



**10 YEARS  
OF PLATFORMA**  
10 YEARS OF ACTION!



# MAP OF PLATFORMA'S PARTNERS 2008 - 2018

## EUROPEAN NETWORKS

### AEBR

Association of European border regions

[www.aebr.eu/en](http://www.aebr.eu/en)

Partner from 2009 to 2016

### AER

Assembly of European regions

[www.aer.eu](http://www.aer.eu)

Partner from 2009 to 2013

### CEMR

Council of European municipalities and regions

[www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)

Partner from 2009

### CPMR

Conference of peripheral maritime regions of Europe

[www.cpmr.org](http://www.cpmr.org)

Partner from 2009 to 2018

## GLOBAL NETWORKS

### AIMF

International association of French-speaking mayors

[www.aimf.asso.fr](http://www.aimf.asso.fr)

Partner from 2009

### CLGF

Commonwealth local government forum

[www.clgf.org.uk](http://www.clgf.org.uk)

Partner from 2011

### ORU-FOGAR

United regions organisation

[www.regionsunies-fogar.org](http://www.regionsunies-fogar.org)

Partner from 2011 to 2016

### UCLG

United cities and local governments

[www.uclg.org](http://www.uclg.org)

Partner from 2009



## NATIONAL AND SUB-NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

### 1 AEXCID

Extremadura Agency for International Cooperation for Development

[www.juntaex.es/aexcid](http://www.juntaex.es/aexcid)

Partner from 2018

### 2 AFCCRE

French association of the Council of European municipalities and regions

[www.afccre.org](http://www.afccre.org)

Partner from 2009

### 3 AICCRE

Italian association of the Council of European municipalities and regions

[www.aiccre.it](http://www.aiccre.it)

Partner from 2009

### 4 AMR

Association of municipalities from Romania

[www.amr.ro/ro](http://www.amr.ro/ro)

Partner from 2009 to 2017

### 5 ANCI

National association of Italian municipalities

[www.anci.it](http://www.anci.it)

Partner from 2015

### 6 ANMP

National association of Portuguese municipalities

[www.anmp.pt](http://www.anmp.pt)

Partner from 2009 to 2011

### 7 AUC

Association of Ukrainian cities

[www.auc.org.ua/en](http://www.auc.org.ua/en)

Partner from 2015

### 8 CALM

Congress of local authorities from Moldova

[www.calm.md](http://www.calm.md)

Partner from 2015

### 9 CUF

United Cities France

[www.cites-unies-france.org](http://www.cites-unies-france.org)

Partner from 2009

### 10 ELL

Association of Estonian cities

[www.ell.ee](http://www.ell.ee)

Partner from 2015

### 11 FEMP

Spanish Federation of municipalities and provinces

[www.femp.es](http://www.femp.es)

Partner from 2009

### 12 KDZ

KDZ - Centre for public administration research

[www.kdz.eu](http://www.kdz.eu)

Partner from 2015



## LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

- 25 Bucharest 2**  
City of Bucharest - Sector 2  
[bucurestiul.info/harta-sector-2/](http://bucurestiul.info/harta-sector-2/)  
Partner from 2009 to 2013
- 26 DIBA**  
Province of Barcelona  
[www.diba.cat](http://www.diba.cat)  
Partner from 2011
- 27 Euskal Fondoa**  
Basque Fund: Association of cooperating Basque local entities  
[www.euskalfondoa.org](http://www.euskalfondoa.org)  
Partner from 2013
- 28 FAMSI**  
Andalusian fund of municipalities for international solidarity  
[www.andaluciasolidaria.org](http://www.andaluciasolidaria.org)  
Partner from 2017
- 29 Fons Mallorquí**  
Majorcan fund for solidarity and cooperation  
[www.fonsmallorqui.org/ca](http://www.fonsmallorqui.org/ca)  
Partner from 2015
- 30 GENCAT**  
Autonomous community of Catalonia  
[www.gencat.cat](http://www.gencat.cat)  
Partner from 2013
- 31 Grand Lyon**  
Metropole of Lyon  
[www.grandlyon.com](http://www.grandlyon.com)  
Partner from 2009 to 2016
- 32 Nantes Métropole**  
Metropole of Nantes  
[www.nantesmetropole.fr](http://www.nantesmetropole.fr)  
Partner from 2013
- 33 Paris**  
City of Paris  
[www.paris.fr](http://www.paris.fr)  
Partner from 2009
- 34 Région Sud**  
Region of South-Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur  
[www.maregionsud.fr](http://www.maregionsud.fr)  
Partner from 2013
- 35 Rome**  
City of Rome  
[www.comune.roma.it](http://www.comune.roma.it)  
Partner from 2009 to 2011
- 36 Stuttgart**  
City of Stuttgart  
[www.stuttgart.de](http://www.stuttgart.de)  
Partner from 2011 to 2013
- 37 Regione Toscana**  
Region of Tuscany  
[www.regione.toscana.it](http://www.regione.toscana.it)  
Partner from 2011
- 13 KEDE**  
Central union of municipalities of Greece  
[www.kedke.gr](http://www.kedke.gr)  
Partner from 2009 to 2013
- 14 LALRG**  
Latvian association of local and regional governments  
[www.lps.lv/en](http://www.lps.lv/en)  
Partner from 2011
- 15 LBSNN**  
National town-twinning council Netherlands-Nicaragua  
Partner from 2017
- 16 LGA**  
Local government association  
[www.local.gov.uk](http://www.local.gov.uk)  
Partner from 2009 to 2013
- 17 LSA**  
Association of local authorities in Lithuania  
[www.lsa.lt/en](http://www.lsa.lt/en)  
Partner from 2017
- 18 NALAG**  
National association of local authorities of Georgia  
[www.nala.ge/en](http://www.nala.ge/en)  
Partner from 2015
- 19 RGRE**  
German section of the Council of European municipalities and regions  
[www.rgre.de](http://www.rgre.de)  
Partner from 2013 to 2016
- 20 SKL**  
Swedish association of local authorities and regions  
[www.skl.se](http://www.skl.se)  
Partner from 2009 to 2016
- 21 SMO ČR**  
Union of towns and municipalities of the Czech Republic  
[www.smocr.cz](http://www.smocr.cz)  
Partner from 2015
- 22 VNG International**  
Cooperation agency of the Association of Netherlands municipalities  
[www.vng-international.nl](http://www.vng-international.nl)  
Partner from 2009
- 23 VVSG**  
Association of Flemish cities and municipalities  
[www.vvsg.be](http://www.vvsg.be)  
Partner from 2013
- 24 ZMOS**  
Association of towns and communities of Slovakia  
[www.zmos.sk](http://www.zmos.sk)  
Partner from 2015

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>CONCORD</b>	European NGO Confederation of Relief and Development
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organisations
<b>DECENTRALISED COOPERATION</b>	<i>It consists of development cooperation between sub-national governments from the European Union and partner countries</i>
<b>DG DEVCO</b>	European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EP</b>	European Parliament
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EuropeAid</b>	see <i>DG DEVCO</i>
<b>IULA</b>	International Union of Local Authorities
<b>MEP</b>	Member of the European Parliament
<b>NDICI</b>	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
<b>NSA/LA</b>	Programme " <i>Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development</i> "
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNCED</b>	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
<b>UTO</b>	United Towns Organisation or <i>Fédération mondiale des villes jumelées</i>
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals

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Deputy Mayor of Paris **Pierre Schapira** speaking at the formal launch of PLATFORMA during the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the European Development Days in Strasbourg in November 2008.



## CHAPTER 1

# FROM WORLD WAR II TO THE CREATION OF PLATFORMA

## A. A BIT OF HISTORY

### 1. THE GLOBAL ROLE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

At the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in response to the pre-war atmosphere of growing nationalism, local leaders met in Ghent (Belgium) to create the first union of town and cities: the **International Union of Local Authorities** or IULA<sup>1</sup>. Its aim was to create links between cities calling for peace and cooperation.

After World War II, in 1951, mayors from seven western European countries<sup>2</sup> founded the **Council of European Municipalities** (which later also welcomed regional associations and became the **Council of European Municipalities and Regions**, CEMR) in Geneva (Switzerland). Its first Congress was held in 1953 in Versailles (France) and sought to foster reconciliation to pave the way towards a United Europe built on full recognition of local self-government.

In 1957, the **United Towns Organisation** (UTO)<sup>3</sup> was established to encourage cooperation between local governments from all parts of the world in reaction to the effective partitioning of the world into two blocs. International cooperation for peace constituted the core of the activities of these international organisations.

Following the two world wars, which left the old continent destroyed, town twinning between cities developed as an instrument for dialogue between European populations who had been enemies for years.

This movement led to the growing recognition of the role that local and regional governments could play in shaping the international policies of major international institutions, both in Europe and beyond.

In 1992, the **United Nations Conference on Environment and Development** (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) heralded

a new era for local governments in the world. At this Rio Earth Summit, 178 central governments adopted the Agenda 21, a non-binding United Nations action plan for sustainable development that called on local authorities to promote a consensus among their local populations on a local agenda.

In June 1996, at the Habitat II Conference held in Istanbul (Turkey), the international community recognised, in the Final Declaration adopted as a new action plan to realise sustainable human settlements, that local governments are *"the closest partners [of national governments] in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda"*<sup>4</sup>.

This was the start of an international debate on global sustainable development for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which culminated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit being held in 2015, where more than 150 world leaders adopted the new **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, including **17 Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs)<sup>5</sup>.

While these outcomes show the international community's acknowledgement of the growing role of local governments, European local government organisations have begun advocating for specific support from the European Commission for international cooperation activities led by cities and regions, thus reinforcing their own cooperation and capacity to speak with a united voice.

In 2004, the two world organisations, IULA and UTO, merged into one global organisation, **United Cities and Local Governments** (UCLG), under the leadership of the Mayor of Paris, **Bertrand Delanoë**, with 4,000 local representatives from all over the world.

<sup>1</sup> The International Union of Local Authorities was founded in Ghent (Belgium) in 1913, with headquarters in The Hague (Netherlands).

<sup>2</sup> Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Switzerland.

<sup>3</sup> The UTO (or *Fédération mondiale des villes jumelées*) was established in 1957 in Aix-les-Bains (France), with headquarters in Paris.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/istanbul-declaration.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>

## 2. THE SCHAPIRA REPORT

The enthusiasm generated by the creation of a singular and strong world organisation, together with the support of some national associations, encouraged CEMR to set up a working group for North-South cooperation made up of representatives of national associations involved in development cooperation. Buoyed by the efforts of this working group chaired by the **Association of Netherlands Municipalities** (VNG), CEMR took the initiative of bringing together all the partners interested in development cooperation<sup>6</sup>. It launched its action by asking the European Commission to create a European instrument supporting cooperation links between European and non-European cities and municipalities<sup>7</sup>.

