

REPORT

Activity report of Csaba Borboly as member of Committee of the Regions, 2012-2014

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I. ACTIVITIES AS PERMANENT MEMBER

Csaba Borboly, president of Harghita County Council, was elected as permanent member of the Committee of the Regions on 13th September 2012 at the conference of the National Union of County Councils of Romania (UNCJR).



“For the duration of my mandate I will try to represent our region in a more pronounced way” - declared Csaba Borboly. “Our presence here is important not only at national level but also at the level of representing our region in international institutions; as it has become essential to stand up for our citizens’ interests at the level of the European Union, too.

The president of Harghita County Council added that Harghita County Council had always tried to bring an international dimension to economic and cultural activity as well as to other important concerns in the region. The representation of these issues in the Committee of the Regions brings a great opportunity to develop the international activities of the county council.

Activities in the commissions of the Committee of the Regions:

Csaba Borboly is a permanent member working in the Education, Youth, Culture and Research (EDUC) and Environment, Climate Change and Energy (ENVE) commissions, as the member of the European People’s Party (EPP) Group.

Participation at CoR plenary sessions:

- The 98th plenary session of the CoR: 29th - 30th November 2012
- The 99th plenary session of the CoR: 31st of January - 1st February 2013
- The 100th plenary session of the CoR: 11th - 12th April 2013
- The 103rd plenary session of the CoR: between 7th - 9th October 2013
- The 104th plenary session of the CoR: 28th - 29th of November 2013
- The 105th plenary session of the CoR: 30th - 31st January 2014
- The 106th plenary session of the CoR: 2nd - 3rd April 2014
- The 107th plenary session of the CoR: 25th - 26th June 2014

Participation at the meetings of EDUC commission:

- The 16th meeting in Brussels, on 22nd November 2012

- The 17th meeting in Brussels, on 25th February 2013
- The 18th meeting at Espoo, Finland, on 25th April 2013
- The 19th meeting in Brussels, on 16th September 2013
- The 20th meeting in Brussels, on 13 November 2013
- The 21th meeting in Brussels, on 10th April 2014
- The 22nd meeting and conference on the theme of „*Youth's Europe 2014-2020*” Krakow, Poland, 12th - 13th June 2014.
- EDUC commission seminar: Assistance for the cultural and creative sectors, Gabrovo, Bulgaria, 1st July 2014

Participation at the meetings of ENVE commission:

- The 16th meeting in Brussels, on 6th December, 2012
- The 17th meeting in Brussels, on 19th February 2013
- The 18th meeting in Brussels, on 24th April 2013
- The 20th meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 2nd September 2013
- The 21th meeting in Brussels, on December 2013
- The 22nd meeting in Brussels, on February 2014
- The 23rd meeting in Brussels, on 24th April 2014
- The 23rd meeting in Brussels, on 19th June 2014
- ENVE Commission Visit Study “Improving knowledge about the elaboration of environmental and positive climate change policies, at local and regional level”

Participation at other events of the CoR:

- External seminar of the EPP Group, Kaunas, 18th October 2013
- Contact Group: Committee of the Regions and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, 9th December 2013, Paris
- The 6th Summit meeting of cities and regions of Europe, Athens, 6th-7th March 2014
- The 26th session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, Strasbourg, 26th March 2014
- European Union Elections 2014 - Summit meeting of the regional and local EPP political leaders: Ensuring economic growth and assuring jobs in the EU regions and cities, Poznan, Poland, 25th April 2014
- Low carbon, energy and environment - sustainable solutions for environmental and resource management and for innovative research, Swansea, 29th April 2014

Activities as a member of the Romanian delegation

Mr. Borboly writes:

I feel honored to be one of the members of the Romanian delegation to the Committee of the Regions and on this occasion I would like to give thanks to Liliana Mangeac, the

coordinator of the delegation and to the members of UNCJR for their constant, permanent support.

At the same time, I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to the other members of the delegation for supporting me in proposing different amendments in the period of 2012-2014. Without them the amendments would not have been debated in the plenary sessions: Brăiloiu Ovidiu, Nica Alin Adrian, Drăghici Emil, Gâju Mariana, Oprea Emilian, Prioteasa Ion, Adomniței Cristian Mihai, Falcă Gheroghe and Ciupercă Silvan (depending, of course, on the presence of members at plenary sessions).



As members of the delegation we have participated at several interesting meetings; for example on 28th November 2013 the Romanian delegation had the opportunity to meet Mr. Dacian Doloș, European commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, where we had the opportunity to discuss topics pertaining to the Common Agricultural Policy after 2013, its implications for Romania as a member state and also

the role of the Romanian CoR members in the implementation of this policy. This was a successful meeting for us, since agricultural activity and development is the only way of preventing the depopulation of the many small villages in Harghita county. This region has rich agricultural customs; agricultural and environmental programs that sustain and develop these can be of great benefit to these communities.

I also had the opportunity to be present at a discussion held on 8th October 2013 on the topic of how we could develop Romania's capacity to influence European policies. The meeting took place with the support of Mr. Dan Luca, director of Euractiv.

Another interesting meeting took place on 28th November 2014 when we met Mrs. Mădălina Mihalache, head of the Romanian Information Office of the European Parliament. This meeting came about due to the initiative of the CoR and UNCJR Office Brussels for supporting the European Union in its efforts to develop a communication campaign for the European Union Elections in 2014 and to help them introduce the topic onto the communication agenda of local authorities. Moreover, I also had the chance to cooperate through the Romanian delegation in expressing our opinions and reflections about the future of the Committee of the Regions.

