

## Summary Brief 138<sup>th</sup> CoR Plenary

The European Committee of the Regions held from 11-13 Feb. 2020 its inaugural meeting of its new five-year mandate (2020-2025). During the 138th CoR plenary session Apostolos Tzitzikostas (EPP/GR - Governor of Central Macedonia Region) and Vasco Alves Cordeiro (PES/PR - President of the Government of the Autonomous Region of the Azores) have been elected as new CoR President and First Vice-President.

Rapporteur on the CoR draft opinion on the Enlargement Package 2019, Mr. Jaroslav Hlinka (SK/PES - Mayor of Košice – South), expressed in his presentation to the plenary his personal thanks to the Mayor of Skopje, Petre Shilehov and to NALAS.

The draft opinion and its 6 amendments were approved by the plenary with it a number of NALAS recommendations made during the exchange with the CoR rapporteur and his technical adviser during their visit in September last year in Skopje and Veles and throughout the drafting process last year (June-Nov.2019).

NALAS is mentioned in the official document for the EU Commission, Council and European Parliament on two occasions. This is per se a singular and exceptional fact and represents a milestone for NALAS in its relations with the CoR and a leap forward regarding NALAS' EU positioning being a clear sign of recognition and appreciation.

The opinion mentions NALAS under Policy Recommendations subtitle “Country-specific observations” and again under subtitle “Role of local and regional governments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” as follows:

27. *Recalls, in this respect, the irreplaceable role of national associations of local and regional governments, as well as that of the **Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (NALAS)**, which can support local and regional governments in implementing public administration reforms, as well as in building their capacities towards improved exercise of competences and provision of local public services.*

51. *Urges the European Commission to better include the countries of the Western Balkans, and notably their local and regional governments, in the future development of the Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy, and to draw on the potential of national associations of local and regional governments and **the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South East Europe (NALAS)** in facilitating the definition and implementation of local climate action and energy efficiency plans, sustainable urban mobility plans, and other local and regional policy instruments towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.*

Other NALAS recommendations reflected in the opinion:

- Enlargement process to be inclusive and sustainable participation of subnational governments is essential
- Important role of local and regional governments as drivers for economic growth, sustainable development and quality public services

Milestone for NALAS in relation with CoR and EU positioning  
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- Positive perception/recognition of local government role in PAR expressed by EU Commission in their 2019 communication on EU Enlargement Policy in COM(2019) 260 final.<sup>1</sup>
- Local Administration Facility
- CoMo as driver and bottom up movement to support LGs in achieving SGs of 2030 Agenda in Western Balkan countries

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<sup>1</sup> “The role of regional and local authorities in the EU alignment process and eventual application of EU rules needs to be taken into account. An appropriate balance between central, regional and local government needs to be found that best supports the implementation of reforms and the delivery of services to citizens.”