As a result of this work, **Pierre Schapira**, then-Deputy Mayor of Paris in charge of international relations and Member of the European Parliament (MEP), presented a report on "local authorities and development cooperation"<sup>8</sup> to the European Parliament (EP). This report, approved by the EP in 2007, called for the creation of a European programme to support local government projects for development cooperation. He insisted that local governments are "means of dialogue between central government and local communities" and have "essential expertise in the urban sector".

**“Cities have an expertise, a know-how in certain areas, which they alone can bring to the table.”**

Pierre Schapira

The European Commission understood the importance of this movement. Following **Pierre Schapira's** report to the European Parliament, the EU decided to allocate a part of the programme dedicated to Non-State Actors in development cooperation to include local authorities as well. The EU programming for 2007-2013 established the programme "Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development" (NSA/LA) with a total budget of €1.6 billion, around 30 million of which has been allocated to local governments each year.

In response to this new programme, the working group for North-South cooperation decided to restructure itself to better keep up with the evolution of the programme, and to act as a consultative body to the European Commission. This was the birth of PLATFORMA, the pan-European coalition of local and regional governments and their associations active in development cooperation.



**Pierre Schapira** was the Deputy Mayor of **Paris** from 2001 to 2014, responsible for international relations and Francophone matters<sup>9</sup>. In 2004, he was elected Member of the European Parliament. Mr Schapira has always been a very effective player and promoter of international cooperation, both as Deputy Mayor of Paris and within international organisations like UCLG or AIMF<sup>10</sup>. He was PLATFORMA's spokesperson from 2008 to 2014, representing the local level, while **Carles Llorens Vila**, Director General of Development Cooperation at the **Generalitat de Catalunya** (2011-2014)<sup>11</sup>, represented the regional level.

*"PLATFORMA was created as a result of the initiative report that I wrote. In my report, **I requested funding for local authorities' actions in support of development**. Up until that time, EU funding only took non-governmental organisations (NGOs) into consideration. I also asked that there be a coordination of local authorities, as had been the case of CONCORD<sup>12</sup> for NGOs.*

*I believed NGOs did their work very well. That said, **there were certain things which only local authorities could achieve** and which fell to them. There was an added value to what they could contribute. Cities have an expertise, a know-how in certain areas, which they alone can bring to the table. When we build a healthcare centre or an AIDS clinic in Abidjan or Ouagadougou, it is a tangible result that clearly demonstrates to everyone that development cooperation is worthwhile. Of course, we do often work with NGOs as well!*

*There is a concept to which I am particularly attached: that of city diplomacy! **I always tend to think that an elected city representative has the same problems as an elected official in another city**, whether in the north or south, be they rich or poor, large or small. In a city, the mayor and elected officials have to concern themselves with the water supply, roads, transport, schools, nurseries, pollution and parks. All mayors have to take care of these things. It is for this reason that mayors and elected representatives all around the world can understand each other, share their difficulties and convey to others what has worked well for them."*

<sup>9</sup> International Organisation of the Francophonie

<sup>10</sup> AIMF is the International Association of Francophone Mayors or Association internationale des maires francophones, <http://www.aimf.asso.fr/>

<sup>11</sup> Carles Llorens Vila is now Secretary General of ORU-Fogar, the United Regions Organization, [www.regionsunies-fogar.org/en](http://www.regionsunies-fogar.org/en)

<sup>12</sup> CONCORD is the European NGO Confederation of Relief and Development, <https://concordeurope.org/>

<sup>6</sup> Transnational, as well as national and regional organisations, representing local and regional governments active in development cooperation, or "decentralised cooperation".

<sup>7</sup> This was inspired by the already existing Town Twinning programme in the European Union

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2007-0039+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>



# B. THE CREATION OF PLATFORMA

## 1. ITS LAUNCH AT THE EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS 2008

As one of the founding acts of the coalition, the assembled partners decided to submit a project to the European Commission under the framework of Objective 3 of the NSA/LA programme (strengthening the coordination of non-state actor and local authority networks in EU and acceding countries and enhancing the communication between these networks<sup>13</sup>), aiming to bolster their European coordination and to represent a united voice for local authorities before the European Commission.

The project was accepted by the European Commission as a way to support the activities of the “Informal Platform of local and regional authorities for development cooperation” starting in January 2009.

<sup>13</sup> The two other objectives of the NSA/LA programme were: promoting an inclusive and empowered society in partner countries that will facilitate non-state actor and local authority participation in poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies (Objective 1); raising awareness of development issues and providing development education in the EU and acceding countries (Objective 2)



**Jeremy Smith** was Secretary General of the **Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)** from 2002 to 2009, and also led the **International Union of Local Authorities (IULA)** through a politically complex merger to launch the global organisation, **United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG)**, in 2004. Before that, he was Chief Executive of the London Borough of Camden (1990-1996) and Director of the Local Government International Bureau (LGIB, 1996-2002).

*“I think creating PLATFORMA was probably the hardest task I ever confronted in my 8 years as CEMR Secretary General! It was not that anyone objected to the general goals of the network – and creating a united “voice” towards the European institutions was always a shared mission – but **for the first time we were bringing together different types of bodies**, ranging from individual cities to international associations, with different outlooks and – to be frank – at times conflicting interests.*

*At the time, we all felt, I think, that the positive role in development to be played at regional and local levels was still under-appreciated. So, the step was taken, informally at the outset, to bring together all the main actors on our side to try to agree on the basic ground rules for what was to become “PLATFORMA”. This involved a unique grouping of all the main European and international associations of local and regional government who wanted to take part, plus those national*

*associations active in development cooperation work, plus a group of cities who likewise played a strong role. **The explicit aim was to create a network to share information and good practice, and to lobby for support for our sector’s contribution.***

*Local and regional government had been involved to some extent in international cooperation work for decades. This ranged from twinning- and partnership-related activities to nationally funded programmes in some countries, though with lots of variation between the different national models. In some cases, local government associations themselves managed the programme. There were then the European regional government associations, such as the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR), which saw that many countries were creating, or already had, equivalent “regional” structures through which valuable programmes could be organised. The Francophone Mayors association (AIMF) and the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) also provided scope, within their remit, for active local governments. Last but not least, UCLG as a global organisation for local government was also looking to enhance its role in development cooperation. So, the time was right for our sector to play a stronger role. And **I pay tribute to the PLATFORMA partners – nearly everyone stayed involved and we worked through the differences and contradictions and created the necessary compromises.***

The new coalition, PLATFORMA, was formally launched during the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the European Development Days held in Strasbourg on Sunday, 16 November 2008, with three main objectives:

- Firstly, to allocate the flow of information, the exchange of experiences and best practices, and to prepare common positions;
- Secondly, to facilitate the dialogue between local/regional governments and the other partners of the EU's thematic programme for Non-State Actors and Local Authorities (mainly NGOs);

- Thirdly, to bring together European and national associations of local and regional governments, as well as towns active in north/south cooperation, to be able to present one voice towards the European institutions.

These priorities were set to answer to the main needs that the different European, national, and international associations, as well as cities and regions, had identified as the primary challenges for them to become full players in development cooperation. PLATFORMA's role was, in this context, to coordinate their actions and their voices but also to help them to be better informed and to build common positions to be presented to the European Commission and the EU in general.



## 2. THE PARTNERS: ASSOCIATIONS, BUT ALSO CITIES AND REGIONS

From 19 in 2009 to 32 partners today<sup>14</sup>, the PLATFORMA partners represented from the start the diversity of "decentralised cooperation" players<sup>15</sup>:

**National associations of local and regional governments**, members of CEMR, are very active and have supported the initiative strongly, such as the **Association of Netherlands Municipalities** (VNG) and its international branch **VNG International** and its executive director **Peter Knip**, who is an advocate of strong cooperation, and the French and Italian sections of CEMR (**AFCCRE** and **AICCRE**), the **Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces** (FEMP), the **Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities** (VVSG), to name a few, as well as **United Cities France** (CUF)<sup>16</sup>.

**International networks of local and regional governments** including the **International Association of Francophone Mayors** (AIMF), the **Commonwealth Local Government Forum** (CLGF) and **United Cities Local Governments** (UCLG) are key allies, especially regarding the global agenda<sup>17</sup>. **UCLG**, the world organisation of local governments, has been amplifying the voice of local governments from all over the world through its political leadership from the start of its activities, and has contributed great expertise through its team and political commitment.

**Regional governments** have always been very active within PLATFORMA. Regions and their associations have included specific issues of interest on PLATFORMA's agenda, such as rural

development, food security and in particular the territorial approach to local development.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, some **towns, cities and metropolitan areas** also have a strong international vocation, contributing their own significant input, for example, the **City of Paris** where another very active Deputy Mayor, **Patrick Klugman**, has been following in the footsteps of his predecessor, **Pierre Schapira**. The **Metropolitan Area of Lyon, Rome, Stuttgart**, the **Province of Barcelona, Bucharest** (District 2) and the **Metropolitan Area of Nantes** are other such cases.

PLATFORMA has become a dynamic network of partners. Some of the founding partners have become less involved over time, but many are still engaged and have contributed to the success of the coalition. New partners have been joining the coalition every year.

<sup>14</sup> At least four more partners are willing to join or rejoin the coalition for the period 2019-2021.

<sup>15</sup> Decentralised cooperation consists of development cooperation between sub-national governments from the European Union and partner countries.

<sup>16</sup> Cités Unies France is a federation of local governments which brings together municipalities, intermunicipal structures, departments and regions active in international cooperation (<http://www.cites-unies-france.org/>).

<sup>17</sup> All of them have also signed Framework Partnership Agreements with the European Commission for the period 2015-2020 (see page 14)

<sup>18</sup> The territorial approach to local development (TALD) is a policy framework providing the key ingredients to translate decentralisation reforms into development outcomes (<https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/article/what-territorial-approach-local-development>).





**Peter Knip** has dedicated his career to strengthening local governance worldwide, whether through local peacebuilding programmes in Eastern Europe or the Middle East, international cooperation between municipalities or international programmes for the capacity-building of local governments. Since 1989, he has been Director of **VNG International**, the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities.

