



ASSOCIATION OF UKRAINIAN CITIES
BY JOINT EFFORTS



Ms Ursula von der Leyen
President
European Commission
rue de la Loi 200
1049 Bruxelles

Brussels, 11 May 2022

Re: A strategic twinning initiative for the reconstruction of Ukraine

Dear President von der Leyen,

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) – the oldest and broadest European association of regional and local governments, and the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC) – the main organisation representing local governments in Ukraine, welcome the interest of both the European Commission and the Ukrainian Government in “twinning” as a strategic tool to foster sustainable, inclusive and effective reconstruction of cities, towns and municipalities in Ukraine.

Twinning lies at the heart of the founding aims and activities of CEMR which, since its creation in 1951, has promoted links of exchange and cooperation between towns and communities as a driving force for peaceful cooperation towards the growth and development of Europe. The first twinning links were born in the aftermath of the Second World War, at the initiative of a handful of mayors convinced that friendship between citizens was the first necessary step to rebuild a stable and peaceful Europe.

Today, the twinning movement represents a crucial brick on which to rebuild cities and towns and brings hope back to local territories and communities in Ukraine. Since the very first day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, European municipalities have been working within the framework of twinning relationships to provide humanitarian aid to their Ukrainian partners, with the support of CEMR and AUC. These efforts build on 20 years of cooperation between the Association of Ukrainian Cities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions to make Europe more local, fairer and closer to its citizens.

Since 2015, CEMR, together with PLATFORMA, the pan-European coalition network of towns and regions and their national, European and global associations active in city-to-city and region-to-region development cooperation, has developed concrete activities in the EU Eastern neighbourhood. We have been supporting decentralisation, enhancing multi-level political dialogue at local, national, and European levels, facilitating capacity-building and reinforcing decentralised cooperation with local governments in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Furthermore, with the support of the U-LEAD with Europe programme, our current Bridges of Trust initiative supports building capacities of Ukrainian municipalities and establishing new twinning partnerships between local governments in the EU and Ukraine.

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Since the outbreak of the war, European municipalities and regions have expressed full solidarity with Ukraine and are providing humanitarian aid to their Ukrainian partners. We are witnessing the strong willingness of local and regional governments in rebuilding Ukraine.

As the two main organisations representing regional and local governments in Ukraine and the rest of Europe, we would welcome a structured and constructive exchange with you on strategic and operational aspects of a twinning initiative to launch and implement the reconstruction of Ukrainian cities and towns.

We invite your services to contact Marlène Siméon, CEMR Director of Operations (marlene.simeon@ccre-cemr.org; tel.: +32-2-842.67.76), and Valérie Solle, PA to the CEMR Secretary General (valerie.solle@ccre-cemr.org; tel.: +32-2-500.05.32), for the organisation of this meeting.

Yours sincerely,



Oleksandr Slobozhan
AUC Executive Director



Vitaliy Klitschko
AUC President
Mayor of Kiev



Fabrizio Rossi
CEMR Secretary General



Stefano Bonaccini
CEMR President
President of Emilia-Romagna