

# EU Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) with Associations of Local Authorities (ALAs)

## PLATFORMA

**PLATFORMA** is a pan-European coalition of local and regional government partners, including associations representing them at the national, European and global levels. Established in 2008, today the coalition regroups over 30 institutions actively engaged in decentralised development cooperation.



The overall mission of PLATFORMA is to cooperate towards consolidating local and regional governments in partner countries as accountable, autonomous, and responsive sphere of government, instrumental to state building and rule of law, advancing decentralisation and deepening local democratic governance, cooperating with their peers, learning from each other's experience, building trust between citizens and public authorities, as well as responding to citizen demands for improved access to local services and better living conditions, through the mobilisation of natural, local, social, economic, and cultural resources for sustainable local development.

The PLATFORMA network membership includes

- 8 individual **cities and regions** (France, Italy, Spain);
- 18 national and sub-national **associations of local and regional governments** (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine);
- 2 European and sub-**European networks** of local and regional governments (CEMR, NALAS);
- 3 **global networks** of local and regional governments (AIMF, CLGF, UCLG);

The PLATFORMA network, thanks to its inclusive membership represents

- Through the *Council of European Municipalities and Regions* (CEMR): around 100 000 local and regional governments in Europe, including all *European Union* Member States;
- Through the *Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe* (NALAS): local government associations in 13 countries (Albania, Bosna and Herzegovina, Bulgaria Croatia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine);
- Through the *Commonwealth Local Government Forum* (CLGF): local governments in 53 member states of the Commonwealth of Nations;
- Through the *International Association of French-speaking Mayors* (AIMF): 294 local governments or their groupings;
- Through *United Cities and Local Governments* (UCLG): local governments in  $\frac{2}{3}$  of UN Member States with over 50% of the world's total population;

## Specific Grant Agreement supporting the FPAs

Title: *"Working together towards empowering local and regional governments for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes in EU partner countries"*.

- Duration of the **FPA**: 28/01/2015 to 31/12/2020
  - **SGA 1**: 31/07/2015 to 28/02/2019, budget: 7 522 657 €, EU grant: 5 641 993 €
  - **SGA 2**: 01/03/2019 to 28/02/2021, budget: 5 000 000 €, EU grant: 4 000 000 €

### Objectives

General objective of the SGA is to **contribute to empowerment of local and regional governments in EU partner countries** through mobilisation and transfer of experience of EU local and regional governments.

### Specific objectives

1. Strengthen the **contribution to European development policy and global development agenda** by European local and regional governments through mobilisation of European local and regional government actors, and by providing systematic political and technical input to European and global policy-making;
2. Increase **efficiency of decentralised cooperation** through exchanges and peer-learning among EU local and regional government cooperation actors, and with their peers in partner countries;
3. Increase **awareness of European citizens, and local and regional governments** on global development issues, promoting universal values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law, mobilising their support towards concrete contribution of local and regional governments to development;

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## Main achievements to date

### 1. FPA supports local and regional governments in helping to achieve global and European sustainable development goals

The FPA enabled EU's local and regional governments (LRGs) to better coordinate their efforts in reframing their policies in light of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and its *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs), in the spirit of the Commission's *Reflection Paper on a Sustainable Europe by 2030*. Its key achievement is the reinforcement of capacities of LRGs and their associations in **localising the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs**—assessing local and regional policies in light of global goals, their alignment with the global agenda, integrating them into their partnerships, and developing tools to monitor and evaluate progress in achieving the goals.

The FPA facilitated participation of LRGs in national **dialogues with the central governments on development** in the context of the 2030 Agenda, and a survey by CEMR-PLATFORMA demonstrated that the percentage of national associations of LRGs in Europe invited to contribute to National Voluntary Reports to the UN *High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development* (UN HLPF) increased from 50% to 58% between 2016–2019, in comparison with the global average of 40%–45%. In addition, 73% of the countries surveyed initiated the development of local indicators for monitoring of the SDGs.



Photo 1. Local and regional elected representatives meet DG DEVCO Director General Stefano Manservigi at UN HLPF (July 2019). Source: PLATFORMA

The FPA boosted the contribution by Europe's LRGs to **global policy dialogue** facilitated through the *Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments* (GTF), and LRGs and their associations now make regular contributions to the UN HLPF through a voluntary local government report compiled annually by CEMR-PLATFORMA in Europe, and by UCLG and its other sections worldwide.

Facilitated by the Global Taskforce, this work resulted in 2019 in exclusive meetings with the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, with the President of the General Assembly María Fernanda Espinosa, and with the Executive Director of UN-Habitat Maimunah Sharif, discussing the **contribution by LRGs to achieving the ambitious global sustainable development goals**.