*"The creation of PLATFORMA has been a crucial step in getting the EU recognition, both for the potential strengths of the local government sector in developing countries, and for the specific role European local governments and their associations can play in international cooperation and development.*

*Having been part of the movement of local governments, often based on citizen initiatives, in the 1980s and 1990s, I was always disappointed that the non-governmental development organisations were always able to express their case to the EU much better through CONCORD, while we, as the local government sector, did not have such a platform. Even worse, in the beginning local governments were seen by the EU as part of the non-governmental groupings and their specific status as public entities was not recognised.*

*Yet, PLATFORMA has achieved a lot. With **Pierre Schapira** playing an important role in the European Parliament, **we succeeded in influencing the policies of the EU**, which resulted in important [European Commission] Communications that reflected the growing recognition of local government potential in the field of development. **We have been able to observe a burgeoning partnership between the different local government associations and cities in Europe** who are active in the international arena. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of European development assistance, from the perspective of the local government sector in the EU partner countries, is still underdeveloped."*



Elected Secretary General of **CEMR** in 2009, **Frédéric Vallier** understood immediately the importance of bringing all the relevant players together to support development cooperation under PLATFORMA. Thanks to his commitment, the work of PLATFORMA has grown to become a major discussion partner of the EU and international institutions.

*"Within ten years, what PLATFORMA has accomplished is far more than just being the coalition of players involved in development cooperation, it has demonstrated unmistakably that **Development policies cannot be fragmented but need to be integrated**. Europe is by far the foremost international contributor to development, but if we want to contribute real added value, we need to work in partnership with the European Union, the Member States, local and regional governments and Civil Society Organisations.*

*In a world of such uncertainty, the European added value of PLATFORMA lies in its capacity to support all players and **promote capacity-building as close as possible to the people**. In the years to come, more than ever we will need to be united to confront the rise of nationalism and scepticism everywhere in the world.*

*As Europeans, we are sometimes seen as former colonialists and lesson givers. It is important that a true form of cooperation be established with our partners outside Europe rather than merely exporting our model and that instead help be given so that they can define their own model of development, local democracy and respect for individual liberties, human rights and equality.*

*This can only be achieved through coalitions like PLATFORMA, which **can help to build up trust between all players**. Moreover, there is a need for confidence: confidence that the world we are building together for the next generations will not be based on ignorance of the past, nor on repentance, but will be based on the wish to build a world of true equality and respect between humans."*



### 3. FROM THE STRUCTURED DIALOGUE TO THE POLICY FORUM ON DEVELOPMENT

In 2008, at the same time that PLATFORMA was being created, the European Commission adopted a Communication on “Local Authorities, actors for development”<sup>19</sup>, which recognised the role played by local governments in global development but failed to grasp the opportunity to address the issue jointly.

In March 2010, the European Commission launched a consultative process (or “Structured Dialogue”) on the participation of local governments and civil society in European external cooperation. Five players were invited to take part in this Dialogue: the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Member States, civil society organisations, and local governments. Towns and regions were represented by PLATFORMA, together with stakeholders from partner countries<sup>20</sup>.

The final objective of this Structured Dialogue was to ensure improvements in the partnership between civil society and local governments with regard to European programming. PLATFORMA’s secretariat and partners enhanced cooperation with **CONCORD**, the umbrella organisation of European NGOs; but other entities such as universities, trade unions or foundations also had a seat at the table. All of these players had multiple objectives and ways of working and expressed different views. Although all of them believed that local governments played an important role, they were wary that the support given to local governments through a programme originally dedicated to civil society would dilute the amount of resources available amongst the large number of stakeholders. The dialogue also introduced a new debate at European level: the fundamental importance of decentralisation as an element *sine qua non* for democracy. This new approach was supported not only by PLATFORMA, but also by CONCORD and its Executive Director at the time, **Olivier Consolo**.

In 2011, the European Commission replaced the Structured Dialogue with the Policy Forum on Development. The PLATFORMA partners

supported the establishment of this new form of consultation, considering it fundamental that there continue to be leeway for dialogue with civil society organisations and the European Commission. PLATFORMA succeeded in ensuring that the Policy Forum would be co-chaired by civil society organisations and local governments. An alternating system was put in place whereby partners of PLATFORMA represented local governments at the Policy Forum together with representatives from partner countries.

Encouraged by its growing recognition, PLATFORMA started contributing to the general debate on development cooperation by promoting good practices and participating in international fora on water, urban issues, climate change, etc.

In view of the new EU programming period for 2014-2020, the European Commission announced the publication of a new Communication on the role of civil society organisations. PLATFORMA’s partners all worked together towards procuring a consultation and a Communication for local governments as well. As a result, a series of consultations were opened, during which all the partners of PLATFORMA were invited to share their views. This resulted in the publication in 2013 of the Communication “Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes”<sup>21</sup>, adopted by the European Council the same year. Local governments were once again recognised as major players for development and good governance. It was a substantial step forward for PLATFORMA and a signal of the beginning of a new phase.

<sup>19</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/lexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0626:FIN:EN:PDF>.

<sup>20</sup> “EuropeAid implements programmes and projects around the world, wherever assistance is needed”, [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/countries-territories-and-regions-where-we-are-active\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/countries-territories-and-regions-where-we-are-active_en)

<sup>21</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-local-authorities-in-partner-countries-com2013280-20130515\\_en\\_4.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/communication-local-authorities-in-partner-countries-com2013280-20130515_en_4.pdf)



The first regional meeting "Europe" of the Policy Forum on Development took place in Ghent (Belgium) on 15-16 January 2018.



**Angelo Baglio** was the Head of Unit in charge of Civil Society and Local Authorities in the **European Commission** at the time of the Structured Dialogue and the creation of the Policy Forum on Development.

*"Since its creation, PLATFORMA has worked to unify the voice of European local governments. This unique representation at the level of the EU's bodies has certainly helped to make the importance of the different roles they play in the field of international development more perceptible and better understood – but this is not its only benefit.*

*Owing to PLATFORMA's actions, **the EU now better understands that European local authorities are fundamental public actors** who, by their own specificities, address the needs of their counterparts in the partner countries. Indeed, European cities and regions have to manage similar issues regarding local life: nurturing local democracy, good governance or providing quality basic services to citizens. They also have to deal with the same problems: climate change, economic and social questions or migration crises. European local authorities are familiar with these issues as they are called on to confront them daily and are therefore well-suited to come up with answers for their own territories, which can then be shared with their counterparts in partner countries, most notably by exchanging experiences and transferring best practices, without overlooking financial support!*

**The creation of PLATFORMA generated a lot of enthusiasm not only in the local government sector but also elsewhere.** Within the European bodies and EuropeAid<sup>22</sup> in particular, PLATFORMA's establishment coincided with the advent of a new synergy in the structured dialogue with numerous civil society actors. From the start, PLATFORMA was present to organise the European participation of these dialogues that involved almost all of the local authority networks and platforms from Europe as well as from other regions of the world.

*This process led to a number of meetings and beneficial discussions, the results of which were published by the European Commission in its 2013 Communication "Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes". It is this impetus that resulted in the EU's pluriannual financial framework for the 2014-2020 period showing a notable increase in the budget dedicated to local authorities and then, later in 2015, PLATFORMA signing an agreement of strategic partnership with the European Commission that defined shared objectives until 2020."*

<sup>22</sup> This is another name for the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)



## 4. THE NEW ERA OF THE FRAMEWORK PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

Thus, the European Commission decided to establish a new partnership with organisations that play a fundamental role in supporting decentralised international development cooperation. In January 2015, through its Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development, the European Commission signed with **CEMR** (representing PLATFORMA) and four other stakeholders (**AIMF**, **CLGF**, **UCLG**, and **UCLG Africa**) the new Framework Partnership Agreements<sup>23</sup> for the period 2015-2020.

What the Framework Partnership Agreement signified for PLATFORMA was a concrete recognition of the efforts and of

the crucial role the coalition plays in promoting international development and cooperation towards and through European local and regional governments.

It encourages local and regional governments and their associations to contribute to the empowerment of local and regional governments in EU partner countries, based on the European conviction regarding the importance of local development and local democracy, which has remained at the forefront of every action since the **European Charter of Local Self-Government** was adopted by the Council of Europe in 1985<sup>24</sup>.



According to the **Framework Partnership Agreement** signed by PLATFORMA, the coalition pursues the following joint objectives with the European Commission:

- Promoting local democracy, good governance, human rights and the rule of law, sustainable development and poverty reduction to meet the demands and needs of all members of local communities, including vulnerable groups;
- Promoting the principle of subsidiarity, including clarity of the rule and responsibility of different spheres of government and strengthening the partnership between them for effective decentralisation;
- Empowering citizens' participation in public life and consequently increasing the scrutiny, transparency and accountability of local authorities;
- Encouraging the balanced participation and representation of women and men in leadership and decision-making at local level;
- Supporting empowered local and regional governments and their associations in view of enhancing the capacity and means to execute their institutional mandate as defined by law and consequently to exercise their power of initiative as full-fledged policy-makers, even in the face of rapid urbanisation and risk-prone situations.



As a result of the Framework Partnership Agreement with the European Commission, PLATFORMA was able to inaugurate a new spirit of collaboration between the players of decentralised cooperation. This has been a crucial step for many organisations, some of which had never worked together before but which consequently, thanks to the will of dedicated leaders, decided to cooperate within this new circle to bring forth the unique voice of local and regional governments involved in development cooperation.

<sup>23</sup> Framework Partnership Agreements bring with them commitment and value for both the signing partners and the European Commission by framing joint objectives and conditions of cooperation and support under a multi-annual legal agreement, which may be accompanied by financial support in order to achieve joint objectives.

<sup>24</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/168007a088>



## CHAPTER 2

# 2008-2018: TEN YEARS OF PLATFORMA ACTIONS AND SUCCESSES

## A. PROMOTING DECENTRALISED CO-OPERATION AND RAISING AWARENESS ON DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

### 1. THE ADDED VALUES OF DECENTRALISED CO-OPERATION

The core of the action of PLATFORMA is decentralised cooperation, which had to prove its capacity before gaining recognition by the international community as an effective form of international development cooperation, focusing on reinforcing local and regional governments.

Twinning links were the first form of decentralised cooperation whereby municipalities started to cooperate to enhance cultural exchanges in view of building a lasting peace after World War II, in support of the idea of a United Europe.

In the 1990s, the twinning movement opened up to the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe, and to new ways of cooperation, with municipalities exchanging experiences and know-how. New programmes were launched by the European Commission in order to facilitate cooperation between the municipalities of Western Europe (the Pacte Programme established in 1989) and between Western and Eastern municipalities (the ECHOS programme in 1993).

