Association Européenne des Représentants Territoriaux de l'État

European Association of State Territorial Representatives

XXXth European Days of State Territorial Representatives

'The State Territorial Representatives and Sustainable Development'

Valencia, Spain

May 8-10, 2025

AERTE EASTR

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PARTICIPANT'S PROGRAMME

Thursday, May 8, 2025

- **13:00** **Cultural Centre La Nau** (University of Valencia)
  C/ de la Universitat, 2, Ciutat Vella, 46003 València, Espagne
- **13:00 - 15:00** Registration of participants and welcoming lunch with guests/companions
- **14:45 - 15:00** Group photo - University Cloister
- **11:00 - 12:30** OPENING PROTOCOL SESSION
  - **Mr Arcadi ESPAÑA GARCÍA**, Secretary of State, Ministry of Territorial Policy (**Spain**)
  - **Mr Ignazio PORTELLI**, President of EASTR, President of ANFACI, State Commissioner for the Sicily Region **(Italy)**
- **15:30 - 17:00** SESSION 1 ***'Emergency management and international cooperation in the context of climate change'***

  Moderator
  - **Ms Milagros TOLON JAIME**, Delegate of the Spanish Government of Spain in Castile-La Mancha **(Spain)**

  Speakers
  - **Ms Pilar María BERNABÉ GARCIA**, State Representative in the Autonomous Community of Valencia **(Spain) 15'**
  - **Mr Stefano LAPORTA**, President of ISPRA (Higher Institute for Environmental Protection and Research) **(Italy) 15'**
    'Energy crisis and environmental threats: the example of the coordination of Italian prefects'
  - **Mr Julien MARION**, Director of the General Directorate-for Civil Security and Crisis Management **(France) 15'**
    'What place for solidarity in Europe in the context of accelerating of the consequences of climate change?'
  - **Mr Ricardo GABALDÓN GABALDÓN**, Mayor of Utiel **(Spain) 15'**

  Exchanges with the audience : 30'
- **17:00 - 18:30** Coffee break and free time (for those who do not participate in the Board of Directors)
- **17:30 - 18:30** BOARD OF DIRECTORS
- **18:30 - 18:40** Walking from the University to the city centre
- **18:45 - 19:45** Guided cultural tour of the historic centre of Valencia
- **19:45 - 20:00** Return from the city centre to Hotel Valencia Palace by bus
- **20:35** Metting at the reception desk of the Valencia Palace Hotel
- **20:45** Departure for dinner by bus from the Valencia Palace Hotel
- **21:00 - 23:30** Dinner at the restaurant 'La Maritima'
- **23:30** Return by bus to Valencia Palace Hotel

PARTICIPANT'S PROGRAMME

Friday, May 9, 2025

- **9:30 - 11:45** SESSION 2 ***'Territorial cohesion and quality of public service. A special focus on policies adapted to demographic transition and climate change'***

  Moderator

  - **Ms Adriana LASTRA FERNANDEZ**, Delegate of the Spanish Government of Spain in Asturias **(Spain)**

  Speakers

  - **Ms Miryam ALVAREZ PAEZ**, Secretary General of Territorial Coordination, Ministry of Territorial Policy and Democratic Memory **(Spain) 20'**
  - **Ms Ina ADEMA**, King's Commissioner in the province of North Brabant **(Netherlands) 20'**
    'Balance between fire and flood: climate "resilience" in a changing Dutch landscape?'
  - **Mr Saffet Arikan BEDÜK**, President of the Association of Turkish Governors **(Turkey) 20'**
    'Sustainable development approach by the territorial representatives of the State in Turkey'
  - **Ms Tania SOLANS RALUY**, Mayor of Esplús **(Spain) 20'**

  Exchanges with the room: 25'

- **11:15 - 12:00** Coffee break

- **12:00 - 13:30** SESSION 3 ***'Sustainable tourism: the issue of territorial cohesion between towns and countries'***

  Moderator

  - **Mr Alfonso RODRÍGUEZ BADAL**, Delegate of the Government of Spain to the Autonomous Community of the Balearic Islands **(Spain)**

  Speakers

  - **Ms Ana MUÑOZ LLABRÉS,** Director General for Tourism Policy **(Spain) 15'**
  - **Ms Michèle PAPPALARDO**, President of the Gustave Eiffel University Foundation **(France) 15'**
    'Tourism and the consequences of climate change in urban areas'
  - **Mr Pablo TORRES PANIAGUA**, Technical Secretary General for Housing and Urban Development **(Spain) 15'**
  - **Mr Denis MATHEN**, Governor of Namur **(Belgium) 15'**
    'The integration and importance of the 'sustainability' dimension in the framework of an international project with tourist impact. The example of Namur'

  Discussions with the audience: 30'

- **13:30 - 14:30** Lunch at the Cultural Centre Le Nau

- **14:30 - 15:30** SESSION 4 ***'The role of artificial intelligence in territorial transformation and population evacuation'***

  Moderator

  - **Ms María SOLEDAD GARMENDIA BELOQUI**, Delegate of the Government of Spain to the Basque Country **(Spain)**

  Speakers

  - **Ms Ruth DEL CAMPO BÉCARES**, Director-General for Data at the Secretariat-General for Digitisation and Artificial Intelligence **(Spain) 20'**
  - **Ms Sophie LAVAUX**, Senior Civil Servant of the Brussels Agglomeration **(Belgium) 20'**
    'Artificial intelligence in the evacuation of populations'

  Discussions with the audience: 20'

- **15:30 - 16:30** SESSION 5 ***'Open Government: bring decision-making closer to citizens. Policies of transparency and security. Resistance to foreign interference and disinformation'***

  Moderator

  - **Mr Francisco MARTIN AGUIRRE**, Delegate of the Government of Spain in Madrid **(Spain)**

  Speakers

  - **Ms Carmen CABANILLAS SERRANO**, Director-General of Public Governance of the Ministry of Digital Transformation and Civil Service **(Spain) 20'**
  - **Mr Mariusz FRANKOWSKI**, Mazovia Voivodeship **(Poland) 30'**
    'Open Government: social resilience to crises. The emergency response system in Poland'

  Discussions with the audience: 10'

- **16:30 - 17:00** Coffee break

- **17:00 - 17:30** CONCLUSIONS OF DAYS

  Ministry of Territorial Policy and Democratic Memory in Spain

  - **Mr Agustín TORRES HERRERO**, Director-General of the General Administration of the State **(Spain)**
  - **Mr Alfonso Carlos GARCÍA ROMERO**, Deputy Director General of European and International Relations **(Spain)**
  - **Mr Jean-Michel BRICAULT**, Lecturer at the University of Reims **(France)**

- **17:30 - 18:30** GENERAL ASSEMBLY and CLOSURE OF WORK
  - **Mr Fernando MARIANO SAMPEDRO MARCOS**, Secretary of State for the European Union **(Spain)**

- **18:30** Group photo

- **20:35** Metting at the reception desk of the Valencia Palace Hotel

- **20:45** Departure for dinner by bus

- **21:00 - 23:45** Dinner at the Oceanographic restaurant

- **23:45** Return by bus to Hotel Valencia Palace

Protocol opening session

BY MR ARCADI ESPAÑA GARCÍA
Secretary of State,
Ministry of Territorial Policy , Spain

The State Secretary of Territorial Policy, Mr Arcadi España, inaugurated in Valencia the 30th European Conference of State Territorial Representatives (EASTR) under the theme "Sustainable Development" which brings together territorial representatives with international counterparts. Mr España stressed the important role of the state in the territory when it comes to helping citizens in the face of the effects of climate change.

The Secretary of State also emphasised the symbolism of this international meeting, which was being held for the first time in the city of Valencia after the DANA, a disaster which highlighted the key role of government delegations and town halls, particularly in a decentralised country such as Spain.

These sessions are an excellent opportunity to learn from what has happened, to exchange synergies with countries that have also suffered the adverse effects of climate change, such as Türkiye and Morocco, and to work together to improve prevention measures that protect citizens.

Opening protocol session

BY MR IGNAZIO PORTELLI
President of AERTE and ANFACI, Italy

Hello everyone,

I sincerely thank you for your presence at the XXXth European Territorial representatives of the State.
I warmly greet and warmly thank the Government of Spain and Secretary of State Arcadi España Garcia, who honours us with his presence.
I also thank the speakers, the moderators of the working sessions and the organizers.
I also extend my warmest thanks to the beautiful city of Valencia, the Valencian Community and the University for their hospitality.
The topics we are going to address here are of great importance to our countries and require adequate analytical capacity and appropriate pragmatism.
We meet again in Spain after the interesting *JERTE* in Castile and León and, before that, the meetings in Madrid, Malaga and Toledo.

The *European Days* have long been linked to our Spanish colleagues and we have very good memories of personal friendship. I am thinking in particular of Luis Negro Carrillo, José Luis Becares, Juan Antonio Redondo Parral and Francisco Álvarez Santamaría.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the great return of our colleagues from Poland and Greece and to point out that our Albanian colleagues, as well as our Italian colleagues, were prevented from participating in our activities because of the elections and, in the case of Italy, the five referendums held simultaneously.

I am very happy to celebrate with all of you in Spain the 30th edition of the *European Days*. This is an important step, which confirms the solidity of our project.
Since the first two meetings in Rome in 1994 and 1995, the aim has been to promote the exchange of knowledge and experience *between the territorial representatives of the State*, in a spirit of strong conviction, cultivated with consistency and rigour. By *territorial representatives of the State*, we refer to:

a) institutional actors whose common element is to represent the government, national or regional, on the territory;

b) institutional actors dealing with the relations between the centre and the periphery, i.e. between central and local authorities.

From the beginning to the present, significant experience has been gained. It has been found that there are *representatives* in almost all European states, regardless of the diversity of state forms, different types of government and national rules.

State officials have different qualifications. The rules of access to the functions are diverse, they can be subject to the *system of spoils* and the complexity of the tasks assigned to them can vary.

For this reason, the generic term territorial *representative of the State* is used, i.e. the intermediate administrative authority between the different levels of government. The effectiveness of this network of interinstitutional relations, which is sometimes complex, depends on the ability to create networks and collaborate, as well as on the ability to synthesize the activities of the various public authorities operating in the territory. We are, on the ground, the interpreters of kaleidoscopic social contexts.

