



Committee of the Regions

The EU's Assembly of Regional and Local Representatives

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The president of the Committee of the Regions meets the Croatian prime minister Jadranka Kosor: "in Croatia, the cities and regions will be the ones to bring the benefits of Europe to the people"

With Croatia progressing along the road to reform, the CoR president, Mercedes Bresso, was invited to go and see for herself. At numerous meetings with the Croatian authorities and representatives of Croatian local and regional authorities, she restated the CoR's commitment to support devolution in candidate countries.

"We are drawing on our experience of previous enlargements to encourage the Croatian authorities in their efforts to involve local and regional authorities in the enlargement process. EU accession cannot be successful unless it is anchored at local level", said Mercedes Bresso at a meeting with Croatian prime minister **Jadranka Kosor**.

She continued: "During my meetings I have appreciated the efforts that Croatia, soon to be the newest member of our Union, is making to create the political conditions, the institutional framework and the management capacity to boost its regional development, not least on the basis of a reformed system of self-government. The CoR is at your disposal to share best practices to ensure the success of such reforms which, whilst being highly complex, are richly rewarding. I am convinced that the preparation, involvement and training of political and administrative representatives at local and regional level is an essential step on the road to accession." These same local and regional representatives will soon be part of the assembly of the Committee of the Regions, not least through the work of the CoR-Croatia joint committee, which already exists.

Prime minister Jadranka Kosor added: "It is only thanks to the excellent work done by local and regional authorities that Croatian citizens will fully benefit from entering the EU".

In particular, the president of the CoR was able to point out to the minister responsible for regional development, **Božidar Pankrećić**, that "the public service reform being carried out by Croatia is going in the right direction by abolishing the current highly complex procedures and strengthening at every level the broadening of competences, efficiency, independence and reliability of the administration." For this reason, Mercedes Bresso called on the Croatian authorities "to continue their efforts and transfer the greatest possible number of competences to local and regional level, whilst guaranteeing the accompanying funding."

Such a step would contribute to the "decentralised information and communication campaign at local and regional level that must, without fail, accompany any enlargement." Mercedes Bresso added: "We are ready to support the efforts of Croatian local and regional authorities in this area so that they will be ready for their future responsibilities and to facilitate cooperation with their partners in the European institutions, starting with the European Parliament."

The CoR president's visit to Croatia also enabled her to take part in the [ministerial conference on the Danube](#) in Vukovar, a town symbolising reconciliation in the Balkans, alongside the minister for foreign affairs and European integration, **Gordan Jandoković**, and the commissioner for regional policy, **Johannes Hahn**. "In the Danube basin, the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea, we can draw on the accomplishments of the EU to prepare the next stages of its enlargement," said Mercedes Bresso. "The CoR hopes that the June Council will enable formal progress in pursuing macro-regional strategies."

On the fringe of the conference, Mercedes Bresso also recalled that on 23 May this year, the CoR would be hosting the annual meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Adriatic & Ionian Initiative.

Visit the CoR's website at www.cor.europa.eu.

The Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of regional and local representatives. The mission of its 344 members from all 27 EU Member States is to involve regional and local authorities and the communities they represent in the EU's decision-making process and to inform them about EU policies. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council are obliged to consult the Committee in policy areas affecting regions and cities. It can appeal to the EU Court of Justice if its rights are infringed or it believes that an EU law violates the subsidiarity principle or fails to respect regional or local powers.

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