

CEMR Leaders' Summit / June 2026

Draft agenda

Dates: 4 and 5 June 2026

Venue: Santa's Hotel (Korkalonkatu 29, 96200 Rovaniemi, Finland)

This year, CEMR marks 75 years of representing and strengthening Europe's local and regional governments. Since its foundation in 1951, CEMR has worked with its member associations across Europe to accompany towns, cities, and regions through major transformations - from post-war reconstruction and democratic consolidation to European integration, decentralisation, and social and climate transitions. Throughout this period, CEMR has remained a key partner as local and regional governments operate in increasingly complex and uncertain environments.

Building on this legacy and in response to today's evolving challenges the Leaders' Summit in Rovaniemi will take place over two days and will address preparedness and foresight, the evolving negotiations on the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), and the international dimension of local governance in the context of the upcoming UCLG elections.

Day 1 will focus on preparedness and foresight as core functions of democratic governance.

Grounded in foresight and embedded within a comprehensive security approach, preparedness is increasingly essential as local and regional governments confront interlinked pressures—from climate and environmental risks to demographic change, economic and infrastructure vulnerabilities, hybrid threats, and rising expectations to maintain public trust and service continuity. Although many of these challenges are global, their impacts are felt locally, shaping everyday decisions on services, investment, and community resilience.

Preparedness extends well beyond emergency response. It includes the capacity to anticipate risks, reduce vulnerabilities, respond to disruptions, and recover while safeguarding democratic values. Discussions on Day 1 will examine how preparedness can be embedded as a permanent dimension of local governance through foresight-informed policy design, resilience-oriented budgeting, and stronger coordination across sectors and levels of government, with particular attention to the role of citizens, trust, and social cohesion in building resilient communities.

Day 2 will place local preparedness within a broader European and international context. A dedicated session will provide an update on the negotiations on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034, a decisive moment for cohesion policy, territorial investment, and local democracy. In line with CEMR's long-standing position, discussions will underline the need for local and regional governments to be recognised as key partners in both the design and implementation of the next MFF, ensuring that EU investments respond effectively to local needs and deliver tangible results for citizens across all territories.

The second day will also situate the Summit within CEMR's engagement in United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), highlighting how international cooperation, solidarity, and shared learning are essential to strengthening preparedness and democratic resilience locally and worldwide.

Summit Outcomes

The CEMR Leaders' Summit 2026 will deliver concrete outcomes and provide strategic guidance to support Europe's local and regional governments in navigating growing uncertainty and complexity. In particular, the Summit will:

- Facilitate exchange on preparedness and comprehensive security at local and regional level, promoting the systematic integration of foresight as a continuous function of democratic governance, policy-making, and service delivery.
- Foster collaboration and mutual learning among local and regional governments, enhancing knowledge exchange, peer-to-peer cooperation, and joint initiatives that reinforce collective capacity across Europe.
- Reinforce CEMR's policy and advocacy priorities at EU level, contributing to the debate on the EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034 and underlining the need for local and regional governments to be recognised as key partners in the design and delivery of EU investments for cohesion, competitiveness, and democratic resilience.
- Strengthen CEMR's international engagement, particularly within United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), highlighting how European local and regional governments can work with global peers to advance local democracy and local self-government worldwide.

In a time of growing uncertainty, the role of local and regional governments in safeguarding democracy, maintaining social stability, and managing complex and interlinked risks has never been more critical. The CEMR Leaders' Summit 2026 will provide a unique platform to shape collective responses, reinforce shared values, and reaffirm the central role of local and regional authorities in Europe's present and future.

Interpretation

EN – FR – DE – IT – ES

Day 1. Policy Committee meeting and political dialogue

Thursday, 4 June 2026

09:30 **Cultural tour**

Venue: Santa Claus Village (By shuttle – meeting point: Santa's Hotel).

11:30 **Departure to the meeting venue** (By shuttle – meeting point: Santa Claus Village).

12:00 **Lunch**

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

Opening and welcome remarks by **Gunn Marit Helgesen**, CEMR president; **Heikki Kontiosalo**, Vice Chair of the Rovaniemi City Council and **Miikka Lönnqvist**, Head of the delegation of the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities.

Participation is open to members of the CEMR Policy Committee.

15:30 **Political debate**

Foresight and preparedness: strengthening democratic governance.

Keynote by Katri Kulmuni, Former deputy prime minister of Finland and the northernmost MEP.

Setting the scene by Pertti Onkalo, Director of Technical Services, City of Rovaniemi, Finland.

Moderated panel discussion

***Moderated by Meritxell Parramon Vila**, Head of Communications of CEMR.*

Elisabeth Unell, Councillor of Västerås, Sweden.

Ap Reinders, Mayor of Stichtse Vecht, Netherlands.

Isabel Simões Pinto, Mayor of Estarreja, Portugal.

Pertti Onkalo, Director of Technical Services, City of Rovaniemi, Finland.

17:00 **Group Picture**

17:15 **End of the day**

19:00 **Evening reception** (Group walk to the venue at 18:30 – meeting point: Santa's Hotel).

Day 2. Political discussions on the future EU Budget and UCLG priorities

Friday, 5 June 2026

08:00 Registration

08:30 Coordination café

Participation is open to members of the CEMR Policy Committee who are also members of the Committee of the Regions, as well as to representatives of their respective member associations.

09:15 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF): Exchange with MEP Giuseppe Lupo (Vice-Chair, EP Committee on Budgets), followed by the Adoption of the CEMR Political Declaration

Moderated by Federica Bordelot, CEMR Policy and Impact Director.

Presentation of the state of play of the next MFF negotiations and EP priorities for the future EU budget

Exchange of views with Policy Committee Members

Adoption of the CEMR political declaration: *Ensuring the next EU budget deliver cohesion, competitiveness and trust for all territories.*

10:00 Coffee break and Signature of the CEMR Political Declaration

10:30 European local leaders in UCLG: Snapshot of achievements in 2025 by Carola Gunnarsson, CEMR Spokesperson on International cooperation & UCLG Vice-President, Councillor of Sala Municipality.

10:45 On the road to Tangier: Political exchange with UCLG candidates

Moderated by Fabrizio Rossi, CEMR Secretary General.

Institutional remarks by Emilia Saiz, UCLG Secretary General.

Fatiha El Moudni, Mayor of Rabat (UCLG Africa).

Ibrahim Ugur Altay, Mayor of Konya (UCLG Middle-East and West Asia).

Jan van Zanen, Mayor of The Hague (UCLG Europe).

Berry Vrbanovic, Mayor of Kitchener (UCLG NORAM).

11:45 Closing of the CEMR Leaders' Summit, followed by lunch.

12:30 Shuttle departures to the airport.