

CEMR Leaders' Summit / June 2025

Draft agenda

Dates: 23 and 24 June 2025

Venue: Radisson Blue Scandinavia Hotel (Holbergs Gate 30, 0166, Oslo, Norway)

Europe is facing a convergence of critical challenges that threaten the stability of its democracies and its ability to remain competitive as a global leader in the sustainable, green economy. Signs of erosion within Europe's democratic architecture are multiplying, putting at risk the foundational values upon which modern Europe was built. Emerging from the devastation of World War II, Europe reaffirmed its commitment to decentralization, democracy, and human rights—principles that must now be defended more than ever.

The CEMR Leaders' Summit 2025 will bring together local and regional leaders for a two-day dialogue on the interconnected challenges of democratic resilience, geopolitical instability, and sustainable resource management.

Summit outcomes

The CEMR Leaders' Summit 2025 will deliver actionable insights and strategic direction to:

- Strengthen democracy at local and regional levels in the face of geopolitical uncertainty and societal fragmentation.
- Promote innovative and equitable approaches to sustainable resource management, informing CEMR's policy and advocacy in areas such as [water resilience](#), circular economy, and just transitions.
- Foster collaboration, knowledge exchange, and joint initiatives among European local and regional governments, amplifying their collective impact on sustainability and democratic resilience.

In a time of increasing uncertainty, the role of local and regional governments in safeguarding democracy, fostering social stability, and managing environmental challenges has never been more critical. The CEMR Leaders' Summit 2025 will provide a unique platform for shaping Europe's collective response and reaffirming the values that unite us.

Day 1. The role of CEMR in a volatile geopolitical landscape

The first day will be devoted to CEMR's statutory and financial affairs, alongside a strategic conversation on the growing difficulties faced by local and regional governments in upholding democratic values amid an increasingly unstable geopolitical context. The rise of misinformation, external interference, and political polarization is compounding the strain on democratic institutions.

To protect local democracy, transparent governance, inclusive decision-making, and meaningful citizen participation must remain central. The opening session will offer a space for open exchange among local leaders on how to respond to democratic backsliding, reinforce democratic institutions, and safeguard citizens' rights even in uncertain times.

Day 2. Sustainable resource management – A pillar for democracy

The second day will focus on sustainable resource management, exploring how local and regional governments can address growing resource scarcity while advancing long-term environmental and social sustainability.

Participants will reflect on the vital connection between democratic governance and equitable resource access. While multinational actors often drive resource extraction, local and regional governments are left to manage the consequences—from biodiversity loss to community unrest. A coordinated, place-based approach is needed to reduce material consumption, ensure fair access to resources, and guide a just transition for affected communities.

As the level of government closest to citizens, local and regional governments are uniquely positioned to lead the shift toward circular economy models, climate resilience, and efficient public services. Their leadership is essential not only to achieving climate goals, but also to maintaining democratic legitimacy and social cohesion at all levels.

Day 1. Policy Committee meeting

Monday, 23 June 2025

9:00 Study visit

Venue: VEAS (By shuttle- Meeting point: Radisson Blu Scandinavia Hotel)

Visiting treatment plant and auditorium.

11:15 Departure for meeting venue

12:00 Lunch

13:00 Opening of the CEMR Leaders' Summit & the Policy Committee Meeting

Opening and welcoming words by **Gunn Marit Helgesen**, Member of Telemark County Council, KS President and **Anne Lindboe**, Mayor of Oslo

Geopolitics and its impact on the local level.

Keynote Speech by **Iver Neumann**, Director of Fridtjof Nansen Institute (*tbc*)

Open debate with the audience.

CEMR Policy Committee meeting

Open for CEMR Policy Committee members, CEMR member associations and national sections.

Day 2. Political discussions

Tuesday, 24 June 2025

- 8:30** **Registration**
- 9:00** **Political discussion: Water resilience as a cornerstone of climate adaptation in Europe**
- Setting the scene by Federica Bordelot**, CEMR Policy and Impact Director.
- Panel discussion with the speakers:**
- **Eldri Siem**, Mayor of Sel Municipality, Norway.
 - **Vítor Aleixo**, Mayor of Loulé, Portugal.
 - **Veronica Manfredi**, European Commission, Director for Zero Pollution, Water Resilience & Green Urban Transition (ENV.C) (tbc).
 - **Ragnhild Aalstad**, CEO, Norwegian Water and Wastewater Association Norsk Vann.
- Open debate with the audience.**
- Moderation by Bjørn Egil Asbjørnslett**, Professor, Director of Ocean and Coast Department, Norwegian University of Science and Technology.
- 10:15** **Keynote speech**
- Naaja H. Nathanielsen**, Minister of Business, Trade, Minerals, Justice and Gender equality in the Government of Greenland.
- 10:30** **Breakout sessions: Local resource strategies for European strategic autonomy**
- Roundtable guided discussion** on raw materials and circular economy.
- 12:30** **Reporting and discussion on the breakout sessions**
- Open debate with the audience.**
- 13:15** **Concluding remarks**
- Gunn Marit Helgesen**, Member of Telemark County Council, KS President and CEMR President.
- Fabrizio Rossi**, CEMR Secretary General.
- 13:30** **End of the CEMR Leaders' Summit and lunch**