In 1998, at the initiative of Dr. **Erich Pramböck** (1941-2009), Secretary General of the **Austrian Association of Cities and Towns** (ÖeStB), together with the **Council of European Municipalities and Regions** (CEMR), an active network of national associations of local and regional governments from Central and Eastern Europe was created, marking the renewal of decentralised cooperation within Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Supported by the European

Commission, the project LOGON brought together 24 associations from 19 different countries, including "old Member States" of the EU, "new Member States" (having joined the EU in 1994), and acceding countries<sup>25</sup> (who joined the EU in 2004). LOGON focused on transferring the capacity-building experiences of local governments in EU Member States in view of more effectively dealing with EU policies and the challenges and opportunities of EU membership.

In the same spirit, North-South cooperation appeared to be the perfect tool for exchanging expertise and knowledge between European municipalities in the North and international partner municipalities in the global South. This form of cooperation was mainly supported, politically and financially, by national governments as an additional component to their international cooperation policy. PLATFORMA was born from the idea and conviction that the European Union should also include local development in its global development strategy. Decentralised cooperation significantly contributes to development objectives pursued by the European Union by strengthening local governance and sustainable development through city-to-city, and region-to-region cooperation.

<sup>25</sup> Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia

Nowadays, as explained in a study published by PLATFORMA and CPMR in 2017<sup>26</sup>, experts distinguish between two forms of decentralised cooperation: vertical and horizontal. In fact, it increasingly appears that vertical forms of cooperation (North-South cooperation), under which there is added value from the transfer of aid and knowledge from European local and regional governments to regions considered less advanced, have been relinquished in favour of the current horizontal partnerships, under which knowledge and experience flow in different directions (north to south, south to south and south to north) and the territory works as the node of exchange among the core players of development led by local and regional governments.

PLATFORMA's activity and awareness-raising have played an important role in the change of attitude towards decentralised cooperation. Political and technical debates within the international development community have underscored the need to prioritise efficiency and sustainability. Even if the five principles of the Paris

Declaration<sup>27</sup> did not position local governments<sup>28</sup> at the centre of the agenda for aid effectiveness, the Busan Summit held in November 2011, in which PLATFORMA participated, endorsed the Busan Partnership for effective development<sup>29</sup> and paved the way to a new approach by recognising local governments as key players for development. This acknowledgement also essentially entrusted local and regional governments with an added share of responsibility for increased aid effectiveness, and kicked off a new era in decentralised international development cooperation.

Today, with its stakeholders' determination to uphold aid standards, innovation, transparency, monitoring, evaluation and accountability, PLATFORMA remains fully committed to promoting decentralised cooperation and to further building up on the results. It is this message that the partners of PLATFORMA have expressed in the international arena through their very active participation as full partners in the most important events held at the European level for development cooperation.



Since the beginning, PLATFORMA has organised events as part of the celebration of the **European Development Days**. The 2018 edition was dedicated to Women and Girls in Development. PLATFORMA and its partners took active part in various sessions and organised a High-Level Panel on "Cities for girls and young women = cities for all". The panel focused on the importance of young women's representation and voices in urban spaces as a way of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (specifically 11 and 5) and the New Urban Agenda.

PLATFORMA is also an important promoter and active partner of the **Assizes of Decentralised Cooperation**<sup>30</sup> that the Committee of the Regions organises every two years with the support of the European Commission, and which aims at promoting best practices in decentralised cooperation as an instrument for supporting development cooperation, mainly through capacity-building.

<sup>26</sup> *Shaping a new generation of decentralised cooperation – for enhanced effectiveness and accountability*, Agustí Fernández de Losada Passols, Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) & PLATFORMA, <http://bit.ly/2FIEG0Z>

<sup>27</sup> The Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness was endorsed in March 2005 by more than 100 states and international agencies, and rests on five principles: ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and central accountability. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/45827300.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> In international documents, "local government" often refers to "local and regional government" as the term is used for sub-national governments in general.

<sup>29</sup> The establishment of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation was a direct outcome of the Busan Partnership agreement reached during the Fourth High-Level

Forum on Aid Effectiveness. The Busan Partnership document highlights a set of common principles for all development actors: a) Ownership of development priorities by developing countries: Countries should define the development model that they want to implement. b) A focus on results: Having a sustainable impact should be the driving force behind investments and efforts in development policy making. c) Partnerships for development: Development depends on the participation of all actors, and recognises the diversity and complementarity of their functions. d) Transparency and shared responsibility: Development co-operation must be transparent and accountable to all citizens.

<sup>30</sup> As of 2019, this forum will take place under a new format and has been renamed "Cities and Regions for Development Cooperation" (<https://lra4dev.cor.europa.eu/portal/EN/news/Pages/6th-cities-and-regions-devcoop.aspx>)

## 2. EXCHANGING EXPERTISE WITH PARTNER COUNTRIES

The overall objective of PLATFORMA, as expressed in the Framework Partnership Agreement, is to promote and advocate for an enabling environment for EU towns and regions to bring their expertise to partner countries, at the EU and at national level, to ensure better support of the citizens, the EU institutions and national governments for decentralised cooperation. PLATFORMA also wishes to contribute towards increasing efficiency in the way EU expertise is delivered in partner countries – through a mechanism which simplifies the matching of the needs and demands and through the capitalisation and promotion of best practices and studies on decentralised cooperation (CONNECT).

Local government capacity-building, twinning, peer-to-peer partnerships are the most appropriate forms of partnerships between EU and partner countries, enabling the real sharing of expertise and know-how between peers. Today, PLATFORMA – following the economic crisis which had negative repercussions on the involvement of European local and regional governments in international cooperation, including restrictive decisions by national governments which have had an impact on decentralisation – is working strongly to provide further momentum to the decentralised cooperation being implemented by European towns, cities, regions and their dedicated citizens.



CONNECT<sup>31</sup> is a new and practical mechanism that was developed by PLATFORMA and one of its founding partners, **VNG International**, with the support of the European Commission. It provides practical and technical assistance for goal-oriented peer-to-peer partnerships, and captures and disseminates knowledge on specific challenges faced by local governments.

**The main strength of CONNECT is its colleague-to-colleague approach:** it provides hands-on municipal employees with the possibility to hold exchanges with colleagues across the world and benefit from their experience, knowledge and skills. At the same time, he/she can also offer her/his expertise to be put to good use in municipalities and regions around the world.

During the 2017-2018 pilot phase, CONNECT facilitated exchanges between municipal colleagues from Brazil, Cambodia, Colombia, Ghana, Iceland, Moldova, the Netherlands, and Spain.



At the 2017 Assizes of Decentralised Cooperation, mayors from Cambodia and Iceland presented the first CONNECT exchange. **Agustí Fernández de Losada Passols** and **Mary Gely** also presented their respective studies.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> <http://connectfordevelopment.eu/>

<sup>32</sup> *Shaping a new generation of decentralised cooperation – for enhanced effectiveness and accountability*, by Agustí Fernández de Losada Passols, CPMR & PLATFORMA, <http://bit.ly/2FIEG0Z>; *The external actions of French local and regional governments*, by Mary Gely, PLATFORMA, <http://bit.ly/2peqy3u>



### 3. REWARDING GOOD PRACTICES

In 2017, PLATFORMA launched the first PLATFORMAwards<sup>33</sup>, a recognition of concrete actions in development cooperation. The first ceremony was held at the Committee of the Regions on 21 March 2018. For this first edition, a jury made up of representatives from European and international institutions selected five partnerships to reward. Members of the European Parliament **Linda McAvan** (Chair of the Committee on Development - DEVE) and **Bogdan Wenta** (Coordinator of the Committee on Development - DEVE), the Vice Chair of the European Committee of the Regions' Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External

affairs (CIVEX) **François Decoster**, were jury members, along with **Johannes Krassnitzer**, Coordinator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP ART initiative)<sup>34</sup> and **Andreas Kiefer**, Secretary General of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> [www.platformawards.eu](http://www.platformawards.eu)

<sup>34</sup> **Johannes Krassnitzer** was represented by **Gemma Aguado**, Programme Analyst, UNDP ART initiative, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

<sup>35</sup> **Andreas Kiefer** was represented by **Marite Moras**, Head of Unit, Co-operation and External Relations Department, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Council of Europe

PLATFORMA  
AWARDS



- **First prize:** Roeselare (Belgium) and Dogbo (Benin) for their joint birth registration programme. After six years of partnership with Roeselare, Dogbo has become a benchmark in the field of civil registration in Benin, a country where more than 40% of newborns go unregistered.
- **Second prize:** the Nouvelle-Aquitaine (France) and Plateau-Central (Burkina Faso) regions were rewarded for a joint programme promoting sustainable economic development, the fight against climate change and support for local governance and employment.
- **Third prize:** Inca (Spain) and Telpaneca (Nicaragua) were rewarded for a successful town twinning partnership

established in 2001, with achievements in the areas of education, water management and sanitation, support for local economic development and local cooperatives.

- **Special Prize of the Jury:** Panevėžys (Lithuania) and Ialoveni (Moldova) were honoured in recognition of their inspirational joint project on civil protection and healthcare.
- **Special Mention of the Jury:** the Province of Barcelona (Spain) and the Union of Municipalities of Al Sahel (Lebanon) were singled out in recognition of their project on urbanisation aimed at helping municipalities deal with the massive and rapid displacement of refugees.



## 4. RAISING AWARENESS ON DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

In a Europe facing a dangerous rise of populism and xenophobia and also vulnerable to global climate change, while still contributing to it at the same time, local and regional governments have a role to play in raising the awareness of European citizens about the importance of involving their cities and regions in global development and climate cooperation. It was in response to this need that PLATFORMA launched the *European Days of Local*

*Solidarity* (EDLS)<sup>36</sup> in 2016, a pan-European campaign driven by European municipalities to raise citizens' awareness about decentralised cooperation. The programme included outdoor activities, educational initiatives and information events organised across Europe, from the Basque Country in Spain, through Nantes, Rome and Paris to the Vidzeme region in Latvia.



### EUROPEAN DAYS OF LOCAL SOLIDARITY

CITIES AND REGIONS UNITED FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In close collaboration with the Secretariat of PLATFORMA, the **Province of Barcelona** headed up the design of a joint outreach campaign for all partners: the **European Days of Local Solidarity**. Partners such as the **Generalitat of Catalunya**, **Euskal Fundoa**<sup>37</sup>, the Italian section of CEMR (**AICCRE**), the **City of Paris**, the **Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments** (LALRG) and the Metropolitan Area of **Nantes** joined the initiative by mobilising municipalities in the field and by promoting concrete events<sup>38</sup>. Step by step, the EDLS working group has been able to carry out intensive collaborative work to consolidate key messages and to upgrade its promotional strategy. The Charter of the European Days of Local Solidarity<sup>39</sup> was drafted to call on European cities and regions and their associations to join efforts in the areas of development education and awareness-raising on sustainable global development.