Over the course of thirty *days*, we have learned all this. More than six hundred interventions and reports and more than four thousand five hundred participants confirm the validity of the original objective set thirty years ago. There was a widely shared need, to which the *Days* fully responded.

Our meetings, including preparatory meetings, took place in 48 cities in 23 countries; One of these cities was Lugansk in Ukraine, now occupied by Russia. At the time of our meeting, the city was experiencing a democratic effervescence after a long period of Soviet domination. That is why a very lively meeting was held with the students and professors of the university, and we were overwhelmed with questions about democracy, the principles of liberal thought, constitutions, elections, etc.

As part of our activities, we have freely discussed and reflected on all aspects relevant to our profession and, in doing so, we have also deepened our mutual knowledge and community of cultural and institutional values, involving academics, experts, representatives of important institutions and companies, as well as representatives of civil society and culture.

I would like to briefly recall a few important steps:
a) in 2000, the foundation in Ghent of our European association, AERTE-EASTR, which is our legal and organisational entity;
b) in 2008, the founding of the Euro-Mediterranean Observatory: this has enabled us to broaden the network of representatives in the Mediterranean basin and to bring knowledge closer together, particularly during the *Arab Spring* 15 years ago;
c) the various protocols signed with study and research centres;
d) finally, the inclusion of our archives in the Historical Archives of the European Union, housed in a prestigious villa in Florence, has been a significant mark of recognition for us.

Our activities have also been made possible thanks to the support of the French Ministry of the Interior, the Belgian Ministry of the Interior, the European Union and many other national and territorial authorities, as well as many companies. We would like to thank in particular all those individuals and institutions, whose support has been important for our commitment and for which we can only be grateful.

In conclusion, the European Association, the *Days*, the Observatory and the various collaborations form a coherent whole which must continue to fully assume its role as a reliable centre for cultural and professional development, and contribute to the development of associative policy in its most authentic and historical sense, in the name of our common values, despite the efforts it requires and by guarding against easy solutions.

Don Quixote said to Sancho: Learn that one man is no more than another, if he does no more than another. Thirty years ago, a group of volunteer colleagues relied on an initiative that many felt was unfeasible and was trying to discourage. And yet, we have gathered today in Valencia to testify that these pioneers have done more than many others – and that is why they have done more than others.

Thank you for your attention and wish you a good continuation.

Session 1

Emergency management and international cooperation in the context of climate change

BY MS PILAR MARÍA BERNABÉ GARCIA
State Representative in the Autonomous Community of Valencia, Spain

THE CURRENT DRAFT OF A EUROPE WITH NEW SHARED CHALLENGES

Cooperation between nations and the common defence of values such as democracy and human rights are needed more than ever in a turbulent global context, where Europe continues to support a common project based on cooperation and shared public sector action; but today Europe faces challenges such as geopolitical tensions, migration crises and challenges such as climate change.

We are representatives of a citizenship that expects us to be effective, proactive and committed. And that is why meetings like this allow us to improve our public action and enrich ourselves with the experiences of colleagues from other countries.

THE ANTICIPATION AS KEY TO AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE

A climate disaster does not become a human tragedy if there is: planning, prevention and coordination.
Anticipation and cooperation, it is the difference between an extreme event and a calamity.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE DANA OF VALENCE

In the midst of so much sadness and despair, the people of Valencia will never forget the enormous outpouring of solidarity we received at this crucial moment. The arrival of volunteers, the heroic action of the Army and the CFSS. Firefighters, health workers, civil servants. On 8 November 2024, at the request of the Generalitat Valenciana, the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) was activated. Through this mechanism:

- France deployed 15 vehicles and 50 personnel;
- Portugal supplied 30 vehicles and 101 people. Both operations were managed by the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) with the direct support of the Spanish Government. This was a demonstration that when governments work together – and do so with fairness, transparency and speed – results are achieved.

Session 1

Energy crisis and environmental threats: the example of the coordination of Italian prefects

BY MR STEFANO LAPORTA
President of ISPRA (Higher Institute for Environmental Protection and Research), Italy

We are living in an era of critical transition: the energy crisis and environmental threats are redefining the way states approach the management of natural resources, the security of territories and the protection of public order and security.

This requires increasingly integrated, multilevel and multidisciplinary responses: the environmental and security dimensions can no longer be considered separately.

The Mediterranean is considered a "hotspot" of the climate crisis, because it heats up faster than the global average, with significant consequences on the environment and citizenship, such as the tragic flooding that hit the city of Valencia, caused by one of the extreme weather phenomena that unfortunately occur with increasing frequency, especially in southern Europe.

Italy is characterised by a strong geoclimatic vulnerability, which makes it directly and increasingly exposed to the effects of climate change.

These events are multiplying and intensifying, and are becoming increasingly complex to model, predict and manage. They are cascading phenomena, the consequences of which can manifest themselves on a geographic and temporal scale much wider than the point of origin: landslides following heavy rains, disruptions to strategic infrastructures, social and economic damage that lasts for years.

Add to this the energy crisis: the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has made it clear that energy cannot be treated as a mere market transaction responding to mere economic logic, clearly showing that gas is a strategic resource and geopolitical issue.

Think also of the recent severe blackout in Spain and Portugal.

This shows how the issue of energy supply connects countries located in the same geographical area affected by the crisis, how this problem is part of the concept of public security, and how fundamental cooperation in the field of institutional public order and security is.

Dealing with such situations requires close institutional coordination, between central and local administrations, but also between states, within the framework of international cooperation and European adaptation and mitigation policies.

It is necessary to equip ourselves with new analysis tools and to intensify the role of Prefects so that they can take into account these interconnections and strengthen the resilience of territories. The strategic role of Prefects is fundamental for the connection between State and territory also to act in the management of environmental and energy emergencies.

In Italy, within the National Civil Protection Service, a strong coordination role is recognised to the Prefect. In fact, the Prefect, in case of emergency events, ensures a constant flow of information with the components of the service; he takes charge of the emergency services to be activated at a provincial level in the immediacy of the event, in liaison with the President of the Regional Council; he promotes and coordinates the adoption of the necessary measures to ensure the intervention of the State structures; he supervises the implementation of emergency services; he activates the State bodies and administrations, thus presenting himself as a necessary interlocutor, when the crisis event occurs. The Prefect can and must stimulate at the local level so that the administrations are ready to operate in a systemic manner

To this must be added the strengthening of the culture of prevention, based on scientific data, knowledge of the territory, inter-institutional collaboration and public awareness of environmental risks and energy emergencies.

Furthermore, the training of public administration operators in new types of risk, including environmental and energy emergencies, is not negligible.

The example and coordination model of the Prefects thus appears as an example and viable solution to try to prevent and manage environmental and energy crises, if necessary, which are now also part of the Prefects' activities, also because of the delicate implications on social cohesion (think of the issue of energy poverty).

National and local emergency plans must always be updated from an integrated perspective, both in terms of civil and industrial protection.

In conclusion, the climate and energy crisis represent central challenges of our time. But also an opportunity to rethink, in depth, the ways in which territories are governed, the environment is protected and citizens' safety is ensured.

In this process, the role of the Prefects will be increasingly central and decisive.

Session 1
Disaster management experiences

BY MR RICARDO GABALDÓN GABALDÓN
Mayor of Utiel, Spain

Appropriate, specific and detailed protocols should be recommended for small municipalities that allow a rapid response to critical or catastrophic events, given the lack or limited resources available in these territorial administrations.

Cross-cutting collaboration that goes beyond partisan aspects is essential and includes administrative support for effective management of aid and recovery, as well as maximum collaboration between municipalities.

Looking ahead, three elements should be highlighted:

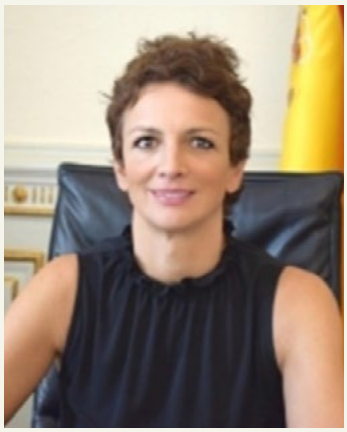
- **Specific and detailed protocols;**
- **Cross-cutting training and information;**
- **Delimitation of competences between territorial administrations.**

They are key factors in meeting the needs of citizens in a society where the challenges we face are ever greater. ●

Session 2

Territorial cohesion and quality of public service. A special focus on policies adapted to demographic transition and climate change.

BY MS MIRYAM ALVAREZ PAEZ
Secretary General of Territorial Coordination,
Ministry of Territorial Policy
and Democratic Memory, Spain



I want to emphasize the importance of spaces for dialogue such as EASTR for effective solutions, such as a space for debate and listening where participants can share their experiences and analyse together the problems of a changing world, facing increasingly difficult challenges, to which responses must be based on anticipation of difficulties and problems, cooperation between countries and solidarity.

The territorial model is key in decision-making and skills, a territorial model understood in its broadest vision to achieve greater proximity to citizens and address their problems not only at the provincial level but also at the local level and especially in rural areas where, despite their depopulation, we must also involve these citizens in our decisions and solutions.

The diversity of the local world affects governance. Not only does national and provincial diversity affect governance, but also local diversity, whose needs we need to address equally, and we also need to strengthen rural areas that have different problems from those of large urban areas but also need common governance.

Use of new technologies: Use of new technologies in all possible environments and intended for all, but especially for older people who are not used to technological environments, without neglecting the security mechanisms necessary to safeguard the positive advances that computer and technological environments facilitate in our lives.

Successful administration close to you, more transparency, agreements with NGOs to help with rights procedures and AAPP's awareness-raising initiative among young people are other relevant aspects that our administrations need to take into account in a globalised world. ●

Session 2

Balancing fire and flood : climate 'resilience' in a changing Dutch landscape ?

BY MS INA ADEMA
King's Commissioner in the province of North Brabant , The Nertherlands

Ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Ina Adema and I am the King's Commissioner in the province of North Brabant. Today I will tell you how we in the Netherlands - and in particular in my province - are coping with the increasing challenges of climate change. A story about water and fire, floods and drought, and above all: about how we are building smart, sustainable and resilient solutions together.