I look forward to future meetings of the Romanian CoR delegation for debating important aspects concerning our activity, and to meeting our invited guests.

II. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS FOR SPECIALISED COMMISSIONS/OR FOR PLENARY SESSIONS

In the period of September 2012 – August 2014 the following amendments were submitted:

2013:

1. Legislative package for cohesion policy post- 2013 - 10 amendments
2. Renewable energy: a major player in the European energy market - 2 amendments
3. Creating greater synergies between EU, national and subnational budgets - 1 amendment
4. Disability, sport, leisure – 6 amendments
5. Entrepreneurship 2020 action plan – 5 amendments
6. Green paper on a European strategy on plastic waste in the environment – 8 amendments
7. Youth employment package – 5 amendments
8. Urban-rural partnership and governance – 3 amendments
9. Green infrastructure-enhancing Europe's natural capital – 5 amendments
10. Cars 2020: action plan for a competitive and sustainable automotive industry in Europe – 3 amendments

2014:

1. European Higher Education in the World – rapporteur
2. Proposal for a directive amending directive 94/62/EC on packaging, packaging waste to reduce the consumption of lightweight plastic carrier bags – 2 amendments
3. Promotional measures for agricultural products – 2 amendments
4. Quality framework of traineeships – 2 amendments
5. New guidelines for state aid for energy - 2 amendments
6. Affordable energy for all – 4 amendments
7. New guidelines for state aid for energy - 3 amendments
8. A European homelessness strategy – 3 amendments
9. The future EU policies in justice and home affairs – 1 amendment
10. Post 2015 Hyogo framework for action – 2 amendments

PRESS RELEASES CONCERNING AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED

Mr. Csaba Borboly expressed his opinion in favor of the rural areas of the European Union, 31st January 2013 (Press release - amendments January 2013):



On 31st of January and 1st of February a plenary session was held by the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, on the grounds of which the president of Harghita County Council submitted two amendments on the opinions regarding “Creating greater synergies between EU, national and

subnational budgets” and “Renewable energy: a major player in the European energy market”, amendments which were adopted by the members of the CoR.

In one of the amendments the president of the county council urged the creation of greater synergies between the EU, national and subnational budgets and he proposed the establishment of a research system across European universities, thus contributing to the local development of the expertise knowledge in this field. He solicited support for the projects based on exchanging experience between different local and regional governmental organizations.

Mr. Csaba Borboly stated that ‘developing social awareness is an integral part of the new support system’ especially emphasizing that the regions have to play a major role in launching the micro-establishments of renewable energy sources. He added that using renewable energies may assure the possibility for a self-sustaining economy for all communities and regions. For this reason it is important to support this proposal respectively to raise people’s awareness regarding this subject. He further noted that “the most important renewable energy plants of our region are the two water turbines in the settlement of Mădăraş; these establishments prove that in Romania part of society is ready to use alternative and natural energy resources.”

A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector, draft opinion on the situation of forests and forestry funds, which should be included in the new silvicultural strategy of the UE also taking into account pollution policies.

In respect of forest management attention should be given to increasing the rate of employment together with encouraging innovation in wood construction and the timber products sector. A favorable taxation system for small and medium sized enterprises would help to facilitate this.

Encouraging local enterprises also supports the implementation of regional policies and the establishment of network systems. The ongoing involvement of local experts is essential, in

order to develop common policies on forest management and to target the adoption and implementation of these regulations at local level.

"In the field of forest management, the Committee of the Regions adopted several proposals, but the one which would have granted European funding for small workshops and family associations was rejected. However, a proposal which promotes a greater involvement of local communities in building up closer cooperation with the parties concerned in this matter was approved. With the adoption of these proposals it is important that these will get into the circuit of the European legislative system"- said Csaba Borboly.

Mr. Csaba Borboly's amendments on environment were accepted by the ENVE Commission, 3rd of September 2013



On the 3rd September the ENVE Commission of the Committee of the Regions accepted three of Mr. Csaba Borboly's amendments. The president of Harghita County Council, who is a member of the European Union's consulting body representing local and regional authorities, has supplemented with proposals the document entitled EU Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change and the Green

Infrastructure – Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital.

The first proposal is that environmental awareness and training events should be focused on climate change. According to Mr. Csaba Borboly, it's important that local and regional authorities take responsibility for the process of environmental education. In the document on environmentally friendly infrastructure, the president of Harghita County Council urges the setting up of forest owners' associations, to further the realization of some unified development plans. Furthermore it would also promote bio-sourced public building construction, using wood as the principal construction material.

Csaba Borboly submitted new amendments for the Committee of the Regions, 16th September 2013:



Three of the five amendments submitted by Csaba Borboly for the CoR's Commission for Education, Youth, Culture and Research (EDUC) were adopted at a session held on 16th September, in Brussels. The president of

Harghita County Council and member of the Committee proposed an amendment related to the Draft Opinion entitled *Disability, sport and leisure*.

The Committee of the Regions agreed on point no. 10 of the amendment regarding the important role of local authorities in the development of sport facilities for people living with disabilities, through promoting sport infrastructure and sport activities as well as from the perspective of long term investment in this field. Mr. Borboly complemented this proposal by highlighting the issue of project funding for those regions where school and other educational institutions' infrastructure is underdeveloped. In paragraph 17 of the document Mr. Borboly stated the following: "it is important to have information campaigns addressed not merely to people with disabilities but also to the public in order to enhance the social integration of people with disadvantages. The aim of these campaigns is to facilitate the general public's positive attitudes towards these people, understanding, accepting and integrating them as they are, and to better learn how we can offer them help." Paragraph 19 deals with organizing forums for the recruitment and training of volunteers, as well as with their recognition and awards. Mr. Borboly added that attention has to be called to the importance of volunteering activities.

