

The Bureau of the Congress

**CG-BUR(2025)68-91<sup>1</sup>**

3 December 2025

## **List of activities with Congress institutional and external partners**

Period covered from 25 May 2024<sup>2</sup> to December 2025

Action required: for information

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<sup>1</sup> This document is classified confidential until it has been examined by the Bureau of the Congress

<sup>2</sup> The Secretary General of the Congress's next-to-last exchange with GR-EXT

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## 1 EUROPEAN ASSOCIATIONS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

### 1.1 Association of European Border Regions (AEBR)

- **On 24-25 October 2024**, the Chair of the Congress Governance Committee, Jelena Drenjanin (Sweden), participated in the **AEBR Annual Conference**, on “Building security and resilience in European border regions”.
- **On 13 November 2025**, Congress Vice-President Andrew Boff, participated in the **European Cross-Border Platform Annual Meeting**, In Gorizia, Italy.

### 1.2 Assembly of European Regions (AER)

*AER has been a Statutory Partner of the Congress since 2017; a Cooperation agreement was signed in 2014. AER SG regularly participates in the Bureau meetings and sessions of the Chamber of Regions.*

- **On 11-14 June 2024**, Congress Vice-President Tunç Soyer participated in the **General Assembly & Bureau Meeting** in Batumi, Georgia.
- **On 12-16 August 2024**, Anna Ramkovic, Youth delegate for Latvia, participated in the **2024 Summer Academy** in Bodø, Norway, hosted by Nordland County Council.
- **On 3 December 2024**, Congress President Marc Cools participated in the **Autumn Bureau Meeting** in Brussels on “High Level Debate on Regions shaping the future of European Agenda”.
- **On 26 March 2025**, the **EU-Belong project**, implemented by the AER, and **Intercultural Regions Network** were inaugurated in the sidelines of the 48<sup>th</sup> Session in Strasbourg.
- **On 26 March 2025**, AER President **Albert Castellanos**, spoke at the 48<sup>th</sup> Session of the Chamber of Regions on “The role of regions in the process of accession and post-accession to the EU”
- **On 17-18 June 2025**, Congress Vice-President Andrew Boff participated in the **General Assembly** (40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary) in Maribor, Slovenia.
- **On 9 November 2025**, Congress President Marc Cools participated in the AER General Assembly (40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary) in Brussels, Belgium.

### 1.3 Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

*CEMR has been a Statutory Partner with the Congress since 10 February 2017. CEMR representatives participate in the Bureau and session meetings of the Chamber of Regions.*

- **On 10 December 2024**, the Secretary General of the Congress participated at the **CEMR Leaders’ Summit**.
- **On 25 March 2025**, Flo Clucas, Chair of the CEMR Standing Committee on Gender Equality spoke on “Violence against women in politics” at the 48<sup>th</sup> Session of the Congress.
- **On 13 October 2025**, Congress President Marc Cools and Congress member Gobnait Ni Mhuimneacain participated in an event on “**The Local Self-Government Charter turns 40: Renewing Democracy in the Digital Age**” jointly organized by the Congress and the CEMR in Brussels. The event was a contribution to the New Democratic Pact for Europe.
- The Local Observatory on Reform Agendas Implementation (**LORAI**) is envisaged as an EU - CoE Joint Programme, to be implemented by the Congress in partnership with the CEMR and NALAS. It is proposed as a strategic initiative to support the Western Balkans’ EU integration and to strengthen local governments’ role in the implementation of the Reform Agendas. Subject to the finalisation of contractual arrangements with the European Union, the Programme is expected to enhance the monitoring of Reform Agendas under the Reform and Growth Facility, reinforce

an inclusive multilevel governance system in the Western Balkans, and promote effective advocacy, knowledge sharing and visibility initiatives.

### **CEMR / EU PLATFORMA**

- On **12 July 2024**, in the framework of the High-Level Political Forum in New York, the Head of the Institutional Partnerships Unit of the Congress participated in the high-level political breakfast “Preparing for the future of the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level” organised by the EU Delegation in New York and the CEMR / PLATFORMA.
- On **17 July 2025**, the Chair of the Congress Committee on Social Inclusion and Human Dignity, Nazia Rehman, participated in the high-level political breakfast “European Territories Localise the SDGs: Getting local SDG actions onto the fast track” organized by the EU Delegation in New York and the CEMR / PLATFORMA in New York.

### **Bilateral meetings**

- On **20 February 2025**, the Secretary General of the Congress met with CEMR SG Fabrizio Rossi, and Federica Bordelot, CEMR Director for Policy and Impact.