The Netherlands is a small and densely populated country: over 17 million inhabitants in a limited area. After Malta and a few microstates Europe's most populous country. In our province Noord-Brabant, we have 2.6 million inhabitants, about 553 people per square kilometre. This puts considerable pressure on our space, infrastructure, nature and living environment. At the same time, we want to use that same space for sustainable growth, a strong economy and a pleasant living environment. That is a complicated puzzle.

Much of the Netherlands lies below sea level. Our relationship with water has always focused on control. We built dykes, dams, delta works and locks. Our rivers widened, our deltas tightly regulated. Thanks to this hydraulic knowledge, we live and work in places that would otherwise be flooded and uninhabitable. The Netherlands have literally been shaped by the battle against water.

But the climate is changing. Besides extreme rainfall, we are increasingly faced with drought. And that creates a new threat: wildfires. In 2020, we had a fire in a large forest area in Brabant - the Deurnese Peel - that lasted two weeks. More than 800 hectares of nature were lost. Firefighters had to flee for their lives. And last month we had two wildfires in Brabant. Such fires are disastrous - for people, nature and climate - and call for new solutions.

Our strategy has always been: drain water as quickly as possible. That doesn't work anymore. We need to retain, buffer and make better use of water. This requires a different mindset and new measures. For instance, we deliberately make nature areas wetter by raising the groundwater level. This prevents dehydration, limits the risk of fire and contributes to biodiversity and climate adaptation. we are also doing more and more to prevent, control and fight wildfires. Brabant leads the way in the Netherlands. An important key is cooperation. We work together around vulnerable areas, for example: municipalities, landowners and safety organisations. One plan for each area. That's how we do it.

Besides quantity, the quality of our water is also at risk. We see increasing pollution of ground and surface water and in addition, demand for clean drinking water is rising. Shortages are looming in some areas. So we need to invest in a strong water system and use water in a more sustainable way. Everyone has a role to play in this: governments, companies and citizens.

Spatial pressure in Brabant is high. We need housing. And more space for defence, for example. Brabant is the defence province par excellence, including four military airfields and the largest army base in the Netherlands. And geopolitical tensions call for more. Economically, our province is strong. For example, Brainport Eindhoven is a top technological region with a fast-growing knowledge and manufacturing industry. Think of companies as chip machine manufacturer ASML and industrial supplier VDL. To enable further growth, the national, provincial and municipal governments are investing EUR 2.5 billion. But growth requires: more housing, more schools, more mobility, more water and more leisure facilities, including nature. Meanwhile, there are more challenges: the power grid is full. We are looking for space for wind turbines, solar fields and grid reinforcement. Not to mention the difficulty of the combination of nature, agriculture and nitrogen. and because we are a densely populated country, we all see the necessity of solutions, but Not In My Backyard.

To tackle these complex issues, we need to work together. Think of it as building a house: the national government is the architect. It determines what needs to be done. The province is the director - we see where and how. And the municipalities are the implementers and facilitators: they make it work at street level. It only works if

we work together well. In my role as King's Commissionar ánd as chairman of all provinces, I regularly speak to the national government. Among other things, about themes such as nitrogen – which is a big problem in the Netherlands, energy, housing and climate. Cooperation between the various governments on these kinds of dossiers is not a luxury - it is a necessity.

But we are working hard on solutions. With thoughtful landscaping, smart techniques and good cooperation, we are achieving results and making an impact. And as a province, we take many initiatives for a better and climate-resilient future. We are greening our cities and homes. We widen rivers and create water buffers – as a result, there is less area for other purposes. We help farmers to become more sustainable and emit less nitrogen - through advice and support. Industrial heritage gets new functions: as residential areas and cultural hotspots. And we develop sustainable business parks, where, where circular building and nature go hand in hand.

Our spatial and ecological challenges are huge. That also makes us take action. It forces us to combine knowledge, decisiveness and creativity. And precisely as the province - as director of space and climate - we have a key role. Together with the national government, municipalities, water boards, companies and residents, we are building a resilient and future-proof Netherlands. The power of together, that's what we call it in Brabant and in the Netherlands.

I hope you got a picture of the challenges and solutions we face in our small and densely populated country and province. The bottom line is: if we keep thinking like we always have, we won't get there. Then we will need three times as much space as we have now. That is why we seek integral solutions - as if we were laying a 3D puzzle, in which everything is connected. This is how we build – together – a solid and resilient as well as a better future. ●

Session 2

Sustainable development approach by the State Territorial Representatives in Türkiye

BY MR SAFFET ARIKAN BEDÜK
President of the Association
of Turkish Governors, Türkiye

Sustainable development has emerged as a development model that can meet the needs of present generations without compromising the capacity of future generations to fully, adequately and safely meet their needs for a standard human life. Towards the end of the 20th century, it entered the world agenda and became a global implementation plan with international agreements signed in the 1990s. This understanding is a discipline that includes positive contributions that are important not only for the needs of today and today's people, but also for future generations.

Sustainable development refers to the common denominator of humanity and the goals of development not only in material and economic terms but also in social, cultural, security, environmental, legal and administrative fields. Sustainable development is the achievement of lasting and equitable social welfare for all humanity.

The general welfare level in a country is an indicator of its cultural, social and administrative structure as well as its general level of development. Customs, traditions, beliefs, all kinds of tangible and intangible elements that people accept as right and wrong constitute the cultural dimension of sustainable development; factors such as protection of the family, children and youth, support for disadvantaged individuals, balanced and fair employment and sharing, increasing general welfare in an environment of peace and tranquility, protection of human dignity and social peace constitute the social dimension of sustainable development; national values, historical and natural wealth, beliefs constitute the cultural dimension; legal regulation, supervision, consultations, local needs and opportunities, institutional capacity of the state constitute the administrative dimension; protection of the environment and natural balance constitutes the environmental dimension; economical use of natural resources, exploration of alternative and renewable energy resources, energy efficiency constitute the economic dimension.

Sustainable development concerns both individuals, state institutions and private sector enterprises, as well as international organizations. In this field, every person and institution at every level has a duty. If states, politicians, managers, public and private sector institutions and international organizations are fair, sincere and honest about sustainable development, it will be easy to achieve the goal and this issue will make sense; otherwise, what is said will not make sense and will remain as empty words.

Without justice, peace and tranquility in the world cannot be sustained. Every society has a lifestyle and therefore a culture related to social life, perception of the state, perception of the environment, public services, production and cooperation. Sustainable development, in addition to protecting local culture and respecting cultural values, concerns the common values of all humanity. When we look at the economic crises, wars, terrorism, migration and ruthless competition in today's world, it becomes clear that the most important factor in terms of security, production, consumption, employment and welfare, both nationally and internationally, is “justice”. Without a justice system and cooperation to protect the oppressed, the innocent, the poor and underdeveloped countries, without respect for other beliefs and cultures, without protecting the territorial integrity of countries, without guaranteeing people's right to live, without ensuring the security of life and property, it is unthinkable for peace and tranquility to be sustainable in the world. Both sustainable development and the concept of justice do not accept injustice, exploitation, extortion and taking what is not rightfully theirs.

If people in the world continue to die of hunger and war, if their countries are occupied, if they have no security of life and property, sustainable development has not yet been realized. Therefore, sustainable development is a necessary goal not only for the rich and powerful, but for all humanity, and in essence means the permanent social welfare of all humanity.

COMPOUND CONTAINERS

All sectors and actors in a country, or even in any country, are like compound containers. A change in one area affects other areas. If there is a humanitarian and positive development in one area, this new situation will directly or indirectly affect other areas positively; if there is a negative situation in a sector in a country or in a part of the world, it will negatively affect other countries and sectors to a certain extent, starting from nearby countries and sectors.

A positive development that can be realized in any sector in a country is of great importance for the future of the country, the nation and even the whole humanity. In this context, sustainable development requires increasing the good and reducing the negative. For this reason, keeping human values alive, sincerely respecting human rights, supporting production and employment in countries with a free market economy will contribute to the permanent welfare, peace, economic and social development of the country, the nation and indirectly the whole humanity.

NATIONAL WEALTH

Investments made by the private sector in a country are the property of the entrepreneur who made the investment until they are put into operation; however, once they are put into operation, they become the property of the whole country, the whole nation; in common parlance, they become national wealth. It is possible to give examples from almost every sector. In Antalya, the center of tourism in Türkiye, hotels with a capacity of thousands of beds each provide financial gain to their entrepreneurs, but at the same time, in a national or international meeting or event organized by the country, they are the pride of the country and the nation in terms of quality accommodation, comfort and satisfaction.

Private sector organizations, which are considered national wealth, provide the most important contribution to employment as well as sales to domestic and foreign markets all over the world. As of the end of 2024, 13.09% of employment in Türkiye was in the public sector and 86.91% in the private sector.

Statistics show that employment in the private sector, especially in industry, increases every year, while it decreases in the public sector. In this context, for the state, in addition to ensuring the effective and efficient operation of the public sector and increasing social trust, which indicates the degree of satisfaction of the citizens with the service provision of the state; supporting the private sector, removing legal and administrative obstacles in front of it, and making efforts to ensure peace of work are of great importance for the economic, social and psychological development of the country, employment and peace of mind of the citizens.

DUTIES OF THE STATE

The state has many duties that are both defined by written legislation and shaped by the tradition of state administration. Among these, there are five classical primary duties that have not changed since time immemorial. These are; protecting the borders of the country from all kinds of illegal and unlawful passage of people and goods; defending citizens, real and legal persons against individual and organizational threats from outside; ensuring internal security through legitimate security units and officials; ensuring justice through institutions and rules, supporting and protecting disadvantaged citizens. In addition to these duties, the regulation of transportation infrastructure and economic and commercial life have also been among the important duties of the state.

Transportation is vital both for the healthy and rapid realization of economic and commercial activities and for the continuation of travel, security and other public services.

Private sector organizations, which are legal entities, are also under both the protection and supervision of the state and are subject to its sanctions. Like natural persons, legal entities also have legal rules that they must comply with. In this context, the state is in a regulatory, directive and supervisory position in the commercial and economic field.

The state should make the best of the work that it does directly; it should also be a regulator, guide and supervisor in the areas that it allows the private sector to do; it should facilitate the work of private sector organizations provided that they remain within the legal framework; it should support them. The state itself should not be a problem or an obstacle in the affairs and transactions related to the private sector; it should be a problem solver whose decisions are trusted and respected. In this context, facilitating the lives of private sector institutions and organizations, which are legal entities, within the scope of their legal activities, removing obstacles in front of them, and helping them overcome bottlenecks with incentives and support should also be considered among the duties and responsibilities of the state.