Submitted amendment proposals by Csaba Borboly, on 10th October 2013

The draft opinions submitted by Csaba Borboly were adopted at the meeting of the European People's Party Committee in Brussels on 8th October 2013. Changes of the text were voted afterwards at the plenary session too.

The submitted amendments to the draft opinions were the following:

- Urban-rural partnership and governance
- Entrepreneurship 2020 action plan
- Commission green paper on the long-term financing of the European economy,
- Cars 2020: action plan for a competitive and sustainable automotive industry in Europe
- Perspective of local and regional authorities on oil and gas from shale and other compact formations (Unconventional hydrocarbons).
- According to the proposals, there must be coordination between rural and urban policies at European Union level, encouraging local and regional authorities, intermediary institutions and administrative structures of other regions to enhance their role in the development and consolidation of urban-rural partnership systems.
- One of the amendments refers to the high proportion of ageing cars, primarily the eastern territories of the European Union. This is due to the thriving trade in second-hand cars, resulting from the cost differences between a new car and a used car and the low living standards in these countries. This is the reason why it is necessary to

rethink the old car program initiative which is already operating in Romania. The aim of the proposal is to encourage other countries to develop common framework conditions and to find different funding modalities to support these kinds of programs, too.



The amendment which refers to the entrepreneurial action plan asserts that local and regional authorities are capable of establishing regionally-specific programs which help the growth of an entrepreneurial spirit amongst young people, in this way contributing to the development of the region. The president of Harghita County

Council explained that there is much scope for developing entrepreneurship based on the skills and expertise practiced in peoples' everyday lives or in the homestead. People need to be encouraged to find the possibilities offered by and to appreciate the value of traditional lifestyles. There is latent business potential in local customs, traditions and crafts. The relearning of these kinds of activities can lead to the establishment of new markets. He also spoke about the need for external financial support for SMEs in conducting environmental activities, which could make a valuable contribution to the economy of many regions.

- In the case of the amendment entitled 'Commission green paper on the long-term financing of the European economy' the president of Harghita County Council completed the text submitted by the Committee of the Regions mentioning that the funding of the capital market can be improved through the support of local and regional financial institutions. In the case of local investments, mainly in the energy and environmental sectors, investment schemes should be established with the purpose of helping a regional community not only to appear in the market as consumers, but also as investors and financiers.
- In the amendments which refer to the use of gas and oil from shale, Csaba Borboly proposed activities to better acquaint people with all the issues around using unconventional hydrocarbon. He also proposed to establish groups who could offer an objective view on all phases of the exploitation operation, contributing in this way to economic benefits and at same time to the resolution of environmental and social risks. Local populations are affected in all stages of the exploitation process. It would therefore be important to gather information about the procedure, possible risks and benefits of this exploitation from experts in the field who have specific knowledge of local conditions.

The 105th plenary session of the CoR, 30th January 2014:

The president of Harghita County Council, Csaba Borboly, in his function of permanent member of the CoR, presented his draft opinion entitled "European Higher Education in the World" on the 30th January 2014, at the 105th plenary session of the Committee of the Regions in Brussels. This draft opinion was adopted unanimously at the session. In addition they voted on two important proposals submitted by the County Council; firstly on the subject of forests and the forestry fund, which are included in the new EU forestry strategy and secondly about pollution policy.

In respect of forest management attention should be given to increasing the rate of employment together with encouraging innovation in wood construction and the timber products sector. This would help the implementation of regional policies and the establishment of a network system. It is important to keep up sustainable and decentralized communication with local stakeholders when developing a common policy on forest management; such policies have to be adopted and implemented at local level. Ongoing communication with local experts becomes significant because it can subserve the elaboration of common policies regarding forest management and also the adoption and implementation of these regulations at regional level.

Lobby in Brussels in the favour of national minorities, 5th of April 2014:

The proposal of Csaba Borboly regarding national minorities' rights was adopted at the EPP Group's meeting, held in Brussels on 2nd of April 2014. The agenda of the meeting also included the situation in Ukraine regarding the country's national minorities.

In his speech Mr. Borboly captured the attention of the meeting when he spoke about the crisis situation in Ukraine in relation to the withdrawal of the law on the usage of regional languages. He sought greater European support for minorities' ethnical and linguistic rights, focusing on the situation of Russian, Hungarian, Romanian and Polish minorities living in Ukraine. These aspects were included in EPP Group's project, becoming part of a resolution framework. The document states that the future of Ukraine should be decided by the population of Ukraine, but without external pressures. Furthermore, the Ukrainian government should accord more respect to the rights of those minorities which live in the territory of this country in concordance with the European Convention on Human Rights, the Helsinki Agreement and the European Charta for Regional and Minority Languages.

Csaba Borboly read the message of the authorities from Republic of Moldova, on the 5th of April 2014, at the meeting of EPP Group of the CoR:

At the beginning of the letter it is stated that the integration of the Republic of Moldova in the European Union has great significance for the country, because it brings with it the opportunity to move away from the totalitarian regime and towards the path of democratic

change, innovation, modernization and sustainable development. The accession process should not just be the problem of the central government, but should directly involve all concerned parties: central government, local and regional authorities, Moldovan citizens.