**Agita Kaupuža** is the Advisor on EU issues at the **Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments** (LALRG). This Baltic partner has always played an active role in PLATFORMA.

*"Through its initiatives, PLATFORMA has increased local governments' involvement in development cooperation and development education on a national scale. For example, in Latvia, the involvement in the European Days of Local Solidarity (EDLS) and participation in the discussions of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues on Development has been an excellent way for local governments to get acquainted with the best practice examples from other partners of PLATFORMA and to find inspiration for their own development cooperation activities."*

<sup>36</sup> <http://localsolidaritydays.eu/>

<sup>37</sup> Euskal Fundoa is the Association of local authorities from the Basque country for international cooperation

<sup>38</sup> For the 2018 edition, more than ten events have been planned between 5 and 18 November, with an increasing number of partners involved.

<sup>39</sup> <http://localsolidaritydays.eu/edls-charter/en>

# B. ADVOCATING THE ROLE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS IN DEVELOPMENT



## 1. A SINGLE VOICE FOR TOWNS AND REGIONS COMMITTED TO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

For ten years, PLATFORMA has been propagating the singular voice of European cities, towns and regions active in development, mainly to the European institutions, discoursing on many different subjects, arguing for the role of local governments in sustainable development, taking care of the people and their needs. PLATFORMA's priority in this regard has been to explain the key role of local governments in good governance, and the specific legitimacy conferred upon them through a political mandate from their citizens, as well as the specialised expertise and concrete added value obtained through exchanges held as part of international partnerships among cities and regions, i.e. decentralised cooperation; bearing all this in mind, PLATFORMA has also been promoting new strategies, adapted policies and efficient working methods in the international arena of development cooperation.

Owing in large part to the extensive knowledge and expertise of the partners, PLATFORMA was able to play a crucial role during the debates in preparation of the 2014-2020 European Multiannual

Financial Framework (MFF). For the first time under this framework, PLATFORMA organised the voice of local and regional governments and introduced fundamental changes to the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the European instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) in order to secure recognition of local governments in the EU external policies. As a result of this contribution by PLATFORMA, the principal EU instruments for development policy, covering the current programming period (2014-2020), included a real reference to local governments for the first time. Towns and regions had not heretofore been mentioned in the EU financial instruments.

Besides this significant improvement to the programming structure of the EU policy, PLATFORMA has also mainstreamed the voice of local governments on new subjects for development, defending development based on local and regional democracy.

## • The Role of Local Governments in Peace-Building and Reconstruction

The issue of local governments in fragile states and their role in peace-building and reconstruction has long been promoted by PLATFORMA, thanks to the work done in the field by the **AIMF**, **CUF** and **VNG International** in particular, as well as other partners. A discussion group was set up and a special seminar was held at the European Parliament in 2011 in cooperation with the European Commission. PLATFORMA contributed details of concrete cases of cities active in peace-building and city diplomacy. This important aspect has still not been publicised enough in international cooperation and will require more efforts before it is widely known within the international community.

**Denis Pourchet**, a former administrator at the European Commission who has been working with PLATFORMA for many years, particularly on this issue, stated: *"The work carried out with PLATFORMA on fragility has compelled the Commission to ensure better awareness of how crises are managed by formalising the links between the different actors and by ensuring a smoother transition between humanitarian emergencies and development. In the midst of a crisis, local governments are sometimes the final shield of protection for populations, the last resort for upholding civil security and providing for the needs of their populations. Local and regional governments also play a major role when it comes to reconstruction. Of course, it is a question of rebuilding in order to ensure access to essential services, but also reconstructing from the bottom up in view of reconciling populations within the same territory."*

## • Strengthening Local Governments after the Arab Spring

After the Arab Spring, several of PLATFORMA's partners expressed the willingness to set up a discussion group on support for Mediterranean countries, especially in terms of bolstering local governance and democracy on the ground, in response to concrete requests from the territories. Besides the work advocating the European Commission to prepare a call for proposals aimed at civil society organisations in these countries, for which local and regional governments could also be eligible, PLATFORMA has been a very active participant in the debate on the transition towards democracy, particularly in Tunisia, together with the European Commission and in close partnership with UCLG through its Euro-Mediterranean Committee. Even now, several PLATFORMA partners are still following up on this particular commitment to the EU Southern neighbourhood.

## • Neighbourhood East and South

For a long time, PLATFORMA has defended the need to take care of its neighbourhood. As part of the dialogue with partner countries, PLATFORMA has undertaken many initiatives to support the European Neighbourhood East and South in order to promote the objectives of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and in particular, to advocate for local democracy and good governance and to encourage people-to-people contacts within and with the region. PLATFORMA works to support national associations of local governments through improved decentralisation reforms and local democracy in the Eastern European Neighbourhood, as well as in the transition towards greater democracy and decentralisation in the Southern Mediterranean countries.

## • EU-ACP partnership

The post-Cotonou Agreement towards a new partnership between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries after 2020 is another crucial issue on which PLATFORMA has a specific viewpoint. PLATFORMA and its partners have been engaged with their counterparts in the ACP region through **CGLF**, **AIMF** and **UCLG** and its African section (UCLG Africa) to further develop its position.

The EU-ACP Partnership Agreement, which is the institutional and operational framework for cooperation between the European Union and 79 countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, is one of the most extensive agreements addressing development, economics and trade and political cooperation, as well as being one of the few EU development agreements that refers to local and regional governments as key stakeholders.

For this reason, PLATFORMA has called for a widened Political Dialogue that would institutionally involve local and regional governments through their representative networks, the creation of a multi-stakeholder consultation mechanism within the architecture of the new framework in order to define and implement development strategies in line with the needs and ambitions of local populations, and has also requested that the Member States and partner countries commit to empowering and strengthening local and regional governments' capacities to enable them to carry out their responsibilities effectively and efficiently and to operate as meaningful agents for development<sup>40</sup>.

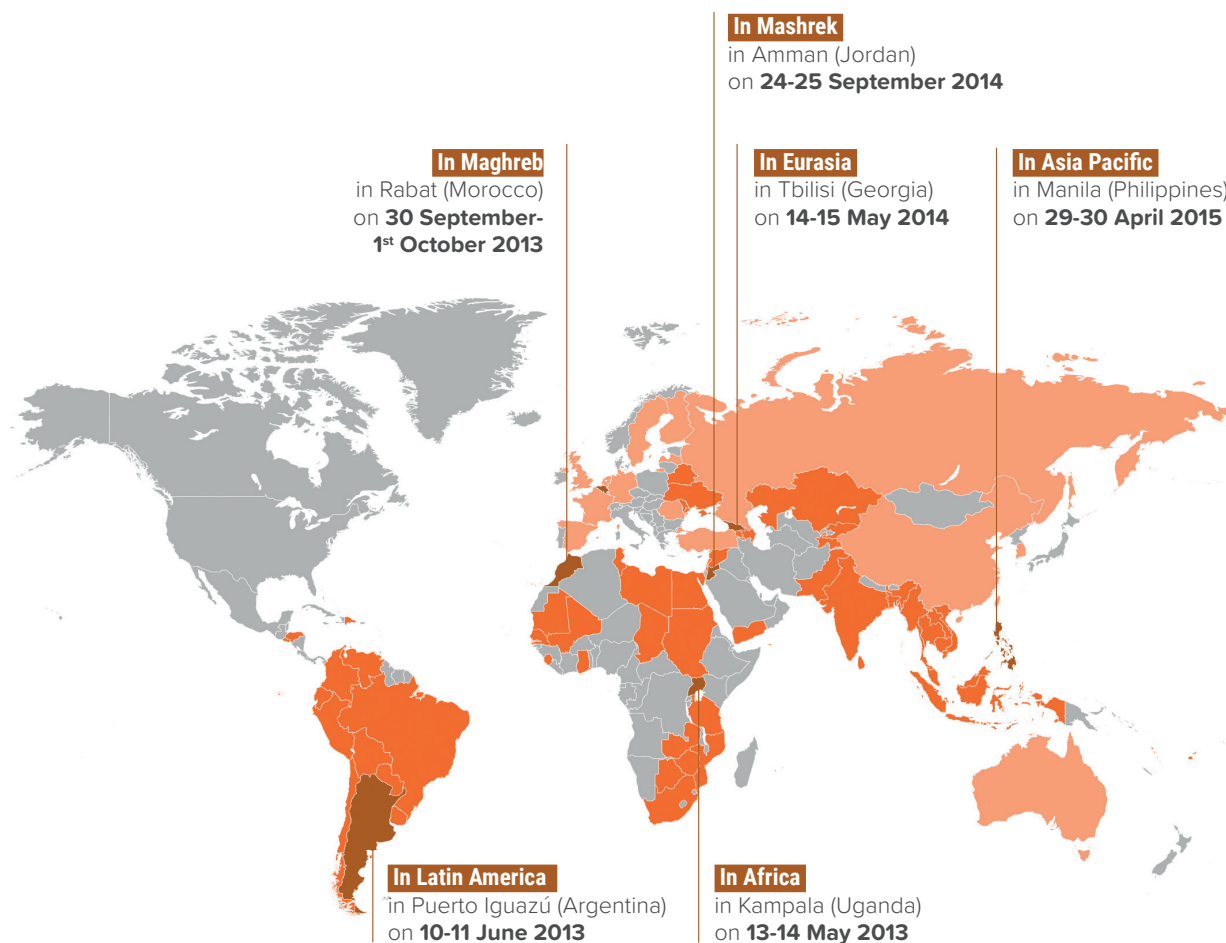
## • Dialogue with Non-EU Local Governments

Another concrete achievement for PLATFORMA is the central role it played from 2012 to 2015, with the support and participation of the European Commission, in listening to and strengthening the voice of local governments from partner countries and in helping them to establish a dialogue with the EU (even if it had already partly begun with the Structured Dialogue). Through a project called "enhancing dialogue and capacity building of local and regional authorities in EU partner countries in the fields of cooperation and local governance", PLATFORMA organised a series of six regional seminars in different continents of the world, with the support of the international member organisations of PLATFORMA, particularly **UCLG** and its regional sections<sup>41</sup>, as well as **AIMF** and **CLGF** (see next page).