STATE TERRITORIAL REPRESENTATIVES

The state can carry out its duties through decisions, regulations, practices and interventions directly from the center, as well as through its institutions, organizations and personnel in the provinces. As the most important representatives of the state in the provinces, State Territorial Representatives (governors, district governors), who are in the position of general administrators, fulfill the duties of the state defined by law by taking decisions according to the conditions and needs of the region, in coordination with the relevant institutions and organizations, to the extent of their means and capabilities.

State Territorial Representatives, who carry out services on behalf of the state in the provinces, have duties in the fields of social, cultural, security, employment, administration and environmental protection; they also act as a bridge between the state and citizens.

They also have the means and capacity to meet the basic humanitarian needs of disabled, elderly and orphaned disadvantaged citizens. They fulfill this service with the facilities and social service personnel of the social assistance and solidarity foundations they head; they also mediate voluntary civilian contributions and thus contribute to social welfare.

Through various legal regulations, State Territorial Representatives have also been given duties and powers to direct and supervise the activities of private sector organizations in economic and commercial dimensions, including the elements of sustainable development. While fulfilling their supervisory

duties in this regard, the members of the profession do not look for loopholes, prevent or punish the activities of the organization, but guide, rehabilitate, facilitate the activities of the legal entity within the scope of the legislation, and guide the activities of the legal entity in order to ensure better quality production and increase employment, and exhibit a constructive and positive attitude.

COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Private sector organizations, which try to meet personal and social needs by producing goods or services, not only provide benefits to their entrepreneurs, shareholders and employees, but also provide resources directly to the state and public services by paying taxes and indirectly to real and legal persons who will benefit from the service; they contribute to society and social peace through employment.

Providing positive communication and cooperation between all segments of the society and all sectors by the State Territorial Representatives, who are the representatives of the state and the government in the provinces, will contribute positively to sustainable development. In this way, social and economic development, employment, occupational safety and health, general security, social peace, environmental protection, prevention of waste of resources and productivity indicators will improve positively. Some of the activities carried out in this environment of cooperation and communication can be listed as follows:

The private sector participates in training programs, national and international fairs and meetings, and benefits from expert opinions, especially on general security, occupational safety and occupational health, accident prevention and risk reduction, productivity, environmental protection, crisis management, in communication and cooperation with State Territorial Representatives.

In Türkiye, Law No. 5449 enacted in 2006 envisaged the establishment of development agencies in 26 NUTS 2 regions and as of 2009, all 26 development agencies have been established and continue their activities under the chairmanship of governors.

Development agencies are established "in order to accelerate regional development, ensure its sustainability, and reduce inter-regional and intra-regional development disparities in line with the principles and policies envisaged in national development plans and programs by improving cooperation between the public sector, private sector and non-governmental organizations, ensuring the appropriate and effective use of resources and mobilizing local potential" established. Development agencies, whose presidents are governors, guide willing investors and provide them with preliminary information on areas with investment opportunities.

In order to meet the need for qualified personnel and intermediate staff, especially in the field of industry, vocational and training courses are opened in cooperation with municipalities, chambers of industry and commerce, public education directorates, Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), social assistance and solidarity foundations and non-governmental organizations under the coordination of State Territorial Representatives.

- State Territorial Representatives also mediate services and voluntary contributions for disadvantaged groups.
- Providing employment from local sources also increases the acceptability and reputation of the enterprise in the eyes of the public.

In terms of sustainable development, research and development (R&D) activities are increasingly emphasized by the public and private sectors.

Industrial organizations pay special attention to protecting soil, water and air quality. In particular, clean, sufficient and accessible water is one of the most important needs of today's societies and future generations. For this reason, maximum savings in water consumption and the establishment of biological treatment facilities enabling the reuse of wastewater by enterprises are monitored closely.

- In regions where land is allocated for investment incentives, public and private lands suitable for investment are identified by the State Territorial Representatives. Information on this subject is constantly updated and investors are provided with reliable information upon request.

Private sector investors have the opportunity to obtain reliable information from the State Territorial Representatives on the general advantages and disadvantages of the region in which they wish to invest and the suitability of the investment to be made in the region.

Emergency response and security plans of private sector organizations are continuously updated and reinforced from time to time through drills under the coordination of State Territorial Representatives. In addition, there is also the opportunity to work jointly to prevent or minimize power and water cuts, which are of great importance for industrial organizations as well as private individuals.

City security systems with cameras provide great advantages and convenience to security units and property owners in preventing crime and combating criminals. Many complex public order incidents can be easily and quickly resolved thanks to the Urban Security Management System (KGYS) system. Private sector organizations also establish the security system in cooperation with the State Territorial Representatives in order to ensure the general security of their enterprises and facilities at a higher level.

Using the natural resources and physical infrastructure of the region in which they operate, private sector organizations pay attention to the sensitivities of the society and the environment in which they operate; they contribute to the community through sponsorships, social activities and social responsibility projects in line with local needs and expectations, particularly in the areas of education, health and afforestation; this is also important in terms of social sensitivity and sustainability.

CONCLUSION

In the eyes of citizens and legal entities, State Territorial Representatives, who are assigned many duties by various legislations and regulations, especially the duties to ensure the implementation of laws as the representative of the state, the orderly execution of public services and investments, and the

maintenance of general public order and order, are seen as the final solution place and authority for problems, failures and deficiencies in the provinces.

In addition to their direct executive duties for their provinces and districts, State Territorial Representatives also have the authority to coordinate the activities of all public institutions, including municipalities. In this respect, they are among the authorities that will make the most important contribution to the development of cooperation between private sector organizations and public institutions and organizations in the provinces and to the resolution of problems and disputes that may arise.

With this capacity, attitude and behavior, the State Territorial Representatives, who have always sincerely and fairly helped and supported those who have done useful work for the citizens and the country within their capacities, means and time, and have always tried to make their lives easier, also carry out a mission and vision that integrates the cultural, psychological, security, environmental, social and administrative dimensions of sustainable development in Türkiye.

More intensive communication and cooperation between state institutions, state administrators, private sector, universities, non-governmental organizations all over the world will be more beneficial in terms of economic, social, cultural development, employment, social security, environmental protection, prevention of waste of resources and efficiency, and ultimately, "sustainable development, which is the continuous provision of a permanent and fair level of social welfare in peace and tranquility", which is necessary for all humanity, will be achieved more easily. ●

Session 2

BY MS TANIA SOLANS RALUY
Mayor of Esplús, Spain

Population growth in Esplús: we have increased our population by 25% in the last 7 years, from 541 inhabitants in 2018 to 673 in 2024.
Growth factors: one of the main factors was its geographical location, in a prosperous region with job opportunities. But state, provincial and local policies on services, housing and reconciliation have also had a positive influence.

Territorial cohesion and public services: living in rural areas does not mean giving up rights or services.

Equal access to the internet to support teleworking, education and services. Initiative of the Spanish government to succeed in an '**Administration close to you**' with mobile offices by guaranteeing the procedures with public administrations without having to move. Services such as obtaining digital certificates, renewing identity cards or passports for example.

Conciliation policies and co-responsibility plan of the Spanish Government. Free lessons in the morning, games room in the afternoon and subsidized school cafeteria. Kindergarten (0–3 years) with free registration and reduced rates. Flexible schedules that allow you to reconcile work and family life. Active ageing with free daily activities for seniors; Memory workshops, gymnastics, healthy walks...

Intergenerational activities with kindergarten.

Space for socialisation and prevention of loneliness.

A housing plan is proposed : we are for the creation of public rental housing and for the construction of two youth homes.

Climate change and sustainability: A more sustainable energy model (Next Generation Funds) and the need for grants to improve the energy efficiency of municipal infrastructure, promote sustainable mobility and reduce CO2 emissions through clean technologies.

Circular economy: a door-to-door waste collection model, Esplús recycles 67%, exceeding the EU target of 55% by 2025. 50% increase in packaging and paper/cardboard recycling.

Session 3

Sustainable tourism: the question of territorial cohesion between towns and countries

BY MS ANA MUÑOZ LLABRÉS
Director General of Tourism Policies, Spain

Due to the COVID crisis, opportunities have been created thanks to the Next G. A broad vision of sustainability: do not cause damage to the environment, territorial sustainability, burden sharing between more or less saturated destinations, sustainable coexistence between residential and tourist tourism.

The four key aspects to be taken into account in the sustainable development of our society and the globalized world are:
Tourism that respects the environment and society.
Digitalisation is essential for information and communication.

The recovery strategy has brought new opportunities: **Management of tourist destinations.** Social and economic cohesion. Promote new destinations such as rural destinations with cultural heritage, urban destinations and protected areas.

Governance: Coordination of the Autonomous Communities and Local Authorities (EELL) which manage the tourism activities of supra-local destinations managed by the regional governments. Energy efficiency. Social and cultural sustainability: promotion of crafts, restoration of traditional recipes, restoration of cultural buildings, etc. "Being authentic (caring for and promoting cultural heritage) to be different".

Investment works through Next G.

Sustainable Mobility: bike paths, greenways, promotion of hiking...

Session 3

Tourism and the consequences of climate change in urban areas

BY MS MICHÈLE PAPPALARDO
President of the Gustave Eiffel University Foundation , France

TOURISM AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN URBAN AREAS

The increase in human-induced greenhouse gas emissions since the beginning of the industrial era has led to changes in the climate, which now have major consequences not only for our activities but also for our environment, our food, our health, etc. Of course, tourism activities are also affected, even in cities.

We must therefore take into account the impact of climate change on tourism in our countries, especially as Europe is more affected than the rest of the world by the average increase in temperature: +2.4° since the pre-industrial era compared to +1.3° for the whole planet.

Meteorologists' forecasts for the coming years are unambiguous: the average temperature will continue to rise and will be accompanied by an increase in extreme events: drought, heatwaves, intense rains causing river and rain floods, rising sea levels...

For Europe, 2024 is a good indicator of what lies ahead. In particular, the climate of cities will be completely changed. Paris will be similar in 2050 to Istanbul and London to Barcelona.

