

Brussels, 20 November 2015

ALDE-CoR launches Liberal Mayors Network at ALDE Party Congress in Budapest

Responding to a growing demand to hear the voice of liberal mayors on matters of European relevance, the President of the ALDE Group in the European Committee of the Regions, Bas Verkerk, Mayor of Delft, convened a meeting of mayors during the ALDE Party Congress in Budapest to discuss migration, refugees and integration.

The positive response from many liberal mayors to this initiative, including from those who could not attend, revealed a clear demand amongst the mayors themselves for this kind of initiative. President Verkerk therefore announced that this meeting would also mark the launch of a new Liberal Mayors Network, and a plan for future action was agreed.

The mayors also met the two candidates for ALDE Party President, Hans van Baalen and Siim Kallas (photos attached).

Speaking after the meeting, Bas Verkerk said: "The mayors all agreed that in this highly complex refugee crisis, politicians must view and treat refugees as individuals and not as groups. We also agreed that liberal mayors must speak out incessantly in our streets and neighbourhoods to defend Europe's values which are under attack from within Europe and from the outside, and we will be sharing detailed conclusions with the rest of the Liberal Mayors Network to build upon today's meeting."

The founding mayors of the network are:

- Belgium - Bart SOMERS, Mayor of Mechelen, prospective CoR rapporteur on Radicalisation
- Czech Republic - Adriana KRNÁČOVÁ, Mayor of Prague
- France - François DECOSTER, Mayor of Saint-Omer, CoR rapporteur on Migration
- Kosovo - Mimoza KUSARI-LILA, Mayor of Gjakova
- Lithuania - Vytautas GRUBLIAUSKAS, Mayor of Klaipėda
- Macedonia - Andrej ŽERNOVSKI, Mayor of Centar Municipality of Skopje
- Moldova - Dorin CHIRTOACĂ, Mayor of Chișinău
- Netherlands – Bas VERKERK, Mayor of Delft
- Romania – Iulian TEODORESCU, Mayor of Ploiești
- United Kingdom - Keith HOUSE, Leader of the Eastleigh Borough Council

Also attending were Delphine Bourgeois, Deputy Mayor of the Brussels district of Ixelles; Breda Kolar and Tadej Špilar, both deputy mayors of the Slovenian towns of Vele and Trbovlje respectively.



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Notes for Editors:

1. The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) is one of Europe's strongest political forces with over 80 full and alternate members in the European Committee of the Regions, nearly 70 members in the European Parliament, and more than 70 members in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. The ALDE-CoR website is www.alde.eu/cor.

2. The European Committee of the Regions is the EU's assembly of regional and local representatives. It is the institution in charge of giving a voice to the EU's local and regional authorities, which implement approximately two thirds of EU legislation.