<sup>40</sup> PLATFORMA's declaration on the revision of the EU-ACP Cotonou partnership agreement in 2020 (April 2016) (<http://platforma-dev.eu/platforma-declaration-on-the-revision-of-the-eu-ACP-cotonou-partnership-agreement-in-2020/>)

<sup>41</sup> The UCLG network is a decentralised structure made up of seven regional sections, one metropolitan section and one section for regional governments: <https://www.uclg.org/en/organisation/structure/uclg-sections>





For many years, there has been a strong voice representing African local governments: **Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi**, Secretary General of **UCLG Africa**. He has always believed in the role that a coalition such as PLATFORMA could have in the dialogue with the European Commission, as well as with other international donors and stakeholders. Today, PLATFORMA has established a special link with UCLG Africa in order to reinforce and strengthen the partnerships and cooperation with local governments in Africa, a continent of great hopes and challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*"I participated in the meeting which led to the birth of PLATFORMA ten years ago as an invitee. Since UCLG Africa was not an association of local governments with European members, it could not be part of PLATFORMA. Nonetheless, I saw potential within it at a time when the model for decentralised cooperation that had been heretofore developed had begun to show signs of fatigue. I saw within it the possibility to organise a more systematic and structured*

**advocacy in favour of territorial authorities' international actions.** In a broad sense, the future has shown that I was correct.

*For UCLG Africa, PLATFORMA's more significant political success is the organisation of the first Africa-Europe forum of local governments held on 28 November 2017 in Abidjan (Ivory Coast). This took place in the context of the demonstrations around the 5<sup>th</sup> African Union-European Union summit with heads of state and government (Abidjan, 29-30 November 2017).*

*The accomplishment of the SDGs is more than 60% within the remit of local and regional governments' competencies. Their implication is therefore crucial to the success of the SDGs. **It is by contributing to keeping the EU's attention on the inevitable role of local and regional governments in achieving the SDGs that PLATFORMA will contribute to the delivery of these SDGs.***"



## 2. CROSS-BORDER ISSUES

### • The Role of Women in Development

PLATFORMA also supports the involvement of new players as partners for development. Owing to the deep commitment of CEMR to gender equality issues, PLATFORMA has successfully advocated for the role of women in development, particularly in local life, securing recognition of this in the EU strategy for development cooperation for the 2011-2013 period. The role of women in development has become undeniable; and in 2018, it was the chosen theme for the European Development Days. *"This would have been unthinkable even a couple of years ago!"*, women were saying during the event held in June 2018 in Brussels.

CEMR has always been quite attentive to the equality of women and men and has been very active in all the spheres of power and influence affecting this issue. In 2011, a large conference on the role of local elected women in the world was organised at Paris' City

Hall, at the initiative of **Anne Hidalgo**, then-Deputy Mayor of Paris, with the support of **UCLG**, **CEMR** and PLATFORMA. That same year, the African Section of UCLG launched the **REFELA**<sup>42</sup>, the Network of Locally Elected Women of Africa.

Gender equality today is once again an important topic in development, as can be seen from the 5<sup>th</sup> objective of the SDGs: *"Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls"*<sup>43</sup>. PLATFORMA has been at the forefront of the global struggle in favour of equality for women and men in local life, and continues to contribute to the women's movement that **UCLG** supports all around the world<sup>44</sup>. The **CEMR** Conference held in Bilbao (Spain) in June 2018 is a good example of this.

<sup>42</sup> Réseau des Femmes élues locales d'Afrique

<sup>43</sup> <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5>

<sup>44</sup> <https://women.uclg.org/>



Célestine Ketcha Courtès (right) is President of the Network of locally elected women of Africa (REFELA) and Mayor of Bangangté (Cameroon). She was speaking at the High-Level Panel organised by PLATFORMA at the European Development Days 2018 in Brussels.



**Jocelyne Bougeard** is Deputy Mayor of Rennes (France) and Vice-President of the French section of CEMR (**AFCCRE**). But she is also the Chair of CEMR's Committee for Equality.

*"The analysis of international data shows that gender inequalities persist in all areas. **Women everywhere continue to be discriminated against and do not equally benefit from development policies.**"*

*Thus, inequalities between women and men in the world are particularly striking in the spheres of employment, access to decision-making processes (political or economic) and access to education.*

*Equality between women and men is an objective in itself (for example, in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals - Objective 5) and is in itself a factor of development.*

*In this context, local and regional governments have a central role to play in reducing these inequalities. They can take initiatives in specific areas, that is to say directly*

*concerning women, such as safe access to education for girls, improving health conditions by promoting access to care and information, and finally they can contribute to the economic empowerment of women.*

*This is why, within PLATFORMA, AFCCRE has particularly devoted itself to this subject, namely by developing a handbook. This handbook<sup>45</sup> aims **to ensure the systematic and transversal consideration of gender dimensions in decentralised cooperation projects.** I also welcome the fact that this priority of cooperation policies is featured prominently in the **CEMR European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life** adopted by many European local and regional governments, and in the final text of the Joint Declaration<sup>46</sup> of the Africa-Europe Forum of Local and Regional Governments, adopted in Abidjan in November 2017.*

*Gender equality is a priority for AFCCRE, CEMR and PLATFORMA, and we will continue to work for a more egalitarian world."*

## • Tackling Climate Change

Alerted by its partners, PLATFORMA soon realised the urgency of the challenge that climate change represents for our societies. Local and regional governments are directly concerned by the consequences of climate change. They also represent the principal level of governance called on to take any measures necessary to adapt the territories to minimise the impacts of climate change and to come up with more sustainable approaches to development. PLATFORMA has been a very active participant in the UN Climate Change Conferences<sup>47</sup> (COP 21, 22 and 23) held in Paris, Marrakesh and Bonn and, as a partner, strongly supports initiatives that bring local and regional governments together to tackle this crucial challenge, such as the "Global Covenant of Mayors"<sup>48</sup> and the "Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa" (CoM SSA)<sup>49</sup>.

## • Territorial and Urban Approach

PLATFORMA is contributing, mainly through the experience and voice of its partners, to the international discussion on the territorial and urban debate. The growing role of cities in the world and the phenomenon of urbanisation that characterise our modern era have pushed this issue to the front of the international agenda. PLATFORMA's partners have made substantial contributions to the debate, presenting cases and challenges that need to be managed and resolved for the future. As a participant in the Global Taskforce of

local and regional governments facilitated by UCLG<sup>50</sup>, PLATFORMA was able to present its position on the Habitat III process and the New Urban Agenda. PLATFORMA and its partners also responded to specific concerns of cities of all sizes and functional areas by encouraging effective working partnerships between central and local governments in each country, and working towards the definition and implementation of integrated national urban policies.

PLATFORMA continues to strongly advocate for a territorial approach in development, in large part because of the input and experiences of its partners representing the regional level. This as well as the rural question, food security, territorial coordination and implementation of policies, or multi-level governance, have all been on PLATFORMA's agenda since its creation.

<sup>45</sup> <http://bit.ly/2FaOTB1>

<sup>46</sup> [http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/171124-Draft-declaration-Africa-Europe-Forum-LR-Gov\\_EN\\_CLEAN.pdf](http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/171124-Draft-declaration-Africa-Europe-Forum-LR-Gov_EN_CLEAN.pdf)

<sup>47</sup> <https://unfccc.int/process/bodies/supreme-bodies/conference-of-the-parties-cop>

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.globalcovenantofmayors.org/>

<sup>49</sup> CoM SSA was launched by the European Commission to support African cities facing the challenges of climate change by increasing their planning capacities and providing them with a platform to share knowledge and best practices pertaining to this topic (<http://comssa.org/>)

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.global-taskforce.org/>

# C. MAIN RESULTS

## 1. ASSEMBLING A WIDE VARIETY OF PLAYERS

PLATFORMA was born out of a conviction shared by many actors of all different natures (international and European organisations and networks, local and regional governments and their associations, towns, cities and regions), sizes, coming from different countries, each of them with their own specific experiences, culture and working method. They had never worked together previously: the new structure was conceived to help them better understand each other, learn to avoid duplications, create synergies, coordinate

actions, to join forces in one unique coalition in order to be more widely heard and better seen. All of this of course took some time and required energy and work. It demanded optimism and a strong political commitment with a precise aim: to increase the visibility of local governments in the international arena. Today, PLATFORMA brings together 32 partners. There were only 19 when the network was created. PLATFORMA has grown and is today a formidable coalition of actors for sustainable development.

## 2. COORDINATING THE VOICE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS BEFORE THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE EU

PLATFORMA could not have existed without the EU “Non-State Actors and Local Authorities” programme, set up at the request of the European Parliament. As for the European Commission, the support it provides and the actions of cooperation with this body have been continuous and on the rise since 2008.

PLATFORMA brings extensive political and technical knowledge

to the table in its political role and daily work with the European Commission, particularly in exchanges with the Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO). PLATFORMA enjoys a very wide and balanced geographical representation and has specialised knowledge and experiences that are very helpful to local governments in dealing with challenges and issues.

## 3. BRINGING VISIBILITY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Considering PLATFORMA to be one of the primary instruments for influencing European development policies, the partners have worked to strengthen the coalition and increase its visibility in the sector of development cooperation in Brussels and further afield.

Information-sharing and the communication strategy and tools defined and put in place over the past ten years have allowed PLATFORMA's coalition to improve how it informs and

communicates with its partners, but also with the development cooperation stakeholders and local government communities as a whole. A monthly newsletter, dynamic and visually attractive websites<sup>51</sup>, and a strong social media presence ensure that the activities of PLATFORMA and its partners enjoy widespread visibility. In addition to this, there are also direct forms of information and support specifically aimed at its partners.

## 4. SHARING AND EXCHANGING INFORMATION, EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE

Since the beginning, PLATFORMA has been made up of people who strongly believe in development cooperation and good governance: this applies to the partners, the political leadership, the network of experts and the teams and colleagues. Another factor that adds to PLATFORMA's strengths is the wide variety of people, cultures, backgrounds, languages, experiences at its disposal, with everyone involved bringing their own unique added value as well as a strong personal commitment to the mission and the work being accomplished<sup>52</sup>.

PLATFORMA is also a place for exchanges: experiences, opinions, positions, best practices and knowledge<sup>53</sup>. Its leitmotiv has always been to create opportunities for sharing ideas and views, organising meetings and conferences and holding debates. All of this has been

designed to help partners get acquainted with each other, become more familiar with each other, share positions and build a unique voice.

After taking a look at the results achieved by PLATFORMA and bearing in mind the initial objectives of the coalition, it is obvious that the network still has much left to do to establish a healthy environment for local governments involved in development cooperation in Europe and in the rest of the world.