These developments have a particularly important impact on tourism, especially in the mountains or by the sea. But the consequences for urban tourism are also very significant, for all segments of the sector, whether we are dealing with the increase in heat, heat waves or floods:

- summer comfort of tourist accommodation and problems related to its location;
- disruption of city visitation activities due to excessive heat, flooding or the impact of weather events on the city;
- supply problems, in particular water;
- many problems of network failures (electrical, transport, communication), with cascading consequences, especially in transport, to access the city or to circulate there.

In France, where tourism activity is particularly important, awareness of the risks to tourism has been relatively rapid. This can be illustrated in two ways:

- Tourism is the subject of particular attention in the Climate Change Adaptation Plan (PNACC) presented at the beginning of the year. This plan was designed on the basis of a +4° trajectory in France in 2100 and sets out some 50 measures to be implemented. Tourism but also the preservation of natural and cultural heritage are concerned by several of these measures.
- In 2022, ADEME (Agency for the Ecological Transition) started field experiments with stakeholders in the sector to develop the first French sectoral adaptation strategy, dedicated to tourism. It is a guide for operators and tourist territories, published in June 2024 (methodological guide, diagnostic tool, factsheets).

Improving the resilience of cities to climate change has therefore become essential, for all their inhabitants and their activities, of course, but also for tourism. The diversion of tourist flows from certain cities, permanently or periodically, could indeed lead to serious economic consequences.

Regarding tourism in the city, the actions to be carried out are numerous and very diversified. Two factors must be particularly taken into account:

- Actions should, where possible, combine adaptation and mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions in order not to exacerbate climate change.
- The blackout in the Iberian Peninsula must lead to particular attention being paid to the sensitivity to electrical blackouts: generalize emergency solutions (batteries, diesel generators, batteries, self-production PV ...), plans B with frustrated solutions ...

Public actors, at all territorial levels, such as private actors in the sector, have particular responsibilities in the actions to be carried out.

For public actors:

- the national level must work to raise awareness among citizens and mobilise economic actors. It is also responsible for improving the resilience of all networks, including by

developing research on these topics;

- regions must be concerned, in particular, about food and water supply conditions!
- cities must carefully identify the risks linked to climate change that are of specific concern to them; this makes it possible to develop appropriate urban planning, to limit heat islands, to develop dewatering and greening ... but also to adapt local networks and protect cultural heritage.

For economic actors, the mobilisation of the tourism sector at national level must lead local actors to prepare regional developments (changes in tourism activities and seasons) and to support each actor, in particular to develop accommodation, identifying the risks and sensitivity of buildings, to adapt them to climatic changes (water and energy sobriety, summer comfort, energy autonomy, etc.). ●

Session 3

BY MR PABLO TORRES PANIAGUA

Technical Secretary General of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, Spain

Tourism is an economic driver for our country, but it is also an activity that has a **significant impact on our cities, in particular on housing policy.** In addition, sustainable tourism is a tool for territorial cohesion, capable of reactivating rural areas, contributing to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage and improving the local economy.

This is why it is important to implement **public policies** with a clear territorial perspective and at the same time transversal that take into account the quality of life of citizens in the countryside and in the city, i.e. in the two main physical settlements of the population, targeting both sparsely populated Spain and overcrowded cities.

It is a comprehensive vision of the territorial component, so that all actors, public and private, involved in cities and seeking equitable, fair and sustainable development from their different areas of action, can draw up their own Action Plans.

The territorial and urban model advocated by the Agenda is inspired by the **principle of sustainable territorial and urban development**. It is a necessary principle for the expected economic, ecological, social and cultural transition of cities, as well as for the redefinition of a productive model conceived from an urban perspective.

In Spain, **81% of the population lives in urban areas,** and this percentage continues to increase. However, the concentration of population and economic activities in an increasingly small number of urban areas is aggravated by the depopulation or **demographic decline of rural areas and small municipalities.**

Cities concentrate population and services while rural areas struggle to survive, it is essential to rethink the way we design our territories. This is where three major challenges and opportunities converge : **sustainable tourism, the urban agenda and small municipalities.**

Starting from **sustainable tourism**, we have seen the growth of tourist accommodation in recent years. While short-term rental services offered by hosts have existed for many years in addition to other accommodation services, such as hotels, hostels or B&Bs.

Session 3

The integration and importance of the "sustainability" dimension in the framework of an international project with tourist impact. The example of Namur.

BY MR DENIS MATHEN
Governor of Namur, Belgium

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS A EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE?

The European Capital of Culture (ECC) is an initiative of the European Union and is organised in accordance with the rules promulgated by the European Parliament and the Council of Europe as set out in Decision No 445/2014/EU establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033. The main objectives highlighted in this Decision are, inter alia, to safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, to foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities and to widen access to and participation in culture by strengthening the capacities of the cultural sector.

CONTEXT OF THE APPLICATION – NAMUR 2030

For the year 2030, two countries have been selected, Belgium and Cyprus.
A pre-selection of cities was launched in 2024, including 6 cities. The selection that followed in 2025 enabled three Belgian cities to reach the second round, including Namur.

ENSURING TERRITORIAL COHESION – ROLE OF THE GOVERNOR

In order to support the application project, an association of several local personalities was created. These include the Mayor of the City of Namur (Maxime Prévot – currently Minister for Foreign Affairs) and the Rector of Unamur, who chairs the association.
It was following a particular request from the Mayor that the Provincial Governor was integrated into this association to support the candidacy, in the spirit of ensuring a provincial dimension, in the territorial sense of the term.
The candidacy was launched in close collaboration with the Namur provincial institution but also with the Provincial Economic Office (BEPN/Territorial Development Agency). Indeed, although the project application is led by the city of Namur, 2 million visitors are potentially expected for the event and 40% of the actions are planned throughout the provincial territory. This therefore ensures probable economic and tourist benefits for the entire territory of the Province of Namur.

MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABILITY – WHAT ARE THE AMBITIONS?

Interestingly, the environmental sustainability of the EQF project is not taken up as a selection criterion in itself.
On the other hand, the application must lead to a long-term strategy for the territory, both culturally, economically and socially. Thus, in the light of the trajectory set by the Paris Agreement and the City of Namur's PACE (Plan Air Climat Énergie), a long-term strategy to reduce emissions (-55% by 2030, compared to 1990) was included in the project application. This objective will influence the programmatic and organisational decisions of Namur 2030 and has been broken down into 3 axes / 3 'Ecological Confluences'.

<u>1st ecological confluence: Ambition and environmental impact management</u>
A Carbon Budget for the event was calculated on the basis of the maximum annual individual carbon footprint for a Belgian in 2030 (6.3t CO_2eq), so the footprint per event visitor to meet this reduction target is 58 kg CO_2eq.
The maximum carbon budget allocated to the event is 116 kt CO_2eq (based on an estimated 2 million visitors).
This budget will be accompanied by real-time steering to evaluate and arbitrate all programmatic and organizational decisions as early as 2026.
At the same time, a low-carbon charter will be drafted with all stakeholders and made available in order to raise awareness not only among local stakeholders but also among citizens, building on the strengths of the transition.

2nd ecological confluence: the EQF Adaptation and Resilience Accelerator

Measures to reduce the exposure and vulnerability of activities, territories and populations to the current and expected impacts of climate change will be taken in the face of the increasing likelihood of climate hazards.

It will also take advantage of Namur 2030, to be an accelerator of adaptation and resilience of the territory. In particular, by providing for cultural activities in planted areas but also through the planting of trees and hedges, the recovery and reuse of rainwater, the dewatering of artificial surfaces while raising awareness of environmental issues among the general public.

More specifically, the objective is to take advantage of this opportunity to implement part of the actions provided for by the PACE of the City of Namur (138 actions).

3rd ecological confluence: the Digital and Responsible ECC

Digital is part of Namur's DNA, which is taken over as UNESCO's Creative City.

It is therefore essential to set the ambition for the development of responsible digital technology within the event.

This will involve, among other things, cultivating an ethic and practice of raising awareness among artists and stakeholders of the ecological impacts of digital technology, raising awareness of research on the environmental impacts of new technologies such as AI (e.g.) – through colloquia or publications, and supporting the development and use of digital commons to reduce the impact of the cultural sector (the 'Cooprog' platform).

The next appointments

Summer 2025: Preparation of the visit of the Jury

19 September 2025: Visit of the jury during the festivities of Wallonia

23 September 2025: Defence before the European jury

24 September 2025: Announcement of the winning Belgian city among the remaining 3.

Session 4

The role of artificial intelligence in territorial transformation and population evacuation

BY MS RUTH DEL CAMPO BECARES
Director General of Data at the General Secretariat for Digitization and Artificial Intelligence, Spain

Artificial intelligence **(AI)** plays a key role in territorial transformation, with a particular focus on the use of public data as a strategic infrastructure.

The presentation will highlight how **Artificial Intelligence** can help anticipate risks, optimise evacuations and improve territorial decision-making, provided it is supported by high-quality, accessible and well-managed data.

The Directorate-General for Data encourages the creation of shared data spaces in the public sector through use case calls in key sectors such as mobility, forest management and healthcare planning.

These spaces are essential to enable **useful, ethical and human-centered AI.**

It's important also to highlight the need for public and accountable data governance as a key condition to ensure transparency, interoperability and respect for fundamental rights in the application of smart technologies in the region. ●

Session 4

Artificial Intelligence in the evacuation of populations

BY MS SOPHIE LAVAUX
Senior Civil Servant of the Brussels Agglomeration, Belgium

1. INTRODUCTION

In a world of successive crises (natural disasters amplified by climate change, geopolitical tensions, criminal or technological threats), authorities must deal with increasingly complex and unpredictable situations. Anticipation and rapid reaction become essential to protect populations.

In this context, artificial intelligence (AI) appears to be a real lever for crisis management. Capable of processing and analysing massive volumes of data in real time, it provides decision-makers with tools to optimise resource allocation, streamline operations and support decision-making. Applied to mass evacuations, AI promises to improve coordination and security, while raising crucial issues of governance, human acceptance and technical robustness.

2. MASS EVACUATION

When a crisis arises, whether related to an extreme climate event, a geopolitical threat or a criminal act, the authorities may have to order the rapid evacuation of thousands of people. This measure, while necessary to protect human lives, represents one of the most complex operations of crisis management. It simultaneously mobilises the coordination of law enforcement, the regulation of population flows, the management of human and material resources, and clear and constant communication with the population concerned.