#### **1.4 European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA)**

*ALDA has been an Institutional Partner with the Congress since 18 June 2018. ALDA has a co-operation agreement with the Council of Europe from 2002. The first Local Democracy Agency opened in Serbia in 1993 as an idea supported by the Congress; it was created in 1999 at the CoE initiative for coordination and support to the network of Local Democracy Agencies.*

- On **8 October 2024**, the Congress President spoke at the book presentation “30 years of Local Democracy” in Brussels.

### **Bilateral meetings**

- On **19 February 2025**, the Secretary General of the Congress met with ALDA SG Antonella Valmorbidia in Brussels.

#### **1.5 Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS)**

*NALAS has been an Institutional Partner with the Congress since 27 March 2017.*

- On **15 October 2024**, at its 47<sup>th</sup> Session, the Congress held a debate on “Local democracy as a pillar of peace and stability in South-East Europe” marking the **20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of NALAS**. Dušan RAICEVIC, President of NALAS, Mayor of Bar, Montenegro, made a statement.
- On **14 November 2024** in Tirana, Albania, the Congress established a Community of Practice on deliberative democracy, coordinated by NALAS, and composed of 18 local authorities and 7 associations of local authorities from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia, to further promote citizen deliberations and innovative participatory approaches. The Congress guide for local authorities “How to Organise a Deliberative Process at the Local Level?”, was officially introduced during the meeting.
- On **15 April 2025**, Chair of the Governance Committee of the Congress Jelena Drenjanin made an opening address at the **20<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of NALAS** in Varaždin, Croatia.
- **The Local Observatory on Reform Agendas Implementation (LORAI)** is envisaged as an EU -CoE Joint Programme, to be implemented by the Congress in partnership with the CEMR and NALAS. It is proposed as a strategic initiative to support the Western Balkans’ EU integration and to strengthen local governments’ role in the implementation of the Reform Agendas. Subject to the finalisation of contractual arrangements with the European Union, the Programme is expected to enhance the monitoring of reform agendas under the Reform and Growth Facility, reinforce an inclusive multilevel governance system in the Western Balkans, and promote effective advocacy, knowledge sharing and visibility initiatives.

### **1.6 United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)**

- On **11 July 2024**, the Congress Vice-President P Bernd Vöhringer and the Secretary General of the Congress participated in the “**Local and Regional Governments Forum (LRGF) on the 2030 Agenda** “Governing in partnership: powering a Local SDG Rescue Plan”, a special high-level event on the occasion of the 2024 HLPF, organized by the UCLG and the UN.
- On **17-19 October 2024**, Congress Vice-President and spokesperson on European Local Democracy Week and local councillor of Mykonos (Greece), Konstantinos Koukas, spoke at the **23<sup>rd</sup> International Observatory on Participatory Democracy**<sup>3</sup> (IOPD) held in Valongo.
- On **22 July 2025**, Congress Standing and Deputy Standing Rapporteurs on Human Rights Gudrun Mosler-Törnström and Mélanie Lepoutier participated in OHCHR-UCLG meeting on “**Local Governments for Human Rights**”, in Geneva, Switzerland.
- On **16 July 2025**, the Chair of the Congress Committee on Social Inclusion and Human Dignity, Nazia Rehman, spoke at the **Local and Regional Governments Forum on the 2030 Agenda** “A networked multilateralism for present and future generations: Local governments at the heart of the countdown to 2030”, organised jointly by the UN and UCLG on the occasion of the HLPF.

#### **Bilateral meetings**

- On **20 May 2025**, Congress President Cools met with the UCLG SG in Warsaw, Poland, in the sidelines of the OECD Ministerial Meeting.

### **1.7 Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR)**

- On **19 November 2025**, Congress Vice-President and Rapporteur on the New Democratic Pact for Europe Konstantinos Koukas and the Congress Youth Delegate from Lithuania participated in an international seminar “**Stronger Democracy through Multilevel Governance**” jointly organised by the Congress, the CPMR and the Government of Catalonia in Barcelona. The seminar was a contribution to the New Democratic Pact for Europe and was organised as a side event to the 53<sup>rd</sup> CPMR General Assembly.
- On **20 November 2025**, Congress Vice-President and Rapporteur on New Democratic Pact for Europe Konstantinos Koukas, and Congress Director Claudia Luciani, presented the conclusions of the seminar at the **53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly of the CPMR**.

#### **Bilateral meetings**

- On **20 February 2025**, the Secretary General of the Congress met with Davide Strangis, CPMR Acting SG in Brussels.