Moreover, it was mentioned that Republic of Moldova is making considerable effort towards joining the country to the European Union. It is working on bringing modernization to the country and securing prosperity for its citizens. Given the current political situation of the region, they solicit speeding up the process of accession to the European Union through signing a treaty and they also intend to promote the monitoring of their decentralization process and the implementation of local autonomy and democracy.

The necessity of developing institutional cooperative programs between local and regional authorities of the Republic of Moldova and the member states of the European Union was also mentioned. This cooperation should be established under the guidance of the Committee of the Regions. They solicit the evaluation of the possibility of signing an eventual cooperation agreement between the Committee of the Regions and the Congress of Local Authorities in Moldova or at least the initiation of an action plan..

III. RAPPORTEUR ACTIVITY - VOICING OPINIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

III.a European higher education in the world:

1. EDUC Commission's meeting, on 16th September 2013:

Mr. Csaba Borboly assumed the role of a rapporteur on the subject of "European Higher Education in the World" at the meeting of EDUC Commission, held on 16th September 2013. The assumed role was motivated by the fact that Harghita county takes part in several European projects related to the topic, for example the SEEMIG project, which focuses on developing anti-migration strategies. Another example to mention is the internship program of Harghita County Council, which enjoys great interest on the part of the students involved. In the wake of its success the County Council intends to organize a specialized training program, as a new initiative.

Another advantage in the elaboration of the draft opinion was that Mr. Csaba Borboly represents a multilingual region, where minority language higher education has been taking place for just a few decades. The elaboration of the draft opinion was preceded by regional consultations with representatives of higher education institutions in Romania, with expert EU institutions in Brussels, with the European Commission's commissioners for higher education and discussions with representatives of the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU on education.

2. Consultation with stakeholders on the theme, 4th of October 2014:

At local level: the teachers of Sapientia University and Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca were invited to a meeting, and then the consultation continued at national level with: mayor Emilian Oprea and Mrs. Valentina Stefania, state secretary. The following day, the Romanian delegation of the CoR met with minister Remus Pricopie at international level too, at the CoR's seat in Brussels.

3. Csaba Borboly met representatives of the Lithuanian presidency 6th November, 2013

The president of Harghita County Council, Mr. Csaba Borboly together with his expert, Mr. László Csák, participated in a meeting with the representative of the Lithuanian presidency of the EU, Mrs. Milda Špėlytė-Letulienė, on 5th of November 2013, in Brussels. The meeting was organized within the framework of the consultation series informing the elaboration of the Committee of the Regions' draft opinion concerning European higher education in the world, Mr. Csaba Borboly being the rapporteur of the document.

Mrs. Milda Špėlytė-Letulienė presented the Lithuanian perspective on higher education: European university networks' could be more open towards Eastern-European students in order to widen the inner system of European higher education; this would result in qualitative improvement as well. Mr. László Csák sketched the main principles of the draft opinion. Accordingly, the focus should be put on smaller, multicultural universities, and on university networks. He also added that more attention should be given to national minorities' languages, and the role of local and regional authorities should be increased in this regard too. It was also emphasized that it is important not only to have a unilateral mobility of European students, but there should be an endeavor focused on balancing the 'knowledge attraction'.

4. European multicultural higher education, theme debated in Brussels, on 13th November 2013:

The Commission for Education, Youth and Research (EDUC) of the Committee of the Regions accepted the draft opinion entitled 'European Higher Education in the World', on 13th November. Mr. Csaba Borboly, president of Harghita County Council, being the rapporteur of the above-mentioned document underlined that 'in a multilingual and multi-ethnic Europe, institutions of higher education offering learning opportunities in minority languages can play a very significant role'. The draft opinion prioritizes the involvement of higher educational institutions at least fulfilling the conditions of internationalization for the purpose of increasing the competitiveness of European higher education.

Regarding the modification of the draft opinion, Mr. Jean Francois Istasse submitted 13



amendments with the aim of changing some parts of the original text. Concerning the amendments, Mr. Csaba Borboly proposed newer amendments regarding four of them, since he firmly believes that regional

languages have to be mentioned, as they contribute to the regional integration of higher educational institutions. Furthermore, the county council president added the following: in the course of planning the cohesion and structural policies, member states have to take into consideration the framework programs on higher education; the Committee of the Regions' draft opinion puts great emphasis on the role of local and regional governments in the process of internationalization; member states should create supporting programs, which would contribute to the internationalization of higher education.

He regrets that the communication of the Commission does not sufficiently explain the key role of the local and regional authorities in the process of the internationalisation of regional higher education institutions and he accentuates that member states could elaborate supporting programs that contribute to the implementation of internalization strategies of the local, regional higher education systems.