AI can play a key role in each phase:

- Before evacuation: thanks to early warning systems exploiting climate data, satellite images and various sensors, it makes it possible to detect and anticipate weak signals from a risky situation.
- During evacuation: it optimises routes in real time, makes travel easier, distributes emergency resources and simultaneously analyses massive data flows (social networks, GSM signals, cameras) to provide decision-makers with a global and up-to-date view.
- After evacuation: it helps assess the effectiveness of the measures put in place, identify areas for improvement and strengthen resilience for future emergencies.
- By integrating these capabilities, AI does not replace human expertise but becomes a decision support tool, able to inform and support authorities in the most critical moments.

3. MAJOR CHALLENGES FOR PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

3.1. The challenge of knowledge

There are many AI solutions suitable for crisis management, but their identification and evaluation require market monitoring and innovations that go beyond the core business of authorities. Even when relevant tools are identified, feedback, including on their effectiveness in real world conditions, often remains limited.

3.2. The human challenge

Adopting an AI solution is not enough: 70% of success is based on human ownership. Crisis managers need to have confidence in these tools and understand their results. However, the fear of losing control of the decision, the difficulty in interpreting the AI recommendations and the question of the legal responsibility for the choices made are major obstacles.

3.3. The technical challenge

The added value of AI depends on the quality and integration of the data used. The latter must be interoperable, traceable, reliable and secure. Systems need to be robust to withstand extreme crisis contexts, without compromising IT security.

4. TOWARDS EXPERIMENTAL GOVERNANCE IN THE BRUSSELS REGION

In Brussels, we have chosen a pragmatic approach: experiment in a controlled setting, with the support of the European Space Agency (ESA).

In October 2025, a week of Acceleration Days will be held in Redu, bringing together researchers, businesses and students around a concrete challenge: Design an innovative AI solution using spatial data, cameras, GSM signals and other sources to facilitate mass evacuation in the Brussels Region. The winning project will then be tested on a full-scale basis in a football stadium, allowing its performance to be assessed in a secure operational environment.

5. CONCLUSION

AI has considerable potential to improve the management of mass evacuations, increasing the efficiency, speed and accuracy of operations. However, its success will depend on our ability to overcome three major challenges: better understand and evaluate existing solutions, ensure their adoption by human actors and ensure their technical integration in a secure environment.

In the Brussels Region, supervised experimentation is a decisive step towards innovative governance, based on concrete tests and rigorous evaluation. By combining human expertise, technological innovations and institutional cooperation, we can build safer, smarter and better adapted evacuation systems for the crises of tomorrow.

Session 5

Open government: bring decision-making closer to citizens. Policies of transparency and security. Resistance to foreign interference and disinformation

BY MS CARMEN CABANILLAS SERRANO
Director General of Public Governance
at the Ministry of Digital Transformation
and the Civil Service,Spain

Transparency and security policies.
We reaffirm our commitment to a more **transparent, participatory, collaborative and accountable** governance model. A new governance that calls into question the three administrations: the General State, the Regional Government and also the Local Government.

Today more than ever, public administrations are judged not only on what they manage, but how they do it. A society that challenges us, that expects more from its institutions than from efficiency: it expects integrity, listening, openness and exemplarity.

In a context marked by disinformation and the urgent need to rebuild the bond of trust between citizens and institutions, **Open Government** is not a luxury, but a real democratic necessity. This is a new paradigm in governance, which recognises that public policies should not be developed behind the backs of citizens, but with them. Transparency does not weaken institutional power, but rather the legitimate.

It is also necessary to experiment with open government locally, where citizens come into direct contact with the public. The irreplaceable role of the AGE on the Territory and Local Administration.

For it is in delegations and sub-delegations, in municipal, provincial and regional councils, and island councils where local governance is exercised. Where the principles of open government can be most directly applied.

Make **Open Government** an organizational culture, an institutional attitude and a democratic pedagogy.

Some of the **challenges** we face as a country and as an administration need to be highlighted:

1. Consolidate the open government regulatory framework, ensuring the stability and permanence of the principles of transparency, participation and collaboration.
2. Improve the quality of participatory processes, avoiding symbolic or formal practices.
3. Strengthen the ethical dimension and public integrity by developing integrity frameworks in all administrations.
4. Leverage technology without exclusion, advancing the digitalisation of public management, but responsibly.
5. Promote the training and professionalization of our public sector employees.
6. And, of course, continue to strengthen the role of the General State Administration (AGE) in the region and other administrations.

Session 5

Open government: social resilience to crises. The emergency response system in Poland

BY MR MARIUSZ FRANKOWSKI
Governor of the Mazovia Region, Poland

The presentation of the Polish approach to the civil protection system was the main theme of the speech which took place during the Polish Presidency of the Council of the European Union held under the priority "Security, Europe!".

The main aspects concerned the functioning of the Polish crisis management system at the regional level, as well as the assumptions of the Civil Protection and Defense The priority of the Polish Government is the Civil Protection and Defense Act that is currently being enforced. The issues were discussed using the example of actions undertaken by the government administration in the Mazovia Region which is comparable to Norway in terms of population and Belgium in terms of area.

The Mazovian experience can therefore be a source of inspiration for many European regions as well as countries.

Crisis management is a unique competence of the regional governor as the Prime Minister's representative in the administrative region in Poland.

The speech presented practical aspects of the crisis management system at the regional level, including the cooperation between the government and local administration, the standards of operation of the Regional Crisis Management Centre and the cooperation with the public services including the police, fire services and border guards.
The regional crisis management centre operates within the structures of the regional office and cooperates directly with local authorities. The centre plays a coordinating role, as well as provides assistance to local governments in terms of equipment, humanitarian aid or military support if necessary due to the scale of the crisis.

The currently reinforced role of the Government Security Centre was highlighted. The National Rescue and Firefighting System, unique in Europe, was also presented, and it is the basis of emergency response in various situations including extreme weather or floods that threaten people's health, lives or property. Outside the system there is also a number of voluntary fire brigades who - together with other services - provide emergency support to residents.

One of the Polish government's priorities is to build the first comprehensive civil protection and defense system in Poland.

Regulations concerning this area have been implemented since the beginning of 2025, with the safety of the population at its centre.
The Act assumes the increase of social resilience to various types of threats, including natural disasters.

The implementation of the regulations also requires building residents' awareness of risks and how to respond to them.

The basic premise of the system is broad cooperation and collaboration for the safety of residents.

Both state administration, local government, security services, scientific, business and non-governmental sectors are to be involved in the process.

The civil protection system is based on already existing structures. The idea is to make optimal use of the potential of, among others, the National Rescue and Firefighting System, which plays a key role in responding to threats and ensuring the safety of local residents. Crisis management structures, both at national, regional and local level, also play an important role.

The funds allocated for the implementation of the Civil Protection and Defense Act amount to at least 0,3% of Poland's GDP annually. The financed areas from the national level include the civil protection assets (f.ex. development of the national rescue and firefighting system), equipment, warehouses, infrastructure for civil protection, including shelters. There is also a strong emphasis on training and education to increase social resilience to risks.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE DAYS

BY MR AGUSTÍN TORRES HERRERO
Director General of the General Administration of the State, Spain

To conclude these EASTR sessions, we must thank the organisation that made this meeting of dialogue and work possible, where we were able to analyse aspects of our lives that affect us all more or less, but with the desire to continue to make progress in building a stronger and more united Europe.

Relevant aspects such as the key role played by **artificial intelligence (AI)** in territorial transformation were discussed, with a particular focus on the use of public data as a strategic infrastructure.
Territorial cohesion and public services, because living in rural areas does not mean giving up rights or services.

Conciliation **policies and co-responsibility plan** of the Spanish Government, which make it possible to reconcile work and family life.
Or the **demographic transition and the housing challenge:** Empty housing, without adequate conditions, or rental market as an alternative to the high demand of citizens.

And also problems caused by **climate change and sustainability** and the possibility of creating a more sustainable energy model with the help of Next Generation Funds. All this without forgetting the major challenges of today's **society such as geopolitical tensions, migration crises and climate change.**

Gender equality, democracy, social inclusion and the defence of fundamental rights are also unfinished business that require institutional presence and determination.Today, in a world fragmented by tensions, geopolitical tensions and global challenges such as migration and pandemics, the pro-European spirit is taking on new importance. Respond quickly to emergencies, rebuild with criteria adapted to sustainability, guarantee rights and generate institutional trust so important. And thanks to supranational dialogue forums such as EASTR, they help us through participation, to move forward together in collaboration and solidarity, towards a more just society of well-being, closer to the problems of citizens and the needs to be solved in community.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE DAYS

BY MR ALFONSO CARLOS GARCÍA ROMERO
Deputy Director General for European and International Relations, Spain

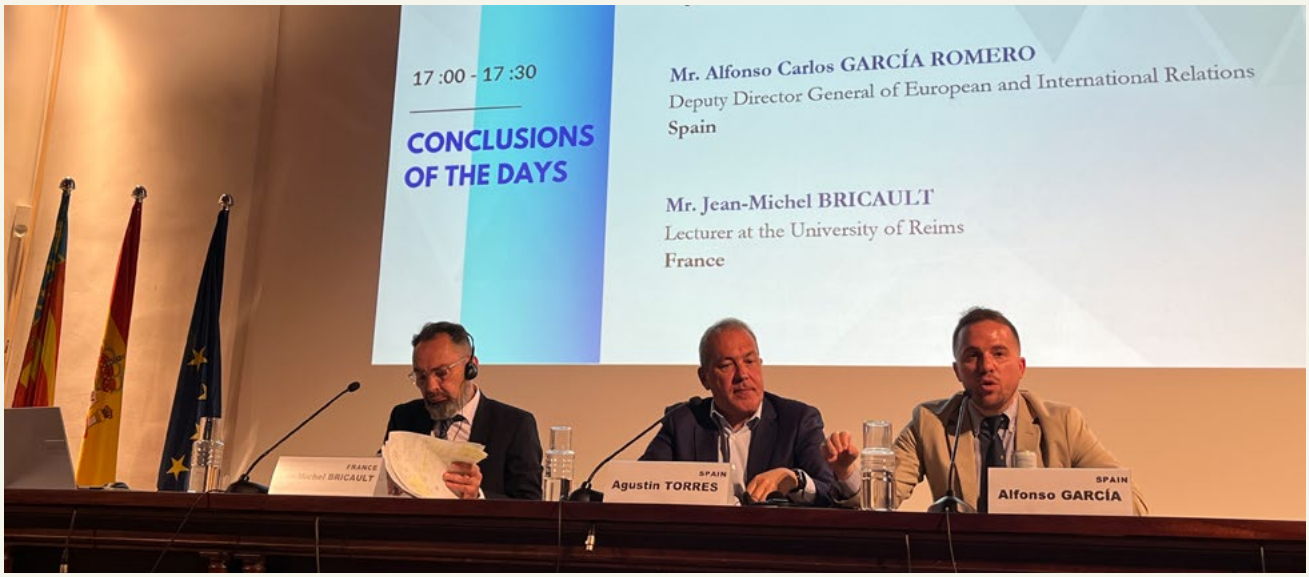
I have to point first what the policy is, which is nothing more than the management of public space, the <rex publicae> as the novels have defined it. Overcoming the difficulties of making people's lives easier, more manageable.