## **2 EUROPEAN UNION**

### **2.1 European Committee of the Regions (CoR)**

*Congress and CoR cooperate on the basis of a Cooperation Agreement signed in 2015 and revised in 2018.*

- On **16 October 2024**, during the **47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Congress**, CIVEX President Patrick Molinoz participated as a keynote speaker in the debate of the Chamber of Regions on “The role of regions in international co-operation for Ukraine’s recovery and reconstruction”.
- On **13 December 2024**, Congress member Stewart Dickson had an exchange with Stephen de Ron, CIVEX Rapporteur on the Rule of Law and other members of the Commission. The Congress was consulted for the **draft opinion of the European Committee of the Regions**<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Created in 2001 within the framework of the Decentralized Cooperation Projects of the European Commission's URB-AL Program. Since 2006, it has been part of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) as its consultation mechanism on local democracy.

**CIVEX Commission on ‘The local and regional perspective in the implementation of the Rule of Law in the European Union’.** During the exchange, particular emphasis was given to Congress Recommendation 502 (2024) “Local and Regional Authorities as Actors and Guarantors of the Rule of Law”.

- **On 20 January 2025**, Congress President Cools participated in the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership (**CORLEAP**) meeting in Rzeszow, Poland.
- **In February 2025**, the Chair of the Congress Governance Committee, Jelena Drenjanin, participated in the **CoR Plenary meeting** (Adamowicz Award ceremony).
- **On 19-20 February 2025**, the Secretary General of the Congress participated in the **CoR Plenary session**, where the elections of the leadership for the 2025-2030 mandate took place.
- **On 2 April 2025**, the CoR plenary adopted an **urgent resolution** on the Arrest of Turkish Mayors and the Assault on Local Democracy in Türkiye explicitly referring to the **Congress declaration** adopted during the 48<sup>th</sup> Session in March 2025.
- **On 27-28 May 2025**, Congress member Bryony Rudkin participated in the **10<sup>th</sup> Enlargement Day** in Brussels (WG on Türkiye).

## **2.2 Fundamental Rights Agency**

- **On 20 November 2024**, in the framework of the implementation of the Congress Human rights strategy, the Standing Rapporteur for Human Rights and her deputies have conducted a study visit to the **Fundamental Rights Agency** in Vienna.
- **On 31 January 2025**, the Congress Standing Rapporteurs on Human Rights visited the EU Fundamental Rights Agency.

## **2.3 CEMR / PLATFORMA**

- **On 12 July 2024**, in the framework of the High-Level Political Forum in New York, the Head of the Institutional Partnerships Unit of the Congress participated in the high-level political breakfast “Preparing for the future of the Sustainable Development Goals at the local level” organized by the EU Delegation in New York and the CEMR / PLATFORMA.
- **On 17 July 2025**, the Chair of the Congress Committee on Social Inclusion and Human Dignity, Nazia Rehman, participated in the high-level political breakfast “European Territories Localise the SDGs: Getting local SDG actions onto the fast track” organized by the EU Delegation in New York and the CEMR / PLATFORMA in New York.

## **2.4 Other EU**

- **On 5 June 2025**, Congress co-rapporteur on United Nations Second World Summit for Social Development Martine Dieschburg-Nickels participated in the Event “*Social Rights: Building Social Justice and Democratic Stability*” (organised by the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the EU’s European Economic and Social Committee).

## **Bilateral meetings**

- **On 19-20 February 2025** in Brussels, the Secretary General of the Congress held meetings with the Head of Cabinet of the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships.

## **2.5 Projects**

- The Local Observatory on Reform Agendas Implementation (**LORAI**) is envisaged as an EU - CoE Joint Programme, to be implemented by the Congress in partnership with the CEMR and NALAS. It is proposed as a strategic initiative to support the Western Balkans’ EU integration and to strengthen local governments’ role in the implementation of the Reform Agendas. Subject to the finalisation of contractual arrangements with the European Union, the Programme is expected

to enhance the monitoring of Reform Agendas under the Reform and Growth Facility, reinforce an inclusive multilevel governance system in the Western Balkans, and promote effective advocacy, knowledge sharing and visibility initiatives.

