

For the multi-governance in the climate crisis

On April 26 2021 the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities held an online debate in the framework of the World Democracy Forum (WDF) on the need to bring local and regional expertise in the fight against global warming to the national and international level.

The expertise of local and regional authorities in policies to combat global warming is invaluable and indispensable in formulating national and international policies that take into account the realities on the ground. This explains the Congress' commitment to support cooperation between various levels of governance in the elaboration of a sustainable development strategy considering local democracy and citizens' aspirations.

The moderator of the debate, Jean-Pierre Liouville, the regional councillor of the Grand Est region and the French member of the Congress (SOC/V/DP), opened the discussion by insisting on the need to systematically adjust the climate strategies adopted at higher levels to the local context. This explains the importance of ongoing dialogue and coordination between these different levels of governance, but also the importance of such initiatives, as the Covenant of Mayors for Climate Action, making actions taken at the local level more visible.

The cooperation of mayors within associations, such as the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP) created in October 2020, appears to be a guarantee of strengthening the dialogue between local, national and international authorities. The Mayor of Vila-real and the member of the FEMP, José Benlloch Fernandez, the Spanish member of Congress (SOC/V/DP), underlined the Federation's commitment to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the UN Agenda 2030. The Federation defends a "holistic approach" that addresses demographic, energy, food, and democratic issues at the same time.

The intervention of Gunn Marit Helgesen, the Vice-President of the Congress (EPP/CCE) and the Vice-President of the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, confirmed the importance of this type of organisation for the consolidation of dialogue between different levels of political governance. The authorities must also involve representatives of academia, business, and civil society. Within the framework of the financial mechanism for sustainable development, the Norwegian government cooperates with the local level and the specialised industrial sector, notably in projects such as the operation of 200 CO₂-free ferries. As part of the UN's Agenda 2030, Norway's voluntary national review combines consideration of the implementation of the SDGs at the local and regional level.

Many municipalities have realised the need to foster the development of resilient cities. This is the example of Freiburg im Breisgau in Germany, whose mayor Martin Horn underlined that the Covid-19 crisis provided an extraordinary opportunity to go much further in creating a "green and digital Europe", which will be resilient to future crises.

Yet if the EU has set a goal to achieve a carbon-neutral economy by 2050, the participation of municipalities and regions is crucial. Vasco Cordeiro, the First Vice President of the European Committee of the Regions and the member of the Commission for the Environment, Climate Change and Energy, Portugal (SOC/V/DP), shared the experience of the EU Green Deal Working Group, created within the European Committee of the Regions in May 2020. Chaired by the Mayor of Seville, in 2021 this group's main objective is to make the voice of regions and municipalities heard in the European Commission and Parliament, especially during the legislative process.

The European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA) working at the international level also plays a key role in promoting local environmental initiatives. The member of the Association, Natasa Vuckovic (Serbia), has presented a series of projects showing the interconnectedness of the climate issues with democracy, migration and nutrition issues. Being active mainly at the local level in the European Union ALDA insists on the need to involve other European countries and build partnerships for implementing successful activities in this sense.

At the end of a series of interventions from the audience, Vladimir Prebilič, the spokesperson of the Congress on Climate Change and Environment and the Mayor of Kocevje in Slovenia (SOC/V/DP), concluded that there is a real momentum for climate change at the European level, especially among the youth and local authorities, whose participation in environmental policies will ensure a more democratic green transition close to the citizens.

- [Congress Participation to the WFD "12 Months, 1 Question" campaign \(coe.int\)](#)
- [Programme of the round table event of 26 April 2021](#)
- [Leaflet of the round table event of 26 April 2021](#)

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