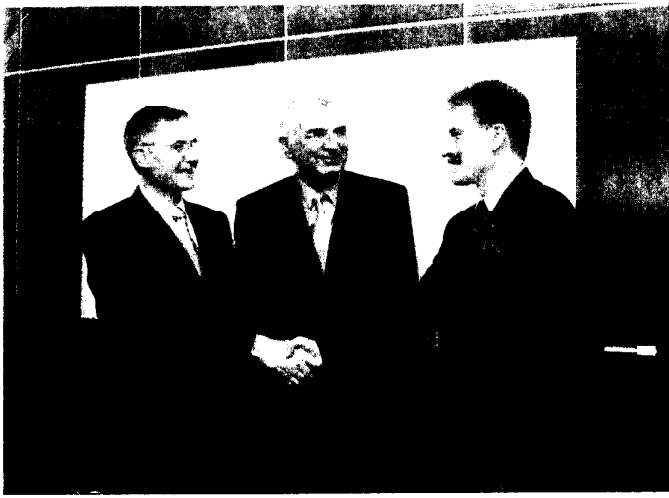
In 1964 the European Council granted the city the European City title. It has 6 twin towns. Every year Innsbruck hosts a ceremony of presenting European Award of Kaiser Maximilian to local and regional politicians.

MALMÖ is a city in southern Sweden, located at Scania Peninsula, by Sund Strait (population 260 thousand). It is the third biggest city in the country. It was founded by Danes in the 12th century, the city rights were granted in 1353. Also in the 14th century the city hall by the Grand Market was built.

Nowadays Malmö is a transit port connecting communication systems of Sweden, Denmark, and Germany. It is an important industry and trade center and one of the biggest ports in the country, the economic crux of southern Sweden.

Malmö is also an important culture center, its Grand Theater with one of the biggest stages in Europe keeps attracting visitors with rich repertoire of opera, ballet, and musicals. It is a multinational city where integration is everyday life. People of over 160 nationalities speak 100 languages.

In the last decade the city witnessed an economic and cultural boom owing to a newly opened university (1998) and a bridge over the Sund Strait connecting Sweden and Denmark. It has actively participated in implementing Agenda 21 and strives for becoming the most integrated, environment-friendly European region.



*Representatives of the twin towns of Szamotuły (Poland) and Tiel (Belgium) at the Congress.
From the left: Jacek Grabowski, Mayor of Szamotuły; Michiel Van Daele, Mayor of Tiel; Marc Seymaeve; Henryk Żłobiński.*



CEMR Political Committee: Dr Heinrich Hoffschulte & Jeremy Smith.



CEMR Political Committee: Tomasz Kayser – Deputy Mayor of Poznań & Dr Hans van der Sluijs, Mayor of Noordwijk (Holland).



Dr Heinrich Hoffschulte & Andrzej Porawski from Association of Polish Cities.