### 3 UNITED NATIONS

*The Congress cooperation with the UN focuses on promoting local and regional action in implementing Agenda 2030.*

#### 3.1 UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe)

##### Forum of Mayors and CUDLHM

- **On 30 September 2024**, the Secretary General of the Congress spoke at the UN 4<sup>th</sup> Forum of Mayors in Geneva and welcomed the adoption by the UN General Assembly of the Pact for the Future and the important role of local and regional authorities in delivering a renewed multilateral system. He also welcomed the Forum's Outcome Statement and its call for including local and regional governments directly in the work of the UN. On 14 October 2024, the Congress Bureau endorsed the Outcome Statement of the Forum.
- **On 2 October 2024**, Doris Kampus, Congress rapporteur on Social Housing Innovations, participated in the 85<sup>th</sup> UNECE session of the **Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management** (CUDLHM) in Geneva, notably in the Workshop on Housing Affordability. Her exchanges with partners were helpful for the report to be debated in October 2025.
- **On 6 October 2025**, the Secretary General of the Congress made an opening speech at the UNECE Forum of Mayors in Geneva, Switzerland. This year the Forum, entitled "Cities shaping the Future", focused on good health and well-being (SDG 3); gender equality (SDG 5); decent work and economic growth (SDG 8); Climate finance mechanisms; Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs); and housing-related challenges.
- **On 9 October 2025**, Councillor Linda Gillham, Congress rapporteur, participated in the 86<sup>th</sup> session of the UNECE Committee on Urban Development, Housing and Land Management.

##### Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

- **On 2-3 April 2025**, Vice President Harald Sonderegger and Congress Director Claudia Luciani participated at the **UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development** in Geneva, Switzerland.

#### 3.2 ECOSOC / United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

- **On 25 March 2025**, at the 48<sup>th</sup> Congress Session, the President of ECOSOC, Bob Rae, addressed the Congress members with a video message during the session on the United Nations Second World Summit for Social Development.

##### High-Level Political Forum

- **On 8-12 July 2024**, Congress Vice-President Bernd Vöhringer and the Secretary General of the Congress participated in the United Nations High-Level Political Forum 2024 in New York.
- **On 14-18 July 2025**, the Chair of the Congress Committee on Social Inclusion and Human Dignity, Nazia Rehman and Congress Director Claudia Luciani participated in the United Nations High-Level Political Forum 2025 in New York.

#### 3.3 Human Rights

- **On 20 November 2024**, in the framework of the implementation of the Congress Human Rights strategy, the Standing Rapporteur on Human Rights and her deputies conducted a study visit to **UNESCO** in Paris.

- **On 27 March 2025**, at the 48<sup>th</sup> Congress Session, Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, made a statement during the session on *“Addressing homelessness in towns and cities”*.
- **On 22 July 2025**, Mélanie Lepoutier, Deputy Standing Rapporteur for Human Rights, addressed the joint **OHCHR - UCLG** conference on **“Local governments for human rights”** in Geneva.
- **On 2-5 February 2026**, the Congress will co-organise the **“Human Rights Go Local-What Works” Academy and Conference 2026**, under the lead of the **UNESCO** Chair in Human Rights and Human Security - International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels. **Steering Committee meetings** have been taking place once per month since early September 2025.

### **3.4 World Social Summit**

- **On 6 November 2025**, Congress Vice-President Gunn-Marit Helgesen, in her capacity as the President of the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), presented Congress Recommendation 528 (2025) *“The role of local and regional authorities in protecting and promoting social rights and fostering social development”*, adopted in March 2025, as a Congress contribution to the **UN Second World Summit for Social Development**, at the Summit’s side event *“Why is tripartite social dialogue key to achieve social development and social justice?”*, in Doha, Qatar.

### **Bilateral meetings**

- On **6-7 October 2025**, the Secretary General of the Congress met in Geneva with Curt Garrigan, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (**ESCAP**); Sukaina Al Nasrawi, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (**ESCWA**), and Sofia Calltorp, Director of the Geneva Office and Chief of Humanitarian Action, **UN Women**.

## **4 COOPERATION WITH NON-MEMBER STATES**

### **4.1 Kazakhstan**

- **On 15-17 October, 2024**, a delegation from the Republic of Kazakhstan for the first time participated in the Congress Session.

### **4.2 Morocco**

- In **September 2024**, the Association of Regions of Morocco (ARM), the Moroccan Association of the Presidents of the Councils of Prefectures and Provinces (AMPCPP) and the Moroccan Association of Communal Council Presidents (AMPCC) participated in the Conference of national associations of local and regional authorities organised by the Congress.
- On **25 October 2024**, Rahma Ouazzani Taibi, Deputy Mayor of Rabat in charge of international co-operation, spoke at a debate during the 47<sup>th</sup> Session of the Congress.
- On **19 December 2024**, the Secretary General of the Congress participated in the Second National Conference on Advanced Regionalisation in Tangier, Morocco. Over 1500 participants including local elected representatives from across Morocco and senior officials from international organisations and government attended. In the sidelines of the Conference, the SG met with the Mayor of Rabat; Mayor of Tangier and President of AMPCC; Presidents of the ARM and AMPCPP as well as the Governor in charge of cooperation at the Directorate General for Local Authorities.

