



CEMR webinar | Local Governments dialogue on the road to EU Enlargement

Date: 1st of July 2025

Format: Online Webinar

Time: 09.45–11.45 CEST

Registration link: <https://forms.office.com/e/QdXHeNefEc>

Concept note:

The European Union recognises enlargement as a priority for geopolitical and security investments by the EU. In this evolving context, Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) are at the forefront of implementing reforms, building public trust, managing EU funds, and aligning local policies with EU standards. Yet, the full potential of LRGs remains under-recognised and under-utilised in the EU enlargement process. It is crucial to acknowledge that empowered Local and Regional Governments (LRGs) are tasked with accelerating economic and social integration and fostering closer ties between candidate countries and the EU.

The CEMR webinar seeks to raise awareness about evidence- based recommendations made by local government representatives from EU and candidate countries, highlighting not only the vital role of LRGs in fostering inclusive, resilient, and sustainable EU integration but also emphasising the need for multilevel dialogue and strengthening the capacity- building of LRGs and their associations. It also aims to develop a shared understanding of how to make enlargement more inclusive, sustainable, and locally rooted.

We believe there is a significant need to assess the current state of preparedness among LRGs and highlight areas requiring targeted support. Additionally, we aim to encourage forward-looking, practical suggestions and a collaborative approach in which LRGs are regarded as key actors in the decision-making process to better implement the EU agenda.

Based on the above, the following questions will be addressed during the webinar:

- To what extent are Local and Regional Governments currently equipped—technically, financially, and institutionally—to assume the responsibilities linked to EU pre-accession reforms and the implementation of the Acquis? Where do we see the most urgent capacity gaps?
- What mechanisms should be strengthened or newly established to ensure effective coordination between LRGs, their national governments, and EU institutions during the enlargement process?
- Looking ahead, what concrete actions—at both the EU and local levels—must be prioritised to empower LRGs as strategic actors in EU integration, particularly in fostering decentralised cooperation and inclusive development?

The webinar will facilitate the editing of a policy paper that includes the main findings and recommendations, which will serve as a tool for continuing CEMR's [work in EU enlargement](#).



Draft agenda

Welcoming Remarks by CEMR Secretary General **Fabrizio Rossi**

Opening session moderated by Fabrizio Rossi

Daniela Morari, Ambassador, Head of the Mission of the Republic of Moldova to the EU

Michał Sobol, Chief specialist, Ministry of Development Funds and Regional Policy, Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

First panel discussion on the state of play of the LRGs' preparedness in the EU accession process and their level of involvement, moderated by Bella Tskhelishvili, adviser, CEMR PLATFORMA

Anna KOTŁARA, Policy officer, DG ENEST, European Commission

Nataliia Kholchenkova, Member of the Chernihiv city council, Ukraine

Dušan Raičević, Mayor of Bar, Montenegro

Nikola Dobroslavić, Speaker of the Dubrovnik-Neretva Regional Assembly, Croatia, CoR member

Interactive Session: Q&A and Audience Input

Second panel discussion on mechanisms that should be strengthened or established to ensure effective coordination between LRGs, their national governments, and EU institutions, moderated by Boris Tonhauser, PLATFORMA Director

Violeta Crudu, Mayor of Cruzești, President of Women Mayors Network Moldova, Vice President of CALM

Kaŗina Miķelsone, Mayor, Ādaŗi municipality council, Latvia

Inga Vismantinė, Vicemayor of Akmenė, Lithuania

Interactive Session: Q&A and Audience Input

Main takeaways from the moderators

Closing Remarks by CEMR Secretary General **Fabrizio Rossi**