<sup>51</sup> The general website is <http://platformawards.eu/>, but there are also webpages for specific projects: <http://localsolidaritydays.eu/>, <http://platformawards.eu/> and <http://connectfordevelopment.eu/>

<sup>52</sup> The staff of the PLATFORMA Secretariat speak a combined total of 14 different languages!

<sup>53</sup> Discover the coalition publications: <http://platforma-dev.eu/publications/>





On 7 June 2017 at the European Development Days in Brussels, the President of the European Commission **Jean-Claude Juncker**, the President of the Council of the European Union **Joseph Muscat** and the President of the European Parliament **Antonio Tajani** signed the "New European Consensus on Development – Our world, our dignity, our future".

## CHAPTER 3

# PLATFORMA'S PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

## A FULL RECOGNITION OF THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN EU POLICIES

In June 2017, the EU adopted the "New European Consensus on Development – our world, our dignity, our future"<sup>54</sup>, establishing a new framework for development cooperation. The new Consensus defines the main principles that will guide the EU and its Member States' approach to development cooperation for the next 15 years, as well as the strategy for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The Consensus reaffirms some principles long supported by PLATFORMA, such as democracy, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality. It also affirms that the EU and its Member States cannot achieve the SDGs by themselves and that they need to work better with other stakeholders. Moreover, it recognises the importance of local governments, among several other actors, in the development field.

The Consensus represents the EU's and its Member States' commitment to support "transparency, accountability and decentralisation reforms, where appropriate, to empower regional and local authorities for better governance and development [...] and strengthen their cooperation with local and other sub-national authorities, including through decentralised cooperation."

PLATFORMA has contributed to the different phases of the debates on the revised European Consensus on Development and asked that the new text include stronger support for effective democratic governance at all levels. To disseminate the voice of its partners,

PLATFORMA published a contribution to the European Commission public consultation<sup>55</sup>, "Five recommendations to strengthen the local dimension in the revised EU Consensus"<sup>56</sup> and a policy position<sup>57</sup>.

Along the same lines, in its position paper on the European Commission's future Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)<sup>58</sup>, PLATFORMA expressed its satisfaction at finding that, despite some concern regarding local and regional governments' status in the financial proposal, many issues relating to their competences are being closely examined in the future EU policy: education, migration, health, climate, environment, gender equality. This is the case for geographic programs as well as for thematic programs<sup>59</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/european-consensus-on-development-final-20170626\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/european-consensus-on-development-final-20170626_en.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> Fighting inequalities with the local and regional perspective, September 2016: <http://platforma-43.dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/160926-copy-of-platforma-reaction-to-eu-consensus-dvpt-full-en.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> December 2016, <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/161213-platforma-reaction-to-consensus-on-development-ec-proposal.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> June 2017, <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/170606-Consensus-factsheet-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>58</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/neighbourhood-and-world\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/neighbourhood-and-world_en)

<sup>59</sup> August 2018, <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/180719-NDICI-PLATFORMA-Position-Paper.pdf>

# B. A CONCRETE CONTRIBUTION TO SDGS AND THE 2030 AGENDA

Even before the creation of PLATFORMA, CEMR and its national associations, as well as UCLG, actively participated in the Campaign for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that was launched by the United Nations (UN) in 2000. Based on the success of the MDGs, more than 150 world leaders adopted the new 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015 to continue their fight against poverty and for development<sup>60</sup>.

All the 17 SDGs concern local governments; however, one in particular needs to be highlighted because of its importance in the framework of the new global development policy: SDG 11, which is aimed at building "Sustainable Cities and Communities". Local governments have therefore decided to continue to act as critical stakeholders for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda<sup>61</sup> and the achievement of the SDGs. In its position on the EU Global Strategy and the 2030 Agenda, PLATFORMA has proposed a vision with local solutions:

*"So far, the main goal of EU development policy has been to reduce poverty. It is now time for the EU to move towards a more integrated*

*approach, and focus on reducing all inequalities: wealth, health, gender, employment, education, opportunities; inequalities in access to public services and spaces, and in the exercise of democracy."*

The partners of PLATFORMA have also underlined that "a successful partnership for the SDGs needs to include the integration of the local perspective in all sectors and levels of government. This would create the necessary pre-conditions to develop effective tools and strategies to achieve the SDGs. After all, local governments, through their proximity, are best placed to govern with citizens and empower all stakeholders to better address inequalities from the local level".

Since 2014, PLATFORMA has been participating in international negotiations relating to international cooperation and development through the *Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments*, which was launched in 2013 and facilitated by UCLG in order to promote the voice of European local governments active in development and decentralised cooperation and to influence the decisions of the United Nations and other international organisations.



**Emilia Sáiz Carracedo**, Secretary General of UCLG, the world organisation of local governments, which is also facilitating the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, has been participating in PLATFORMA's work since the beginning.

*"In the era of urbanisation and universal global agendas, the European Union needs to continue developing policies that are grounded in local experiences and knowledge both at home and abroad. PLATFORMA can be a place where such policy discussions can take place and can ensure dialogue between the European Union and local governments."*

*PLATFORMA certainly has a role to play in implementing the UN 2030 Agenda on SDGs. PLATFORMA should support the sharing of experiences among European local government networks and foster synergies to enhance good practices. It can offer a governance architecture for design and implementation by different partners that would allow for the upscaling of initiatives and joint development of activities by its partners. Above all, **the lessons learned in Europe should inspire action in other regions of the world for the implementation of the global agendas.**"*

In July 2018, the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), i.e. the main platform for the review of the 2030 Agenda, convened in New York, with the overall theme of "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies". The Global Taskforce of local and regional governments represented the voice of local governments at this global event, during which several SDGs were reviewed. Among them was "Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

At this global forum, PLATFORMA and CEMR presented the study "Sustainable Development Goals – How Europe's town and regions

*are taking the lead*"<sup>62</sup>, which highlights the main challenges identified by associations of towns and regions in achieving the SDGs at local level, the top three being the lack of financial resources, the lack of data available at the local level and the lack of training.

<sup>60</sup> <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2015/09/24/undp-welcomes-adoption-of-sustainable-development-goals-by-world-leaders.html>

<sup>61</sup> April 2016, <http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/6.2-platforma-position-paper-on-eu-development-policy-and-global-strategy-p...pdf>

<sup>62</sup> *Sustainable Development Goals – How Europe's town and regions are taking the lead*, <http://bit.ly/2NtFB43>





The Mayor of Soria (Spain), **Carlos Martínez Mínguez**, represented PLATFORMA, CEMR and the **Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)** at the High-Level Political Forum 2018 in New York.

*"Today, cities represent the global leadership that allows people to be at the core of the 2030 Agenda. There is no doubt that towns and regions, national governments, the European Union and international institutions together can overcome obstacles in order to achieve the localisation of the SDGs. However, local and regional governments need support, both financially and technically. This is the role that associations of towns and regions are playing, but they can't achieve this alone."*



## C. A STRONG COMMITMENT AND EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR A BETTER WORLD

Following the announcement in May 2018 of the EU budget for 2021-2027, PLATFORMA made its position known, calling for the budget dedicated to development cooperation to be maintained, and for support for local governments and decentralisation reforms, and in particular for the continued legacy of the CSO-LA program in the framework of the MFF 2020-2027<sup>63</sup>.

Today, PLATFORMA is concerned that despite recognition in the 2013 Communication "Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes" of the crucial role played by local governments as partners, especially in implementing the SDGs, which was specifically acknowledged in the 2017 New European Consensus on Development, they have been marginalised in the Commission's financial proposal.

In an article published by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), **Jean Bossuyt**<sup>64</sup> explains the importance of local governments for the future of good governance

and fair development of the world. "The marginalisation of local authorities – now and in potential future EU partnership agreements, as well as in financing instruments after 2020 – is worrying. [...] Ambitious global and national policies ultimately have to land at the local level, where citizens expect services, economic development, jobs, security, efforts to combat climate change, etc. [...] In the absence of strong institutions, social capital and agents that can deliver these services on the spot, the progress in achieving the SDGs will be less than optimal. This explains the wide consensus on the need to implement the 2030 Agenda at local level in ways that are relevant for local actors."

<sup>63</sup> April 2018, [http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/180502-PLATFORMA-position-paper-future-of-CSO-LA-instrument\\_Clean.pdf](http://platforma-dev.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/180502-PLATFORMA-position-paper-future-of-CSO-LA-instrument_Clean.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> Local authorities in EU external action after 2020: Strategic actors or distant voices?, May 2018, <http://ecdpm.org/talking-points/local-authorities-eu-external-action-after-2020-strategic-actors-distant-voices/>

## OPEN CONCLUSION

# WHICH FUTURE FOR PLATFORMA?

In the future, buoyed by its legitimacy and representativeness, PLATFORMA aims to continue shaping EU policymaking, with the help of its partners' knowledge and experience on the ground and its growing capacity as a network.



## WHAT DO THE PARTNERS OF PLATFORMA THINK?

For **VVSG**, PLATFORMA should concentrate its priorities around: a) Localisation of the SDGs by local public governments, linking a domestic commitment to the SDGs with an international dimension; b) Sharing of knowledge and capitalising on the experiences of local governments, linking the work with CEMR's working groups; c) Advocacy aimed at the EC regarding the role of local governments in development; d) Additional advocacy for an integrated approach to sustainable development, not only among the partners, but also calling on the EU institutions to demonstrate an exemplary functioning by doing so; e) Build alliances with other stakeholders of local governments and with civil society umbrella organisations.

For the **Fons Mallorquí**<sup>65</sup>, the Development Fund of Mallorca, PLATFORMA's aims should consist of: a) Empowering local governments by improving their actions in development cooperation and raising awareness; b) Fostering synergies among the partners; c) Facilitating exchanges and knowledge transfer within the network; d) Supporting local governments in developing EU projects.

For the **Latvian association of local and regional authorities**, PLATFORMA should continue to concentrate on lobbying, exchange of best practice, joint activities/projects in development cooperation. PLATFORMA should continue the work started together with all the partners, carry on cooperating closely with the European Commission and the European Parliament on the development cooperation issues of topical importance for local authorities. PLATFORMA should work in two directions: a) Foster partners' cooperation in the areas they are interested in by providing relevant information, and b) serve as a gateway for the partners to obtain topical information and defend their interests by highlighting the important role that local authorities play in development cooperation.