The president of EDUC Commission, Mr. Anton Rombouts, congratulated Mr. Csaba Borboly. Nevertheless, as he mentioned the document has to be accepted by the Committee of the Regions at its plenary meeting in January 2014 as well, pointing out that the battle is already won but the war is not yet. However, he concluded that the situation is favorable since the EDUC Commission unanimously adopted the draft opinion, thus, prior to the plenary session at least 32 signatures are needed to submit an amendment. Mr. Jean Francois Istasse, vice-president of EDUC Commission and member of the Party of European

Socialists also had a positive opinion on the document and expressed his gratitude for reaching a consensus regarding the amendments. Mr. Dimitrios Kalogeropolous, the rapporteur of the Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional & External Affairs (CIVEX), declared that the submitted draft opinion is of great importance because in order to attract more talented students it tackles an important precondition of European higher education's internationalization. Mr. Csaba Borboly further declared that it is essential to enable distance learning as well for offering the learning opportunities provided by higher education to students who cannot otherwise afford it

Besides the county council president, the local expert invited by him, Mr. László Csák considered that despite the fact that the draft opinion of the Committee of the Regions is not yet EU legislation it is still a great result. He outlined that 'in two subjects we could reach a compromise between the EPP and PES: firstly that educational institutions offering courses in minority languages have an essential role; secondly that from 2014 to 2020 the Committee of the Regions recommends that member states, among them Romania also, should support those higher education investments, which should support smaller, regional universities to become more competitive.

Csaba Borboly also spoke about the need to ensure that necessary conditions are in place for students who are in a disadvantageous economic situation to have access to education. He proposed as a possible solution the introduction of distance learning.

Mr. Borboly also stated that “Rapporteur activity is new for me, taking into account the fact that I became a member of Committee of the Regions one year ago. The preliminary draft of the present document was sent to EDUC Commission on 17th of October. The elaboration of the document was preceded by several consultations with specialists in the concerned field. I have had discussions with representatives of the Romanian higher education system, with specialists of European Union institutions, with the higher education representative of the European Commission, and last but not least with the Attaché for education of the Lithuanian presidency of the EU’.



5. Plenary session, 30th January 2014:

The president of Harghita County Council, Mr. Csaba Borboly, in his function of permanent member of the Committee of the Regions presented his draft opinion on European Higher Education in the World at the **105th plenary session of the CoR, on 30th January, in Brussels**; this draft opinion was adopted unanimously.

Csaba Borboly declared that higher education institutions should offer qualifications in minorities’ languages, establishing programs which contribute to the specific development of the region; he also thinks that mobility, from the perspective of origin and destination regions is also important.

The elaboration of the draft opinion was preceded by regional consultations with representatives of higher education institutions in Romania, with expert EU institutions in Brussels, with the European Commission’s commissioners in the field of higher education and discussions with representatives of the Lithuanian Presidency of the EU on the education.

“The Europe 2020 strategy presents a great opportunity for the internationalization of higher education. I believe that we can respond through partnerships in higher education and we can find resolutions to European globalization challenges. Partnerships should contribute to the growing capacity of research and education; universities can become agents of knowledge transfer” said the county council president.

The draft opinion recommends that member states should elaborate programs which contribute to the internationalization of higher educational institutions at regional level and for minorities. Through these of programs they can draw attention to the bidirectional nature of mobility. The draft opinion emphasizes that in a multilingual, multinational Europe higher educational institutions could have an important role in offering training opportunities in several languages - including minority languages. In such multicultural environments students could meet and become familiar with at least two European languages, which might help to promote the international mobility of students. It also emphasizes the importance of the development of language skills in the internationalization process of higher education institutions.

The Committee of the Regions considers that the dissemination of good practice and the exchange of global solutions for higher education systems between neighboring countries and candidate countries can bring many opportunities in guaranteeing the mobility of the students in the territory of Europe; Europe's competitiveness as a whole also increases together with better opportunities for talented individuals.

The County Council president thanked his expert László Csák (who was also present at the plenary session) for his ongoing help with formulating the draft opinion and he also rendered his special thanks for the support of the Committee of the Regions and of the EPP Group.

The adoption of the amendment has double significance: it draws attention to the importance of regional higher education institutions - for example Sapientia University - whose students should have the same opportunities as the students who learn at more prestigious universities.

6. Participation in conferences as a lecturer, in the framework of Mr. Borboly's rapporteur activity

Expert on youth problems at the conference held in Strasbourg

At the congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe held in Strasbourg, France from 25th to 27th March 2014, the commission talked about different opportunities for supporting youth employment through education and training.

The theme of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, the Council of Europe's advisory body, was the employment of young people through promoting their education and training. Mr. Csaba Borboly's speech about the importance of this issue can be read here: <http://www.borbolycsaba.ro/ro/bunepractici/> .

At this meeting Mr. Borboly made an appeal to student and youth organizations to nominate an expert for formulating an opinion on the subject of youth employment problems in Harghita County. The young expert who accompanied Mr. Csaba Borboly was Mr. Lado Tihamér Zsolt, representing the Federation of Youth Organisations from the Ciuc region.

Youth's Europe. Do the educational and educational systems correspond to the needs and expectations of the younger generation? Krakow, Poland, 13th of June 2014:

The Commission for Education, Youth, Culture and Research together of the Committee of the Regions organized an international conference together with the region of Malopolska about the project of Youth's Europe 2014-2020, on 13th June 2014, in Krakow.

The Harghita County Council president, Csaba Borboly, was invited to take part in the conference and to express his opinion about the possibilities of improving educational and training systems taking into account the needs of the labor market and the expectations of

young people. He considers that youth organizations should voice their opinions more in Europe and for this reason he asks the presidents of youth organizations to present their activities and proposals about the above mentioned subject, especially accentuating the aspects referring to education and professional training, which can help their later employment and can address a series of local and regional problems.

III: b Rapporteur activity on the subject of Sustainable buildings

Borboly Csaba was elected rapporteur on the subject of sustainable buildings in the Committee of the Regions during the Environment, Climate Change and Energy Commission's (ENVE) meeting in Brussels on 19th of June.

