

CEMR Leaders' Summit

Draft agenda

Dates: 4 and 5 December 2025

Venue: Westin Dragonara Resort, STJ 3143, Malta

Building Europe from the Ground Up - Local and Regional Voices in a Changing World

Across Europe, local and regional governments are navigating an increasingly complex and fast-evolving environment. Demographic transitions, geopolitical tensions, and shifting investment priorities—at both EU and national levels—are converging to create new challenges and expectations for subnational governments. These developments highlight the urgent need for place-based and territorially sensitive policymaking that reflects Europe's rich diversity and ensures that no community is left behind.

At a time when the European Union prepares for a new strategic cycle—framed by the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034—local and regional governments must not only adapt to new realities but actively shape the emerging European agenda. With growing emphasis on defence, industrial competitiveness, innovation, and resilience, it is critical to reaffirm the fundamental role of territorial cohesion, social equity, and democratic inclusion in future EU strategies and funding mechanisms.

In this context, the **CEMR Leaders' Summit** will provide a high-level political platform to amplify the voice of Europe's local and regional leaders. Taking place in Malta, this edition carries particular significance as it will coincide with the renewal of the CEMR Policy Committee and the election of new political leadership for the next three years.

Over two days, the summit will bring together elected representatives, policymakers, and institutional partners from across Europe to engage in strategic dialogue, influence EU policy debates, and agree on collective actions. The agenda will tackle demographic transitions, territorial disparities, and the evolving role of local and regional governments within EU governance and investment frameworks. Through interactive formats such as the **Impact Lab**, the summit will foster exchange, peer learning, and joint advocacy for a more cohesive, resilient, and inclusive Europe.

Summit Objectives

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

- Renew the CEMR Policy Committee and mandate the political leadership for the next three years.
- Foster political dialogue on the most pressing challenges affecting Europe's territories, particularly demographic transformation and territorial disparities.
- Clarify and strengthen the role of local and regional governments in shaping the post-2027 MFF and define coordinated advocacy actions.
- Create space for exchange, innovation, and cross-territorial collaboration through interactive formats such as the Impact Lab.
- Build political momentum for stronger, more inclusive EU policies that recognize and empower the diversity of Europe's territories.

Interpretation

EN – FR – DE – IT – ES

DRAFT

Day 1. Policy Committee meeting and Impact Lab

Thursday, 4 December 2025

09:30 Welcome coffee and registration

10:00 Opening of the CEMR Policy Committee

Opening remarks and welcome words by Gunn Marit Helgesen, Member of Telemark County Council, KS President, **Mario Fava**, LCA President and **Olaf McKay**, Mayor of Valletta.

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

15:00 Political debate

Demographic transition: challenges and opportunities in a changing Europe

High-level political opening

Robert Abela, Prime Minister of Malta.

Academic keynote by Giles Merritt, Journalist and founder of Friends of Europe, author of "Timebomb: When Ageing Explodes".

Moderated panel discussion:

- **Hugo Sobral**, Deputy Director-General of the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) (tbc).
- **Alison Zerafa Civelli**, Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government in the Ministry of the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government of Malta.
- **Giorgos Papanastasiou**, Member of KEDE Administrative Board, Mayor of Agrinio.
- CEMR Policy Committee member.

Open debate with the audience.

Closing remarks by Fabrizio Rossi, CEMR Secretary General.

16:15 Coffee Break

16:30 **Impact Lab: Voices from Europe's territories - Shaping EU strategies through local realities**

Setting the scene by Federica Bordelot, CEMR Policy and Impact Director.

Breakout session.

17:45 **Group picture**

19:30 **Gala dinner**

Venue: [MUZA](#).

Day 2. Policy Committee meeting and political discussion

Friday, 5 December 2025

09:00 Registration

09:30 Highlights and main takeaways from Day 1, and introduction to Day 2

09:45 Policy Committee

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

10:45 Coffee break

11:00 Political dialogue

Towards a cohesive and competitive Europe: strengthening local and regional voices in EU budget priorities

Presentation of the Commission proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034

Cinzia Alcidi, Senior Research Fellow and Head of the Economic Policy and Jobs & Skills Units (tbc).

Q&A

Moderated political dialogue between EU institutions and local leaders

- **Fabienne Keller**, Member of the European Parliament & Shadow Rapporteur on the Multiannual Financial Framework.
- **Alex Agius Saliba**, Member of the European Parliament.
- **Jan Olbrycht**, Former Member of the European Parliament & Co-Rapporteur on 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework.
- **María José García-Pelayo**, Mayor of Jerez de la Frontera and FEMP President.
- CEMR Policy Committee member.

Open debate with the audience.

Closing remarks.

13:15 Concluding remarks

13:30 End of the CEMR Leaders' Summit and lunch

14:30 Thematic Visit