It is for this reason that these days have pivoted on the issue of sustainability as a cross-cutting element in all areas of everyday life, a challenge of our time.

The public manager highlighted the importance of these kinds of days as they offer added value, that of comparing different public policies and that of improving good practices as a pillar of the initiative.

With the intention of summarising these days, he highlighted a word that defined each session:

- With regard to the management of emergences: anticipation and prevention. He emphasised the need to develop indicators and data to enable public administrations to react in time to the effects of climate change.
- With regard to territorial cohesion: equal opportunities as an element of cohesion in our societies. The question is guaranteed the freedom of choice of people to develop their life project as they want, not by obligation.
- Sustainable tourism and housing: balance. Make it compatible to develop our economies thanks to tourism revenues at the time that we guarantee as public administrations the right of access to housing.
- With regard to Artificial Intelligence: humanism. AI must be governed so that it serves those interested in citizenship.
- On transparency and open government: share information that may enable public representatives to take different decisions.



SYNTHESIS OF THE SESSIONS

BY MR JEAN-MICHEL BRICAULT
Lecturer at the University of Reims, France

At the opening protocol session, Mr Ignazio Portelli, President of AERTE,[1] outlined the long tradition of the European Days of Territorial Representatives of the State, which consisted in providingclarifications and analyses on the role of TENs from the most varied thematic angles.[2] The choice of 'sustainable development' as the theme of the 30th JERTE is fully in line with this heritage and has given rise to rich debates. It was recalled that sustainable development is a process that reconciles both social and economic progress and environmental protection with the aim of not compromising the capacities of future generations.[3] All the debates consisted in analysing its fundamental and protean challenges in the territories according to a comparative dimension between the various countries represented.

The debates were structured around the five sessions that provided so many spotlights on this topic of 'sustainable development': climate change (particularly against the backdrop of the dramatic Spanish floods of 2024);[4] demographic transition;[5] sustainable tourism;[6] transparency and security policies[7] and, finally, the exploration of the role and contributions of 'artificial intelligence' in the context of systemic and hybrid crises.[8] In line with this very broad approach to the topic, the problem was as follows: what 'common values'[9] should be promoted by representatives of the State in the territories and, more broadly, by all public authorities, with a view to meeting the challenges of sustainable development and meeting its challenges? In the light of the debates, it appears that three words recur repeatedly: Solidarity, Cohesion and Resilience. They clearly draw the three main axes of the work resulting from these 30th JERTE.

I) SOLIDARITY

It was pointed out that climate change 'does not know borders'[10] because it is a global issue. However, it appears that certain areas, particularly in the Mediterranean,[11] are more exposed and more severely hit by intense weather phenomena (rains and spectacular floods 'DANA' in Spain,[12] persistent droughts in Sicily,[13] forest fires, etc.). These climate events follow one another at a frequency never seen before in Europe, and recent years' statistics on the reality of climate change speak for themselves.[14] In this context, the concept of 'solidarity', international and above all European, is now particularly acute and is presented as the 'pillar' of civil protection.[15] European solidarity during the floods in the Valencia region has been underlined on several occasions.[16] The 'European Union Civil Protection Mechanism' (UCPM) created in 2001 now plays an essential role in terms of solidarity (financial provisions, common 'modules' such as canadairs, emergency facilities for populations, etc.).[17] The future of the UCPM was also discussed and in particular its deepening (to non-EU countries, ultra-marine territories, etc.). In particular, it appears that two aspects, among others, constitute points of vigilance: in the background

[1] Ignazio Portelli, President of ANFACI, State Commissioner for Sicily (Italy).

[2] On this occasion, Mr Portelli stressed the importance of relations '*between the centre and the periphery*' and the presence of TENs in accordance with a logic of subsidiarity beyond the legal form of the various Member States (unitary, federal, regionalised, etc.). He also recalled the importance of the '*network work*' provided by AERTE (support from the EU, the Belgian and French Min. de l'Int., archives kept in Florence, etc.) and the '*common values*' of its members.

[3] Saffet Arikan Bedük, Chairman of the Turkish Governors' Association (Turkey), '*Sustainable development approach by territorial representatives of the state in Turkey*'.

[4] Session 1: Emergency management and international cooperation in the context of climate change.

[5] Session 2: Territorial cohesion and the quality of public service delivery. A special look at policies adapted to the demographic transition and climate change.

[6] Session 3: Sustainable tourism: the issue of territorial cohesion between cities and rural areas.

[7] Session 5: Open government: Bringing decision-making closer to citizens. Transparency and security policies. Resistance to foreign interference and disinformation.

[8] Session 4: The role of artificial intelligence in territorial transformation and population evacuation.

[9] Ignazio Portelli, cited above.

[10] Milagros Tolon Jaime, Delegate of the Spanish Government in Castile-La Mancha (Spain).

[11] Pilar María Bernabé Garcia, State Representative in the Autonomous Community of Valencia (Spain).

[12] "DANA": acronym for "depresionaislada en levelles alto" / high-level isolated depression.

[13] Stefano Laporta, President of ISPRA (Higher Institute for Environmental Protection and Research), (Italy), "*Energy crisis and environmental threats: e.g. the coordination of the Italian Prefects*".

[14] Julien Marion, Director of the Directorate-General for Civil Security and Crisis Management (France), "*What place for solidarity in Europe around accelerating the consequences of climate change? and* Michèle Pappalardo, President of the Gustave Eiffel University Foundation, (France), "*Tourism and the consequences of climate change in urban areas*".

[15] Milagros Tolon Jaime, cited above.

[16] Arcadi España Garcia, State Secretary, Ministry of Territorial Policy (Spain).

[17] Julien Marion, cited above.

is the issue of the sovereignty of states in crisis management and that of security risks related to "hybrid" wars (e.g. by causing forest fires ...)[18]

II) COHESION

The cohesion sought is part of a dual societal and territorial dimension. The many factors that could undermine the cohesion of our societies were set out in the debates: the proliferation of fake news,[19] the ageing of the population,[20] difficulties in accessing public services in the rural sector[21] and, more broadly, societal inequalities affecting the most vulnerable ... These phenomena contribute to fragmenting our societies and can sometimes feed eruptive popular manifestations such as 'yellow vests' in France. To overcome these difficulties and strengthen territorial cohesion, solutions must be sought both in the 'territorialisation' of public policies and in the quest for the 'most balanced' appropriate governance possible.[22] In this context, Ms Miryam Alvarez Paez, Secretary General of the Territorial Coordination of the Ministry of Territorial Policy and Democratic Memory (Spain) gave a broad description of the Spanish regionalised system: a strong process of decentralisation, a logic of subsidiarity to strengthen territorial cohesion, local governance (municipal, supra-municipal and autonomous communities) and 'normative dialogue' between the 'centre and the periphery', the role of government delegates and sub-delegates, 'regionalisation à la carte' according to an evolving process in terms of competences, for example. The result is a system that is quite complex institutionally and normatively but adapted to the context of a 'plural' Spain[23] (multilingualism, etc.).

The overall idea is to ensure that the 'peripheries' are taken into account as closely as possible, particularly in rural areas. The latter point has been raised several times. The aim is to ensure both 'city-country' complementarity (e.g. the 'Namur 2030 Programme')[24] and to avoid, as far as possible, the digital divide vis-à-vis the most vulnerable populations. One of the challenges is to ensure efficient access to social rights. In a context of strong digitalisation of public services, the efforts made by the Spanish 'Administration *near you*' programme are essential[25] to ensure access to social rights and benefits for the poorest, but many challenges also concern young people.
More broadly, the debates have demonstrated the importance of maintaining quality public service activities based on a logic of proximity to enable the sustainable development of territories in a context of demographic transition and climate change. Proactive public policies (Spanish 'active ageing' plan, combating 'degraded housing' in France and Spain, 'Fund for the local energy transition', improving 'mobility' for the elderly, maintaining local shops and 'services to the public' in rural areas, etc.) make it possible to establish a certain 'sustainability' in the development of territories. The implementation of a 'sustainable circular economy' enables citizens to become agents of change themselves (e.g. loans between individuals *via* the 'Library of Things', etc.). In the same vein, it is a question of camping a 'sustainable tourism' (particularly in certain highly touristic Spanish regions) to ensure better 'social and environmental sustainability'[26] (better management of water, waste, coastal quality, etc.). In this context, the Spanish 'delegates' are the 'hands and ears' of the government in order to anchor this territorialisation in a logic of proximity and subsidiarity.[27]

Improving territorial cohesion also requires an approach of transparency and trust towards citizens, which must be reflected in normative terms and in terms of public policies (e.g. the Spanish 'ALIA' model of open data and data governance).[28] Francisco Martin Aguirre, Delegate of the Spanish Government in Madrid, referred in this context to the concept of "open government" combining democratic values and "transparency". "Open government"[29] is fully part of a "confidence in citizens" approach.[30] It is then a question of implementing not only 'anti-corruption instruments' but also of prioritising 'the co-creation of public policies with citizens'[31] according to a 'normative approach based on transparency' and, more generally, of encamping a 'new, more agile administration' (e.g. the SIAGE system constituting a 'code of good administration based on 8 elements such as ethics, simplicity, etc.).[32] The challenge is significant, since it is simply a matter of 'rebuilding citizens' trust'.[33] This also includes investments in artificial intelligence and information technologies (augmented reality, etc.), cybersecurity to combat fake news and civic education.