**AFCCRE**, the French section of CEMR, shares similar views. The first priority of PLATFORMA will be to defend a European budget commensurate to the challenges faced by development issues in the context of the negotiations on the post-2020 Financial Framework. It is also necessary to build on the numerous success stories and to make cooperation policy, in particular decentralised cooperation, necessary and incontestable again in the eyes of the European citizens. This should be done by highlighting the work and the actions carried out by the partners.

Moreover, PLATFORMA should develop effective advocacy for decentralised cooperation among European and national citizens and policy makers. PLATFORMA should facilitate exchanges with its partners, sensitize and train local representatives and technicians in a transversal way, and promote the integration of sustainable development objectives in all services.

Finally, PLATFORMA should further develop its recognition, benefiting from its specificity: it is a driving and unifying entity, defending and promoting European values that unite its partners in the field of decentralised cooperation.

For **Peter Knip**, Director of **VNG International**: "Our first priority should remain the influencing of EU development policies by increasing the EU's focus on supporting the local government sector in the partner countries and by securing greater financial support for the local government sector in Europe to cooperate with their partners in developing countries through new innovative frameworks. In this respect, PLATFORMA and its partners should undoubtedly be able to draw attention to emerging new issues in development cooperation such as migration, root causes of conflicts, territorial development, integrated urban development and local revenue collection."

<sup>65</sup> Fons Mallorquí de Solidaritat i Cooperació

## WHAT DO THE EU INSTITUTIONS THINK?



**Paolo Ciccarelli**, Head of Unit Cities, Local Authorities, Digitalisation, Infrastructures at **DG DEVCO**, responsible for local governments, shares his views on the future with regard to PLATFORMA.

*"The European Commission is proud to be partnering with PLATFORMA, which in the space of ten years has become an essential partner, especially when it comes to getting local authorities from Europe and from the global south involved in development cooperation. As we continue to team up, we **strongly believe that the partners of PLATFORMA should soon be able to work together even more effectively**, in particular now that the EU is developing its new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). More than ever, European local and regional governments should be made aware of the critical challenges that all on the planet will need to confront.*

*Eventually, the eyes of citizens should be further opened so that they are shown more than just the negative and worrisome stories from the partner countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia or the Middle East. We have so much to learn from each other and our fates are bound together.*

*The localisation of the SDG Agenda, a joint undertaking, should continue to form the core of our work and, where possible, be integrated into policy dialogues at country level. **PLATFORMA can play a decisive advocacy role and enrich future discussions through research and analytical work.** Sharing best practices, which empower local authorities and make it possible for them to implement initiatives as real actors of development, is also essential.*

*This is of particular relevance in countries that are making real progress in decentralisation and which have embraced the principles of a territorial approach to local development. PLATFORMA will be a welcome partner in shaping and implementing the new Development Cooperation Instrument programme supporting local authorities in urban contexts as well as in programming the future NDICI actions at regional and national levels. In the meantime, a very happy anniversary to all the team and members!"*



**Bogdan Wenta** is a former handball player and head coach in Poland. He was elected **Member of the European Parliament** in 2014 and holds a seat on the Committee on Development (DEVE) where he is a political group coordinator. He was also co-rapporteur on the Parliamentary report on the revision of the European Consensus on Development<sup>66</sup>.

*"Cooperation between local authorities from Europe and their counterparts from partner countries has existed for decades, but institutional recognition of their work is more of a recent phenomenon. **Over the past few decades, we have noticed a growing effectiveness in decentralised cooperation.** Increasing the active commitment of local communities and citizens has remained a constant priority in terms of the work of the European Parliament and European Commission. Legality, proximity, subsidiarity and a high level of participation by local authorities is underlined both in the European Consensus on Development and enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals.*

*There is a growing need to explore all possible synergies and focus on programmes favouring the glocalisation of development cooperation and partnerships. The close cooperation between PLATFORMA and local institutions should help bring about the relevant mechanism to engage civil society, authorities and parliaments in improved dialogue and communications.*

*At the local level, there is still a need to widen the opportunities for NGOs in terms of equitable and effective participation in decision-making processes. **Supporting capacity-building and raising local authorities' awareness is one of the main tasks for the coming years.** For that reason, local governments and NGOs will need to work together to establish consolidated and effective strategies aimed at supporting local administration and getting the different European partners involved."*

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2F%2FEP%2F%2FNONSGML%2bREPORT%2bA8-2017-0020%2b0%2bDOC%2bPDF%2bV0%2F%2FEN>



## LIST OF CURRENT PLATFORMA'S PARTNERS

PLATFORMA is the European coalition of local and regional governments – and their associations – active in city-to-city and region-to-region development cooperation. Since its creation in 2008, PLATFORMA has been representing more than 100,000 local and regional governments. All are key players in international cooperation for sustainable development.

The diversity of PLATFORMA's partners is what makes this network unique. PLATFORMA reflects the diversity of local and regional governments' realities in Europe and across the world.

The aim of PLATFORMA is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge

and mutual learning, but also to strengthen the specific role of local and regional governments in development policies.

In 2015, PLATFORMA signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the European Commission. Its signatories commit to take actions based on common values and objectives to tackle global poverty and inequalities, while promoting local democracy and sustainable development.

The Secretariat of PLATFORMA is hosted by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

[www.platforma-dev.eu](http://www.platforma-dev.eu)



**AEXCID:** Extremadura Agency for International Cooperation for Development  
[www.juntaex.es/aexcid](http://www.juntaex.es/aexcid)



**AUC:** Association of Ukrainian Cities  
[www.auc.org.ua/en](http://www.auc.org.ua/en)



**AFCCRE:** French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions  
[www.afccre.org](http://www.afccre.org)



**CALM:** Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova  
[www.calm.md](http://www.calm.md)



**AICCRE:** Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions  
[www.aiccre.it](http://www.aiccre.it)



**CEMR:** Council of European Municipalities and Regions  
[www.ccre.org](http://www.ccre.org)



**AIMF:** International Association of French-speaking Mayors  
[www.aimf.asso.fr](http://www.aimf.asso.fr)



**CLGF:** Commonwealth Local Government Forum  
[www.clgf.org.uk](http://www.clgf.org.uk)



**ALAL:** Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania  
[www.lsa.lt/en](http://www.lsa.lt/en)



**CPMR:** Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions  
[www.cpmr.org](http://www.cpmr.org)



**ANCI:** National Association of Italian Municipalities  
[www.anci.it](http://www.anci.it)



**CUF:** United Cities France  
<http://cites-unies-france.org/>



**Diputació  
Barcelona**

**DIBA:** Province of Barcelona  
[www.diba.cat](http://www.diba.cat)



**NALAS:** Network of Associations of Local  
Authorities of South-East Europe  
[www.nalas.eu](http://www.nalas.eu)



**EEL:** Association of Estonian Cities  
[www.ell.ee](http://www.ell.ee)



**Nantes métropole:** Nantes Metropolis  
[www.nantesmetropole.fr](http://www.nantesmetropole.fr)



**Euskal Fundoa:** Basque Fund - Association  
of local authorities from the Basque country for  
international cooperation  
[www.euskalfondoa.org](http://www.euskalfondoa.org)



**Région Sud-Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur:**  
Region of South-Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur  
[www.maregionsud.fr](http://www.maregionsud.fr)



**Famsi:** Andalusian Fund of Municipalities  
for International Solidarity  
[www.andaluciasolidaria.org](http://www.andaluciasolidaria.org)



**Regione Toscana:** Region of Tuscany  
[www.regione.toscana.it](http://www.regione.toscana.it)



**FEMP:** Spanish Federation of Municipalities and  
Provinces  
[www.femp.es](http://www.femp.es)



**RGRE:** German Association of the Council of  
European Municipalities and Regions  
[www.rgre.de](http://www.rgre.de)



**Fons Mallorquí:** Majorcan Fund for Solidarity  
and Cooperation  
[www.fonsmallorqui.org/ca](http://www.fonsmallorqui.org/ca)



**SALAR:** Swedish Association of Local Authorities  
and Regions  
[www.skl.se](http://www.skl.se)



**SMO ČR:** Union of Towns and Municipalities  
of the Czech Republic  
[www.smocr.cz](http://www.smocr.cz)



**Generalitat  
de Catalunya**

**Generalitat de Catalunya:** Autonomous  
community of Catalonia  
[www.gencat.cat](http://www.gencat.cat)



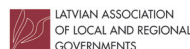
**UCLG:** United Cities and Local  
Governments  
[www.uclg.org](http://www.uclg.org)



**KDZ:** Centre for Public Administration Research  
- Austria  
*to be replaced by the Austrian Association of Cities  
and Towns (AACT) as of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019*  
[www.kdz.eu](http://www.kdz.eu)



**Ville de Paris:** City of Paris  
[www.paris.fr](http://www.paris.fr)



**LALRG:** Latvian Association of  
Local and Regional Governments  
[www.lps.lv/en](http://www.lps.lv/en)



**VNG International:** Cooperation agency of the  
Association of Netherlands Municipalities  
[www.vng-international.nl](http://www.vng-international.nl)



**LBSNN:** National Town-Twinning Council  
Netherlands-Nicaragua



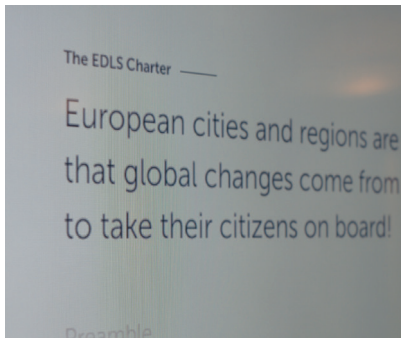
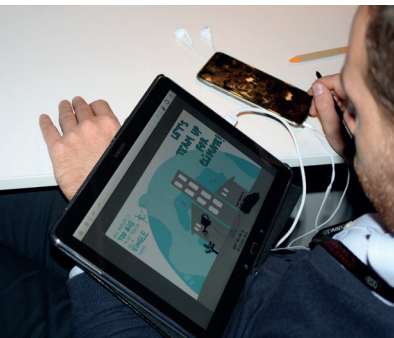
**VVSG:** Association of Flemish Cities and  
Municipalities  
[www.vvsg.be](http://www.vvsg.be)



**NALAG:** National Association of Local  
Authorities of Georgia  
[www.nala.ge/en](http://www.nala.ge/en)



**ZMOS:** Association of Towns and Municipalities  
of Slovakia  
[www.zmos.sk](http://www.zmos.sk)



*PLATFORMA, the pan-European coalition of local and regional governments and their associations active in city-to-city and region-to-region development cooperation, turns 10!*

*But what has been achieved in the past ten years?  
And what should the priorities be for the future?*



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