The general aim of the European Commission's initiative is to reduce the environmental impact of buildings with the improvement of resource efficiency. Therefore, general knowledge in relation to resource usage should be improved and the attention of the general public should be drawn to the environmental impact of buildings, and awareness-raising campaigns should be organized. The demand for ecological buildings should be increased in both the public and private sectors, amongst architects and public institutions.

Mr. Borboly Csaba declared that the preparation of the report will take into consideration the responses of Harghita County Council, as outlined in the institution's strategy under the name 'Together for a stable future'. The President also said that the County Council will consider aspects related to renewable energies and their efficient management.

1. European Union promotes resource-efficient constructions, 27th August 2014

The draft opinion on sustainable buildings, which will be prepared for the Committee of the Regions (CoR) under the initiative of Csaba Borboly, was discussed at the Miercurea Ciuc County Hall on August 27th. The president of Harghita County Council, Borboly Csaba, was elected rapporteur on the subject of sustainable buildings in the Committee of the Regions during the Environment, Climate Change and Energy Commission's (ENVE) meeting held in Brussels on 19th June.

At the consultation were present the members of urban planning committee from Harghita county, the expert on the subject, László Csák, Csongor Incze, the vice-president of the institution, and the president, Csaba Borboly.

The general objective of the Commission's initiative for sustainable buildings is to reduce the environmental impact of buildings by improving resource efficiency. Therefore there is a need to improve general knowledge related to resource usage. The attention of the public should be drawn to the environmental impact of buildings through dissemination and information campaigns. The requirement for ecological buildings should be increased in the private sector, amongst architects and in public institutions.

At the meeting, Csaba Borboly presented the activities of rapporteurs and the process of the preparation of a draft opinion. In his view, it is important to prepare a report on this subject, because the legislative changes which could appear as a consequence of the report could significantly affect the construction industry of Harghita County and the protection of the identity of traditional village architecture. "Many of our ideas correspond with the ones stated in the Communication of the European Commission, but with this report we can strengthen our voice in the EU. Of course, the rapporteur should also take into consideration the opinions of other countries" - said the president.

László Csák explained that there is a new approach in the construction industry, which can increasingly be experienced at the level of legislation in the case of sustainable buildings, in terms of their cost and energy efficiency. This can give a huge boost to the construction industry, and primary regions in logging and wood processing are the major winners under the new communal regulations. So the building firms and building materials manufacturers of Harghita County have to be prepared for this change because a great opportunity is ahead of them. Mr. Csák also drew attention to the absurd constructions - such as cubic wooden houses – that can be built, if only the criteria of sustainability is taken into account without urban planning or aesthetic considerations.

The same warning was mentioned by the architect Ernő Bogos, who proposed the inclusion of village image protection Charta (prepared a few years ago) into the draft opinion. According to him an architect should be included whenever there is a European Union project evaluation. However, it would also be important to educate young people and he urges the establishment of architectural faculty at the Sapientia University, in which a research group would focus and specifically deal with wooden architecture. In addition education in this theme should be beneficial in secondary and vocational schools.

According to the vice-president Csongor Incze, taking into consideration the opinion of the urban expertise committee would imply additional costs, which should be compensated by reducing the contribution percentage, or with the reduction of taxes for a couple of years.

Chief architect Otília Fülöp sees a big opportunity for village image protection in the change of EU legislation on constructions, but according to her, attention should be focused on how energy efficient buildings influence people's health and the human body (for example the bad air in well-insulated schools, that can have a negative impact on student's learning and performance)

Consultation on the report for the Committee of Region, 1st of September 2014

After a consultation with the members of the Urban Planning Committee Csaba Borboly, president of Harghita County Council invited the architects of Harghita County for a forum regarding the draft opinion, which he composes as the rapporteur of the Committee of Region.

At the conference, held in Miercurea-Ciuc on Monday, 1st September the president stated that the European legislation which will take into consideration the report in preparation will have an effect on decision-makers in Bucharest and that the document has to be formulated in such way that it should represent the interests of all member states.

The experts explained that the theme of sustainable building should be interconnected with the following areas: sustainable forestry, environmental management, preservation of traditional knowledge, village image protection and wood construction technology. All these should be encouraged more. They underlined the fact that the operational system of villages and cities should be fully understood, because the living space and environments are different and therefore construction needs and outcomes differ according to location: in villages, as well as houses the gardens and forests also constitute an integral part of a homestead and resources are deployed in a very different way than in cities. For this reason, experts underlined that in the composition of EU legislation different building traditions of a region should be taken into consideration.

They also discussed the reuse of building materials after demolition and that the existing fire protection regulations would prevent the construction of public buildings in wood. Accordingly, the preservation of local values also seems important in relation to the theme of sustainable buildings.

Due to the inefficient ventilation in educational institutions children can become sick, 19th of September 2014

Csaba Borboly, the president of Harghita County Council invited building engineers from Harghita county for a forum on the 19th of September within the framework of a consultation series, regarding the draft opinion about sustainable buildings, which he was composing as the rapporteur of the Committee of the Regions. Borboly Csaba was elected rapporteur on the subject of sustainable buildings in the Committee of the Regions during the Environment, Climate Change and Energy Commission's (ENVE) meeting in Brussels on 19th June. According to Csaba Borboly the essence of the consultation series is that we can give expression to our opinions on the above mentioned topic before the legislative decision is taken in the European Union. Of course, we also have to take into consideration the interests of other EU members, and to align our regional interests in this matter according to common interest.