The partnership with the European Commission also facilitates **coordination of LRG actions with EU policies**, through consultations with a dedicated Unit C.5 (*Cities, Local Authorities, Digitalisation, Infrastructures*) at DG DEVCO, meetings at the level of Director-General (S. Manservigi, K. Doens), as well as meetings with members of the European Parliament.

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## 2. FPA supports local and regional governments in educating, and raising awareness on global development issues

The FPA allowed PLATFORMA to set up specific instruments to support **development education and awareness-raising (DEAR)** among Europe's LRGs, at the local, national, and European levels, mobilising greater citizen support towards engagement on global development issues, and boosting awareness on the role of EU LRGs in international cooperation and development.



Photo 2. Municipalities from Latvia organise awareness-raising events at each edition of the EDLS (2018). Source: LALRG

Following the pilot edition in 2016 of the initiative *European Days of Local Solidarity*, the editions 2017 and 2018 succeeded in increasing more than tenfold the mobilisation of participating LRGs from 8 in the pilot edition, 15 in the second year, to 120 in last year's edition, showing a clear mobilisation momentum. Modern, customised visuals provide an attractive tool for LRGs to **engage with citizens on the global development context**, European development policies, and visually underline the contribution by the European Union to the initiative.

Pilot editions of the *National Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues on Development* aimed to engage national actors, through national associations of LRGs, in structured dialogue on the **role of LRGs in the national development policy context**, and thus increase the awareness of non-LRG actors on the role of cities and regions in decentralised cooperation towards global development.

## 3. FPA helps creating a solid knowledge framework on decentralised development cooperation, towards improved aid effectiveness and policy coherence

The FPA helps EU's LRGs to **boost specific knowledge and skills** required to engage in effective, efficient, and result-oriented sustainable development activities, framed by global and European development policies.

Improving the knowledge base on development issues, sharing know-how and experience, and exchanging with peers in partner countries remains a cornerstone of increased aid effectiveness and policy coherence among decentralised actors, through **reinforced capacities of local and regional government associations** in the EU, as well as in the partner countries.



Photo 3. No less than 25 publications were published by PLATFORMA and its partners, and are available [online](#). Source: PLATFORMA

The FPA greatly facilitates improving the existing compendium of knowledge related to development, and to decentralised development cooperation in particular. Between 2015–2019, **25 thematic multi-lingual publications** (859 pages) were published and disseminated among the beneficiaries, and further 10 are scheduled for the period 2019–2020, covering a range of relevant areas, from (i) fundamental issues (promotion of gender equality, partnership-building); through (ii) methodological support (project management, monitoring and evaluation, climate cooperation tools); (iii) sustainable development issues (sustainable public procurement, local economic development); (iv) current policy frameworks (2030 Agenda, post-Cotonou framework, aid effectiveness); and (v) innovative development topics (internationalisation of LRGs, place-based development, theory of change).

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## 4. FPA facilitates know-how transfer and exchange of experience with local and regional governments and their associations in partner countries

The FPA helps creating a space for dialogue, increasing understanding of peers, creating and reinforcing partnerships, **transferring know-how and exchanging of experience** among local and regional governments and their associations from the EU, and from partner countries.

Thematic events, such as *Les Rencontres* dedicated to partners from **Africa, Asia, and Latin America**; the *EU-Eastern Partnership Forum of Local Leaders* dedicated to partners from the **Eastern Neighbourhood**, notably Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine; or the *Mediterranean of the Future* dedicated to partners from the **Southern Neighbourhood**. Local and regional elected representatives and development experts exchange on development topics relevant for decentralised cooperation actors, building capacity in partner countries on issues such as decentralisation, local economic development, provision of local services, energy efficiency, gender equality, or project management. Localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals, and their integration in international partnerships has become the prime focus of learning activities, with over 20 events organised at local, regional, and European levels.

Dedicated **training sessions** are an inherent part of capacity-building initiatives, both in partner countries, and in Europe. Thematic **training materials and modules** were developed, and specific trainings organised on active global citizenship, decentralised development cooperation, regional development strategies, gender equality mainstreaming, or localisation of SDGs, and over 300 participants were trained, from over 30 countries of Europe, Africa and Latin America.

The FPA also reinforced mutual **coordination among local government framework partners** of the European Commission, not only members of the PLATFORMA network (AIMF, CLGF, UCLG) but more importantly with UCLG Africa, representing the local government sector in Africa, and boosting thus the city-to-city and region-to-region cooperation dimension of **relations between the European Union and the African Union**. An example of this high-level cooperation was the organisation of the *Africa-Europe Local and Regional Government Forum* mobilising 150 leaders of local and regional governments from both continents, addressing local economic development, youth empowerment, migration, human mobility, and climate action.



Photo 4. More than 150 leaders of local and regional governments from both continents took part to the 1<sup>st</sup> Africa-Europe Local and Regional Government Forum. Source: PLATFORMA



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