

CEMR Conference
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
Conference conclusions

A European approach to equality, diversity and inclusion

We, mayors, local and regional elected representatives and our representative associations, gathered in Bilbao on 11 to 13 June 2018

Recall that

1. Europe's strength lies in its diversity and the multitude of expressions of identity that¹ form our societies.
2. Conflicts and fragmentation have marked the history of Europe, which has made it necessary to articulate a common vision that is built on democracy, human rights, freedom, equality and rule of law.
3. Respect for and promotion of these core societal values remain at the heart of our project.
4. Numerous international and European treaties to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms have been adopted and ratified by national governments, which serve as guidance for local and regional governments in their efforts to promote and ensure equality, diversity and inclusion.
5. The Council of European Municipalities and Regions and its member associations play a pivotal role in advancing equality of women and men in local life, and actions of local and regional governments impact the lives of many citizens. CEMR's recently adopted gender equality position paper and multiannual action plan are clear commitments to continue and further this work².
6. The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life and its Observatory form the basis for endeavours to achieve gender equality in European municipalities and regions. Continuous work is undertaken to promote balanced representation and participation of women and men in democratic decision-making at local and regional level as well as in the statutory bodies of CEMR.

Observe that

7. Despite commitment, policies and actions from different institutions, governments and civil society, discrimination persists in Europe.
8. Prejudice, xenophobia, and all forms of discrimination are closely linked to the subordination of women in a society that falls short of equality between women and men. Increased equality between women and men can therefore decrease other forms of discrimination.

¹ All amendments were made by AFCCRE

² Include link to position paper and action plan

9. In order to reduce the risk of an increasing division and segregation in our societies, rigorous measures based on solidarity, cohesion and dignity for all are required.

We affirm the pivotal role and responsibility of local and regional governments to take action to end all forms of discrimination. Therefore,

We call for

10. An equal distribution of power and resources, reduced social gaps and the involvement of citizens as partners and contributors to the shaping of local and regional policy to achieve equal societies.
11. Strengthened cooperation between all levels of government and civil society, complemented by comprehensive, long-term strategies and capacity-building to promote and enhance social inclusion in different fields, such as care, education, employment, health, housing, youth, etc.
12. The European Commission to demonstrate a concrete political commitment to gender equality by adopting a Strategy for Gender Equality that would serve as a framework for action for both Member States and the EU Institutions.
13. Concerted action by international and European organisations and institutions in order to achieve substantial progress on gender equality, diversity and inclusion by 2030, the target of the global Agenda for Sustainable Development. Specifically, joint actions should be initiated between European local and regional governments and their associations with UN Women, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe.
14. Support and encouragement for European local and regional governments involved in international development cooperation to foster gender equality, diversity and inclusion systematically throughout their decentralised cooperation and to develop practical tools and knowledge.
15. The inclusion of the issues related to equality, diversity and inclusion in the citizens' consultation processes on the future of Europe.

We wish that

16. The conclusions and in particular, the discussions during the Conference, will serve as an input to the relevant CEMR working structures and provide inspiration for further action by CEMR and its national associations, notably in the 2019 work programme and beyond.
17. In the international context, PLATFORMA, the European network of local and regional governments active in town-to-town and region-to-region development cooperation, and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), exploit their full potential to facilitate learning and exchange between partner organisations on gender equality, diversity and inclusion.



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