EU regions and cities pledge Mayor Klitschko support to rebuild Ukraine

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Vitaliy Klitschko, Chairman of the Association of Ukrainian Cities and Mayor of Kyiv, takes part in the meeting of the European Committee of the Regions in Prague to show support for efforts by the Committee and Czech Presidency of the EU for Ukraine's reconstruction.

The European Committee of the Regions offers its full and strong support to Ukrainian cities and regions, its President, Vasco Cordeiro, said on 16 September, saying that EU regions and cities will continue to support Ukrainian local and regional authorities over the long term.

The statements came at a meeting of the European Committee of the Regions in Prague, hosted in cooperation with the Czech Presidency of the EU and which also saw the participation of Czech Deputy Prime Minister Ivan Bartoš and the Mayor of Prague, Zdeněk Hřib, a member of the CoR. Members discussed the consequences of the war against Ukraine for people in the European Union, and also how a newly formed Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine could support Ukraine's local communities as they try to cope with the effects of Russia's invasion.

Vasco Alves Cordeiro , President of the European Committee of the Regions, said: "It is an honour for the European Committee of the Regions to welcome Vitaliy Klitschko, Chairman of the Association of Ukrainian Cities and Mayor of Kyiv. I cannot underline enough our sincere, strong and unconditional support to fellow Ukrainian local and regional representatives and the entire population in the fight against tyranny and for the values we all share. We hand him the honorary membership of the Committee not as a symbol, but as an assertion of our commitment to Ukrainian regions and cities. We are grateful to the Czech presidency for their support and their leadership in forging European solutions. We need to work fast to make sure the winter will not put European solidarity at risk. Regions and cities are doing their part and their role must be recognised". Following an invitation from

Mayor Klitschko and Ukraine's Minister for Communities and Territories Oleksiy Chernyshov, President Cordeiro announced he will travel to Kyiv to show solidarity.

Speaking on behalf of the Czech Presidency of the EU, Ivan Bartoš , Deputy Prime Minster of the Czech Republic, said: "It is obvious that the most pressing issue for the whole Europe are energy crisis and impacts of the war in Ukraine. I am strongly convinced that the only way how to successfully get out of this situation is close European cooperation across the EU and with third countries. So I am honoured to host the meeting of the Bureau of the European Committee of the Regions aimed at looking for possible solutions how to face our common challenges, since we are partners. Stability and renewed prosperity – those are our strategic goals."

Vitaliy Klitschko , Chairman of the Association of Ukrainian Cities and Mayor of Kyiv, said: "We are very grateful to all our partners and friends who help Ukraine. And it's good that you understand: Ukraine is fighting not only for its state and freedom. Today, we are defending stability and peace throughout Europe. And it comes at a very high cost. In the future, our cooperation with you should be more systematic, more effective – in particular, in assisting with the restoration of Ukrainian cities and towns, houses of their residents, and infrastructure."

Apostolos Tzitzikostas , First Vice-President of the CoR and Governor of Central Macedonia, said: "Regions and cities across Europe have been helping each other for decades, across borders. But never before perhaps has there been such a large and sudden need for solidarity. We can help re-build Ukraine from the bottom up."

The European Committee of the Regions launched an Alliance of Cities and Regions for the Reconstruction of Ukraine in June, in response to a request from President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and with the support of the Presidents of the European Council and the European Commission. The Association of Ukrainian Cities is a partner of the Alliance. The Alliance attracted significant new support on 16 September, with the Pact of Free Cities – formed in 2020 by the mayors of Prague, Bratislava, Budapest, and Warsaw – formally joining the Alliance.

The Alliance will form part of an emerging EU platform that will

coordinate reconstruction efforts for Ukraine, including support for the work of local and regional administrations. Mayor Klitschko has played a critical role in trying to translate expressions of goodwill by cities and regions across the world into practical support.

Mayor Klitschko has been working with the European Committee of the Regions for several years, most recently through the Committee's Working Group Ukraine, and in March the CoR made him its first honorary member. Mayor Klitschko's visit to Prague provided the Committee with its first opportunity to confer the honour on him in person.

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