– The CoR's power is constantly rising; it will function almost as the upper house of the European Union. It therefore becomes important to strengthen the voice of our region, to represent its interests whenever we create a draft opinion. In this way, we urge measures, which can be applied in our region too. Constructions in Harghita County are usually wasteful and unconsidered; Harghita County Council tries to change this attitude towards construction through interrelated programs such as the village image protection program and the county urban plan, which is currently under construction. We also intend to express our opinion regarding European legislation in the matter of wood processing and forestry;

we can also do this in the context of sustainable buildings. – said the president of Harghita County Council.

László Csák, the expert of the rapporteur, was also present at the consultation, where a significant problem has emerged in the case of renovated public buildings, mainly because of inadequate ventilation solutions or the lack of ventilation. Because of this problem children fall sick in kindergartens or schools and the performance of adults is also negatively affected. Ventilation should be strictly taken into consideration at mayors' planning offices and whenever a new construction or renovation plan is presented, and this should be included in an article of the draft opinion. In addition to proper ventilation we can save thermal energy, too. In the case of ventilation systems building engineers should collaborate with architects.

The participants urged a survey of wood processing capacity, because according to them heating systems should be built considering these parameters. The phenomenon that wood is sold unprocessed has a negative impact on the construction of energy efficient buildings, houses here in Transylvania, since the construction of these kinds of buildings would have a lower cost. It came also into the discussion that the insulation of buildings could be solved with the use of a larger quantity of wool, but somehow this method has not become popular here, as opposed to the Irish construction tradition. Another popular problem is that offices are equipped with separate air conditioning systems though this could be changed to adequate shielding, thereby consuming less energy.

The overall goal of the initiative of the European Commission on the topic of sustainable construction is to reduce the environmental impact of buildings by improving resource efficiency, and increasing the competitiveness of companies in the construction industry. In this respect it is necessary to improve general knowledge on the use of resources and awareness of the effects that buildings have on their environments. This requires awareness campaigns in the private sphere, stimulating architects, the general public and institutions to increase green building construction applications.

Using local knowledge in the case of sustainable buildings, 22 September 2014



The rapporteur consultations on the European Commission's communication on sustainable buildings continued during Monday 22nd September in Brussels at the Committee of the Regions. Together with expert László Csák, Borboly Csaba discussed the issue with representatives of the Committee of Economic and Social Committee (EESC), the Directorate General for

Environment (DG ENV) and the Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry (DG ENTR) of the European Commission.

Csaba Borboly drew attention to the importance of using local knowledge and local materials, and urged for including this in the measures aimed at sustainable construction. Costs would be more efficient and the environmental impact of wood processing could thus be reduced. All these aspects are in accordance with the Harghita County Council programs aimed at protecting traditional villages and modernizing old houses, mainly programs that aim to use local raw materials. European regulations must consider the specificities of different regions. These consultations provide opportunities for expressing the region's interests and to draw attention to it. Representatives of both European institutions agreed with his assertion, in which he recalled that on this subject the European Commission had issued a communication according to which there is need for a single indicator system to collate the various issues related to the sustainability of the construction industry. This will allow comparability and provide consumers and policy makers with easier access to reliable and consistent information.

Other programmed activities:

- **Proposals for a debate in Bucharest at the National Union of County Councils in Romania:** Mr. Csaba Borboly intends to participate in the consultations organized in Bucharest with representatives of the ministry and with professional organizations
- ENVE Commission meeting, 16 to 17 October 2014 in Bologna (Emilia-Romagna), Italy, where they will present the main points of the draft opinion.
- 11th of December, 2014: Committee of environment, climate and energy: debating the draft opinion in the specialized commission
- February, 2015: Debating the draft opinion at the plenary session

IV: COMMUNICATION:

1. **The web page of Csaba Borboly dedicated to the activity** of the Committee of the Regions operates in three languages:

RO: <http://www.borbolycsaba.ro/ro/activitati/comitetul-regiunilor/>

HU: <http://www.borbolycsaba.ro/tevekenyseg/regiok-bizottsaga/>

EN: <http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/committe-of-the-regions/>

Each page is structured in the following method:

- Sustainable buildings – A new draft opinion of the Committee of the Regions will be prepared in Harghita County: includes all the information about the rapporteur activity and offers the possibility of making comments
- Possibility of commenting on the current draft opinions of the Committee of the Regions
- Committee of the Regions – general information
- Accepted amendments
- Amendments partially accepted
- European Higher Education- The draft opinion was prepared in Harghita County
- Fostering youth employment through education and training : roles and best practice within regions of Europe
- Useful information

2. Appearances in CoR newsletters

- EU budget: President Valcárcel highlights the efforts made in favour of cohesion and youth employment
<http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/eu-budget-valcarcel-cohesion-employment.aspx>
- Interview with Romanian representatives at Romanian Open Days , 6th May 2013:
<http://cor.europa.eu/ro/news/regional/Pages/interviu-cu-reprezentantii-romani-la-ziua-portilor-deschise.aspx>
- Vienne (France): flourishing tourism, without Paris and without mountains. Model for Harghita County, 25th October 2013: (In Romanian language)
<http://cor.europa.eu/ro/news/regional/Pages/vienne-model-pentru-harghita.aspx>
- EU telecoms market reform and education on the agenda of EDUC commission, 11th November 2013:
<http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/eu-telecoms-market-educ.aspx>
- Borboly Csaba: negotiations between the EU and Moldova should be supported, 11th December 2013: (in Romanian language)