According to the same logic of "open government", the Polish Voivode of Mazovia, Mariusz Frankowski focused more specifically on "social resilience to crises via the emergency response system in Poland". He referred in particular to the system of "civil defence" in force since 1 Jan. 2025, which aims to ensure better "social resilience" in the face of crisis situations in general (e.g. forest fires, etc.) and more specifically war (e.g. temporary shelters, etc.) according to a multi-level governance method. This system is interconnected and is fully part of a partnership and collaborative approach with the various civil and military administrations to ensure all the necessary 'cohesion'. In this context, the Governor of course has a wide range of civil protection tools at his disposal, but he must specifically ensure the 'fight against disinformation and enable the proper dissemination of information' in line with a 'social resilience' approach. He must be that 'reliable interlocutor' referred to by the mayor of Utiel, a *municipality in the province of Valencia heavily affected by the floods referred to above*.[34] More generally, the TEN's central role must enable it to spread a "true culture of prevention

[18] *Ditto.*
[19] Arcadi España Garcia, cited above.
[20] Tania Solans Raluy, Mayor of Esplús (Spain).
[21] Adriana Lastra Fernandez, Delegate of the Spanish Government in Asturias (Spain) and Tania Solans Raluy, cited above.
[22] Miryam Alvarez Paez, cited above.
[23] María Soledad Garmendia Beloqui, Delegate of the Spanish Government to the Basque Country (Spain).
[24] Denis Mathen, Governor of Namur (Belgium), '*The integration and importance of the 'sustainability' dimension in the context of an international project with tourism benefits. The example of Namur*'.
[25] Tania Solans Raluy, cited above.
[26] Alfonso Luis Rodriguez Badal, Delegate of the Spanish Government in the Balearic Islands (Spain).
[27] Miryam Alvarez Paez, cited above.
[28] Ruth Del Campo Bécares, Director-General for Data at the General Secretariat for Digitisation and Artificial Intelligence (Spain).
[29] Spain hosted more than 1700 Open Government Partnership (OGP) events in 2025. Through the collaboration of hundreds of public institutions, Spain strengthened its leadership as co-chair of the OGP Steering Committee and continued preparations for the OGP World Summit in Oct. 2025.
[30] Carmen Cabanillas Serrano, Director General of Public Governance of the Ministry of Digital Transformation and Public Service (Spain).
[31] *Ditto.*
[32] This is part of the overall European open data context concerning a host of accessible and reusable data (e.g. in the housing sector, infrastructure, etc.) since 2020. V. Ruth Del Campo Bécares, cited above.
[33] Carmen Cabanillas Serrano, cited above.
[34] Ricardo Gabaldón, Mayor of Utiel (Spain).

and public awareness" while "stimulating services and planning emergencies"[35] in the event of a crisis. It is one of the tools at the service of 'cohesion' to develop 'resilience and coordination capacities' at territorial level.

III) RESILIENCE

Territorial resilience to natural and technological disasters practically refers to a territory's capacity to adapt and organise – regarded as a system – so that it can cope with harmful events to the best of its ability. Upstream, resilience is first and foremost part of a holistic planning approach. Fundamentally, the aim is to ensure 'urban planning' that takes account of urban pressure[36] (e.g. in Brabant in the Netherlands), the development of coastal areas (fighting against floods, etc.), the introduction of new construction methods (e.g. anti-seismic standards in Turkey, etc.), the 'greening of urban planning'[37] (e.g. to combat global warming and heatwave temperatures, etc.), the best possible protection of biodiversity, and the development of renewable energies to reduce energy dependence (e.g. wind turbines in the Netherlands, etc.). In short, it is a matter of building 'resilient urban planning'[38] based on 'strategic planning'.[39]

This resilience in crisis prevention is also reflected at various levels, as demonstrated by the speakers. First of all, it is a question of better 'water management' and 'available space' (e.g. development parks enabling 'nature and industry' to join hands in the Netherlands).[40] Resilience also requires the establishment of a more sustainable proximity 'circular economy' enabling citizens to become 'actors for change'.[41] It also involves implementing 'sustainable tourism' that is more respectful of the environment and more qualitative in terms of culture and identity (e.g. sustainable tourism in the Spanish hinterland, the Namur 2030 plan to become the European Capital of Culture, etc.). This "resilient tourism"[42] must be "planned" to be optimized (e.g. the "500 plans" of Spanish tourism sustainability aimed at better management of flows and preservation of natural spaces). The "tourist-citizen" is also destined to become an actor of change. It appears that "tourism is particularly affected by climate change". In France, the 'Plan d'Adaptation au Change Climatique (PNACC3)', presented at the beginning of 2025, specifically contains measures to 'accompany the adaptation of tourism'.[43] A similar approach exists in Belgium with the 'Air Climate Plan' (included in the 'Namur 2030' application referred to above)[44] which aims to camp 'more resilient cities in terms of tourism',[45] particularly in terms of ecology and energy (see also the 'more resilient' management of tourist accommodation following the DANA, for example).[46]

Resilience is of course also part of a logic of emergency and crisis planning. It is then a question of ensuring the 'construction' of a multi-level governance of civil protection actors (establishment of new prevention protocols, simulation exercises, etc.) capable of enabling the emergence of a 'risk culture'. Planning also requires the best possible use of new technologies (smart early warning systems, AI and mass evacuation 'for more inclusive and resilient territories'[47] in 'a context of major systemic and hybrid risks' (e.g. Belgian ESA-SAFE-BXL project on the evacuation of a football stadium),[48] AI and anticipation of emergency situations, etc.).[49]

At the heart of the institutional set-up, the TEN is in a position to 'enable the various public authorities to collaborate'[50] and to ensure 'coordination and cooperation between the various administrations',[51] which are essential in the event of a crisis (earthquakes, electric blackouts in Spain, etc.). In the context of the floods (DANA referred to above) in the Valencia region, more than 40 000 staff had to be managed.[52] The Spanish (CCOPAL) and Turkish 'emergency plan' were set out. They have in common, of course, to be very structured and built on 'multi-level cooperation'[53] and 'multi-stakeholders'. This coordination role is also part of the management of 'volunteer staff', which is a real challenge at the peak of the crisis (e.g. the management of farmers who came to help spontaneously during the floods in Utiel, Spain, etc.). The TEN must manage the flow of information, ensure the immediate response of State services and ensure the involvement of all administrations.[54]
In the post-crisis period, resilience must be part of the 'reconstruction' phase in order to minimise future risks.[55] *This includes a more efficient use of public aid dedicated to post-disaster reconstruction. To manage that aid, it is necessary to 'work in a network'.*[56] *It is also about improving protocols and procedures related to reconstruction.*

To conclude these two days of intense debate on the issue of sustainable development, it appears that the changes at work (climate change, energy poverty, demographic transition, etc.) are impacting our societies and are bringing 'uncertainties'[57] *in terms of social and territorial cohesion.*
At the same time, territorial resilience offers adaptability and organisational capacity to the territories in which the TENs are able to act as closely as possible to the citizens. In particular, this action was able to accompany and guide the tremendous momentum of solidarity (European and territorial) that spontaneously manifested itself for the victims in the face of the situation generated at the time of the floods linked to the 'DANA' phenomenon in the Valencia region. ●

[35] Stefano Laporta, cited above.

[36] Ina Adema, Commissioner of the King in the province of North Brabant (Netherlands), '*Balance between fires and floods: climate 'resilience' in a changing Dutch landscape?*

[37] *Ditto.*

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] María Soledad Garmendia Beloqui, cited above.

[40] Ina Adema, cited above.

[41] Tania Solans Raluy, cited above.

[42] Ana Muroz.

[43] Michèle Pappalardo, cited above.

[44] Denis Mathen, supra.

[45] Michèle Pappalardo, cited above.

[46] Pablo Torres Paniagua, Technical Secretary General of Housing and Urban Development (Spain).

[47] María Soledad Garmendia Beloqui, cited above.

[48] Sophie Lavaux, Senior Official of the Brussels Agglomeration (Belgium), '*Artificial intelligence in the evacuation of populations*'.

[49] Pilar María Bernabé Garcia, cited above.

[50] Ignazio Portelli and Saffet Arikan Bedük, cited above.

[51] Milagros Tolon Jaime, cited above.

[52] Pilar María Bernabé Garcia, cited above.

[53] *Ditto.*

[54] Stefano Laporta, cited above.

[55] Ricardo Gabaldón, Mayor of Utiel (Spain).

[56] *Ditto.*

[57] Ina Adema, cited above.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND CLOSING SESSION

BY MR FERNANDO MARIANO SAMPEDRO MARCOS
Secretary of State for the European Union, Spain

First, Mr Sampedro highlighted the coincidence of the celebration of Europe Day on 9 May with the AERTE days as a way to move forward together in building a stronger Union, closer to its citizens through its territorial representatives, to better understand Europe's challenges and facilitate the implementation of public policies on the ground.

Cooperation between Member States and the common defence of democratic values are needed more than ever in a turbulent global context and a Europe in profound institutional change, but where Europe continues to support a common project based on cooperation and shared action by the public sector.

These sessions addressed issues that affect all Europeans, such as civil security, the management of natural disasters, many of which are caused by climate change, problems related to demographic challenges such as overcrowding in large "overcrowded" cities, depopulation or demographic decline in rural areas and small municipalities, or the use of new technologies among many others. Nowadays, these problems are brought together in a widely shared European local dimension in the different European local territorial divisions and that is why these spaces for debate, discussion and dialogue serve to share common scenarios and propose solutions in the form of cooperation, mutual assistance and mutual resilience.

Finally, these sessions allowed us to explore more social issues that allow us to better understand the reality of our rapidly changing and sometimes fragmented societies.

In short, we are the representatives of a citizenship that expects us to be effective, far-sighted and committed. And that is why meetings like this allow us to improve our public action and enrich ourselves with the experiences of colleagues from other countries, because territorial representatives of the State help bring local problems that are closest to citizens and affect their daily lives closer to the central government. And for this reason, they expect a rapid response in a society that, although increasingly polarised, is committed to solidarity and globalisation in order to solve common problems together. It is an obligation for political and social forces to respond, strengthening the solidarity of democratic institutions as well as citizens' trust in a government that is open and transparent to their concerns. ●