## **5 OTHER**

### **5.1 URBAN 20 (G20)**

*The U20 runs parallel to the G20 process; it brings together mayors from G20 cities to inform the discussions of national leaders. Contributions from the U20 are shared with the G20 Presidency and Heads of State, enhancing the role of cities as global economic and political leaders.*

- **On 16-17 November 2024** the **24<sup>th</sup> Edition of the U20** took place in Rio de Janeiro. Congress member Danela Arsovska and the Secretary General of the Congress spoke at the Climate and Youth debates respectively.

### **5.2 OSCE**

- **In October 2024**, the Congress participated in an international election observation mission, held jointly with the European Parliament and the OSCE/ODIHR, to observe the local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **5.3 OECD**

- **On 26 March 2025**, Sean Dougherty, Senior Advisor and Head of Secretariat, OECD Network on Fiscal Relations, spoke at the **48<sup>th</sup> Session of the Chamber of Regions** during the debate on *“Towards a sound regional financial governance”*.
- **On 20 May 2025**, Congress President Marc Cools participated in the OECD Ministerial meeting - Strengthening regional policy for resilient places - in Warsaw, Poland.
- **On 13 October 2025**, Karen Maguire, Senior Counsellor at the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, spoke at the joint event on *“Renewing Democracy in the Digital Age: How can local and regional governments withstand growing political polarisation and public distrust?”* organized by the Congress and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) as contribution to the New Democratic Pact for Europe.
- **On 29 October 2025**, during the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Chamber of Regions, Nadim Ahmad, Deputy Director, Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities, presented the outcomes of the OECD Ministerial Meeting *“Strengthening Regional Policy for Resilient Places”*, which took place in Warsaw in May 2025.

### **5.4 Open Government Partnership (OGP)**

*The Open Government Partnership (OGP) is a partnership of 75 countries and 104 local governments – representing more than two billion people – and thousands of civil society organizations, created in 2011.*

- **On 27-31 May 2024**, during the **Open Gov Week 2024 edition**, the Congress organised the meeting of the **Ukrainian Platform for National – Local Dialogue on open government** on 28 May 2024, which was followed by the Award ceremony of the Second Ukrainian OGP Local Best Practices Competition, and the OpenGov Marathon. A second event gathered local authorities from Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine to discuss experiences, strategies and challenges of inclusive and human-rights approaches within open government local initiatives.
- **On 29 May 2024**, Deputy Standing Rapporteur on Human Rights of the Congress Mélanie Lepoutier attended an online peer exchange meeting uniting local authorities from Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine to share experiences, strategies, and challenges related to promoting inclusivity and a human rights perspective within OGP Local initiatives.

### **5.5 CoE Bank**

*The Congress cooperates with the Bank in the areas of protection of social rights, in particular in combating homelessness and tackling housing crisis with a recognition of the pivotal role of local and regional authorities in addressing these pressing issues.*

- **On 3 December 2024**, Congress member James Moloney attended the Conference **“Addressing Homelessness through Social Investment”** organised by the CoE Development Bank in Strasbourg.

### **5.6 European Commission against Racism and Intolerance**

- **On 3 July 2024**, in Strasbourg, Congress Deputy Standing Rapporteur on Human Rights Mélanie Lepoultier made a statement during the **95<sup>th</sup> Plenary Meeting** of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance.

### **5.7 World Forum for Democracy**

- **On 6-8 November 2024**, the Congress attended the World Forum for Democracy through a delegation comprising six members and three youth delegates. The Congress sponsored the laboratory on **“How can diversity be promoted at local level?”**, moderated by Congress Spokesperson on Youth, Veronique Bertholle. The Congress also contributed to the Forum Talk **“Can We Transcend Divides Through Multi-Level Governance?”**, moderated by Congress Director Claudia Luciani.
- **On 6 November 2025**, the Congress co-organised an **“Ideas Session 2 - Local initiatives to revitalise democracy”** session as part of the World Forum for Democracy taking place on 5-7 November 2025 under the theme **“Democracy in danger: how to revive it?”**. Congress Vice-Presidents Xavier Cadoret and Güneş Pehlivan, Congress Youth Delegates from Malta and Estonia spoke at the panels; general remarks were made by the Secretary General of the Congress Mathieu Mori.