<http://cor.europa.eu/ro/news/regional/Pages/borboly-csaba-negocierile-ue-moldova-sustinute.aspx>

- Robinwood Plus: The project came to an end, the work continues, 18th December 2013 (in Romanian): <http://cor.europa.eu/ro/news/regional/Pages/robinwood-plus.aspx>
- Voluntary program-successfully implemented in Harghita County, 13th January 2014 (In Romanian): <http://cor.europa.eu/ro/news/regional/Pages/sistemul-de-claca-harghita.aspx>
- CoR calls for a modernized education policy that also benefits disadvantaged regions and groups, 31st January 2014:
<http://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Pages/modernised-education-policy.aspx>
- Romania – active participant on the festival of Europe's Regions and Cities, 23rd May 2014:
http://www.cor.europa.eu/ro/news/regional/Pages/romania-la-festivalul-regiunilor-si-oraselor-europei-.aspx?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Romania-May-2014
- Exposition project of the CreArt at Vilnius, Zagreb and inn Harghita County, 11th July 2014: (In Romanian) http://www.cor.europa.eu/ro/news/regional/Pages/creart-la-Harghita.aspx?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Romania-July-2014

3. News

- Csaba Borboly was elected as the member of the Committee of the Regions, 13th September 2012: (In Romanian language)
<http://judetulharghita.ro/stiri/stiri-generale/borboly-csaba-a-fost-ales-membru-al-comitetului-regiunilor.html>
- Mr. Csaba Borboly expressed his opinion in favor of the rural areas of the European Union, 15th January 2013:
<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/mr-csaba-borboly-expressed-his-opinion-in-favour-of-the-rural-areas-of-the-european-union/>
- Borboly Csaba was re-elected as the vice-president of UNCJR, 14th March 2013 (In Romanian language)
<http://www.borbolycsaba.ro/ro/borboly-csaba-a-fost-reales-in-functia-de-vicepresedinte-al-uncjr/>
- Mr. Csaba Borboly re-submitted amendments to the Committee of the Regions, 16th of September 2013
<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/mr-csaba-borboly-submitted-again-amendments-to-the-committee-of-the-regions/>
- Committee of the Regions: Mr. Csaba Borboly's amendments were accepted, 10th October 2013:

<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/committee-of-the-regions-mr-csaba-borbolys-amendments-were-accepted/>

- EPP declaration on European Energy security, 25th October 2013: (In Romanian)
<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/epp-declaration-about-european-energy-security/>
- Csaba Borboly met the Lithuanian presidency, 6th November 2013
<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/the-committee-of-the-regions-draft-opinion-on-european-higher-education/>
- Focus on universities offering training in minority languages, 13th November 2013
<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/focus-on-universities-offering-training-in-minority-languages/>
- Draft opinion on the competitiveness of European higher education, presented in Brussels, 30th January 2014
<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/category/news/page/4/>
- Livestream – Committee of the Regions, 30th January 2014 (in Romanian)
<http://www.borbolycsaba.ro/ro/livestream-comitetului-regiunilor/>
- Presentation of the approved draft opinion at Brussels, 2nd February 2014:
<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/european-higher-education-in-the-world-2/>
- Csaba Borboly's proposals will enter European legislation, 4th February 2014: (in Romanian)
<http://www.borbolycsaba.ro/ro/propunerile-formulate-de-borboly-csaba-vor-intra-in-legislatia-europeana/>
- CoR calls for a modernized education policy that also benefits disadvantaged regions and groups, 12th February 2014
<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/cor-calls-for-a-modernised-education-policy-that-also-benefits-disadvantaged-regions-and-groups/>
- Debate on „Fostering youth employment through education and training: role and best practices within regions in Europe”, 13th March 2014:
<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/debate-onfostering-youth-employment-through-education-and-training-role-and-best-practices-within-regions-in-europe/>
- Lobbying activity for national minorities in Brussels, 5th April 2014:
<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/lobbying-activity-for-national-minorities-in-brussels/>
- Csaba Borboly searches for a young expert to accompany him to a conference held in Krakow, 22nd April 2014: (In Romanian)
<http://www.borbolycsaba.ro/ro/borboly-csaba-cauta-un-tanar-expert-care-sa-l-insoteasca-la-conferinta-din-iunie-de-la-cracovia/>
- Csaba Borboly, rapporteur of the Committee of the Regions, 23th June 2014 (in Romanian):
<http://www.borbolycsaba.ro/ro/borboly-csaba-raportor-in-cadrul-comitetului-regiunilor/>

- About my activities as the rapporteur of the Committee of the Regions, 8th July 2014: <http://www.borbolycsaba.ro/ro/despre-activitatea-mea-de-raportor-in-cadrul-comitetului-regiunilor/>
- European Union promotes resource-efficient constructions, 27th August 2014: <http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/european-union-promotes-resource-efficient-constructions/>
- Consultation on the report for the Committee of Region, 13th September 2014 <http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/consultation-on-the-report-for-the-committee-of-region/>
- Consultation with building engineers on the report for the Committee of Region
<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/consultation-with-building-engineers-on-the-report-for-the-committee-of-region/>
- Using local knowledge also in the case of sustainable buildings
<http://borbolycsaba.ro/en/using-local-knowledge-also-in-the-case-of-sustainable-buildings/>

Csaba Borboly,

Miercurea-Ciuc, 20th October 2014