

Building Europe with **Local Councillors**

THE BULLETIN

The European Parliament elections are a time for Europeans to reflect on their vision for Europe and realise the power of their collective voice. They also provide an opportunity to highlight the crucial role each BELC member can play in shaping Europe's future through democratic participation.

This issue is central to BELC community activities, and an opportunity to share best practices and showcase BELC members' inspiring initiatives ahead of the European elections. From grassroots actions to institutional collaborations, these combined efforts show how local governance can make a big difference in creating positive change at European level.

1,100

BELC members

540

registrations on Futurium

192

regions covered

Economic opportunities in rural areas, including for young farmers



Access to (quality) education, including education for environmental sustainability and digitalisation



Top 5

EU topics of interest for BELC members

Transition towards renewable energy



Opportunities linked to tourism, including eco-tourism



Valorisation of cultural heritage & traditions





European Elections 2024

BELC members have been very active in engaging citizens in the run up to the European elections. Here is just a snapshot.



Breakfast with the EU event, City of Bretten

1. Wolfgang Lübeck, a BELC member from **Bretten, Germany**, organised a **Breakfast with the EU** in collaboration with **EUROPE DIRECT centre Karlsruhe** and the city administration of Bretten. Six hundred first-time voters discussed the importance of the European Parliament elections and their role in shaping Europe's future.



The 2024 European elections: context and challenges forum, city of Reims

2. The public forum **The 2024 European elections: context and challenges**, jointly organised by the city of **Reims, France**, **EUROPE DIRECT centre Grand Est**, Mayor **Arnaud Robinet**, and BELC member **Dimitri Oudin** was an opportunity to explain the role of the EU, the importance of voting in the European elections, and to commend young people for their commitment to Europe.



Xavier Aldeguer, City Council of Girona

3. The **city council of Girona, Spain**, its deputy mayor, BELC member **Xavier Aldeguer**, and **EUROPE DIRECT centre Girona**, took to the streets (literally) in an interurban electric bus to promote participation in the European elections and the importance of informed decision-making and civic engagement.



Marcel Schoierer, Wesel

4. **Marcel Schoierer**, a German BELC member from **Wesel**, teamed up with the municipal youth council and staff for a **special quiz** during Wesel's Spring Festival. The quiz challenged participants to answer EU-related questions and explore the benefits of a united Europe. This event, part of the **#LetsEurope** campaign, underscored the important role of young voters in shaping the future of Europe.



Giannis Malandrakis, Municipality of Platania

5. BELC member Mayor **Giannis Malandrakis, Platania, Greece**, organised a series of **youth-focused** initiatives. Collaborating with **EUROPE DIRECT centre Crete** and the Evening Vocational High School of Platania, they **set up** an information point at Gerani Town Hall, informing locals and international visitors about postal voting and EU institutions. Mayor Malandrakis participated in the initiative from Brussels, via a live broadcast from the European Parliament. The efforts culminated in a successful Europe Day celebration at the Orthodox Academy of Crete, drawing approximately 300 attendees, showcasing Platania's commitment to European civic engagement.



Claudio Petrozzelli, Municipality of Cesinali

6. Supported by **EUROPE DIRECT centre Salerno**, BELC member **Claudio Petrozzelli** from **Cesinali, Italy**, organised two events aimed at promoting engagement in the European elections among local **youth**. The first event, **Elezioni europee 2024**, took place in Salerno and addressed students of political science and communications. The second event, held in Amalfi, brought together local leaders. Mr Petrozzelli emphasised the crucial role of the BELC network and urged everyone to play an active role in European democracy, particularly encouraging young people to participate.

BELC members' best practices

Led by BELC member **Driss Zayou**, in collaboration with **EUROPE DIRECT Antwerp** and the **Dessel municipality**, the '**Pop Up Europa**' project brought Europe into peoples' homes for 5 weeks between February and March, enhancing engagement on EU topics among both young and senior residents through exhibitions, lectures, and competitions.

Led by BELC member **Deputy Mayor Katarzyna Łaziuk**, in collaboration with the EC Representation in Poland, **EUROPE DIRECT centre Minsk Mazowiecki**, and **Minsk County**, the **Together Against Depression** conference in March addressed



Katarzyna Łaziuk, City of Mińsk Mazowiecki

important mental health and wellbeing issues with over 300 attendees, including professionals, educators, and local leaders, culminating in a commitment to join the European Alliance Against Depression.



Calpe Europe Day 1

Europe Day

9 May is Europe Day, a day celebrating peace and unity in Europe, highlighting EU accomplishments and envisioning its future. For many BELC members, Europe Day was an opportunity to host events and mark this important occasion. Over 90 activities spanning 11 countries were organised and followed by social and local media.

Webinars

Throughout March and April 2024, **new BELC members from France, Romania, Bulgaria, Germany, and Portugal** were **welcomed** in an online meeting by representatives from the European Commission. The aim of these sessions was to serve as live platforms for exchanging insights and fostering fellowship within the growing BELC community.

BELC members were also offered webinars on various **EU topics of their main interest**, including EU citizenship rights, rural development, and immigration. Stay tuned for more updates!



Member visits to Brussels

In the latest series of visits, enthusiastic delegations of BELC members from Lithuania, Italy, Greece, and Cyprus were welcomed to Brussels in March and April. They were eager to learn more about the European institutions and the EU policies relevant to their respective constituencies.

Once again, the visits proved to be highly appreciated opportunities for knowledge exchange and community building. Discussions covered a range of topics from cultural promotion and ecotourism to strategies for sustainability and circular economy. Lively discussions on rural development, sustainable transport, and the European elections further enriched their experience.

The Greek and Cypriot joint delegation had the chance for a lengthy debate with Commissioner Margaritis Schinas, who praised the BELC initiative. He posted on X: 'Thank you "Building Europe with Local Councillors" network for a timely discussion on improving understanding of and communication about EU policies.'



Margaritis Schinas @MargSchinas · Apr 22

As we approach the European elections, it is more important than ever to meet with elected representatives of local government.

Thank you "Building Europe with Local Councillors" network for a timely discussion on improving understanding of and communication about EU policies.



Italian BELC members visit to Brussels



Lithuanian BELC members visit to Brussels

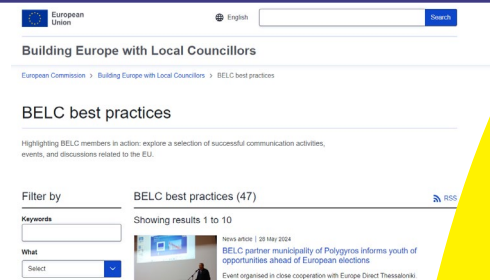
Futurium - your space for information and networking!

Information and communication material about **EU topics of your interest** are just a few clicks away in the **library section** of Futurium! All posts are accessible in your own official EU language.

Explore other categories such as the dedicated one about the **European elections here**, **meet fellow BELC members here**, or share **your own activities here**.



Building Europe with Local Councillors



New on BELC website

- An upgraded **interactive BELC member map!** The map features a new filter function, allowing anyone to easily find EU local councillors by country and region to network with like-minded people who share their passion for the EU and local governance.
- New entries in the **best practices section!** Check out the new initiatives led by BELC members. Discover their innovative approaches in communicating the EU on the ground.