



CEVIPOL



Cities and regions bypassing central governments?

Online conference

Date: **26 September 2025** (Friday)

Program of the conference

Link:

https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/19%3ameeting_NjVmNmI3MmEtY2I5Yy00NzUxLWE1ZGltOTc4MmZiZDhkYmY1%40thread.v2/0?context=%7b%22Tid%22%3a%2263441aef-da0e-4397-bb7e-f9d4705e963b%22%2c%22Oid%22%3a%2294aa8212-baf9-4a5c-b472-f8a820c193c7%22%7d

Opening session

Brussels time:

13.00-14.00
CET

Welcome address: Jean-Michel de Waele (Université Libre de Bruxelles)

Meet the Practitioners: Roundtable discussion with **Benedek Jávör**, head of Brussels Liaison Office of Budapest and a former Member of the European Parliament, **Michaela Kauer**, head of Brussels Liaison Office of Vienna, and **Pietro Reviglio**, policy and research advisor at Eurocities (TBC)

moderator: Balázs Brucker (ELTE CERS Institute for Regional Studies)

Panel 1: City diplomacy in action

(moderator: Joanna Ciesielska-Klikowska, University of Lodz)

14.00-15.15
CET

1. **Joanna Modrzyńska** (Nicolaus Copernicus University), *The Pact of Free Cities: origins, development, and current dynamics*
2. **Elif Menderes** (Friedrich Naumann Stiftung); **Mustafa Osman Turan** (Foreign Relations Advisor to the Mayor of Istanbul), *City diplomacy as a normative tool against democratic backsliding - the case of Istanbul*
3. **Balázs Brucker** (ELTE CERS Institute for Regional Studies), *Foreign strategy between principles and pragmatism: the city diplomacy activities of Budapest under the leadership of the opposition Mayor (2019–2025)*
4. **Fedor Zolotarev** (University of Pécs), *Strong ties become stronger, but pivot to the West: analysis of Ukrainian city partnerships*

Panel 2: Paradiplomacy in contentious contexts

(moderator: Balázs Brucker, ELTE CERS Institute for Regional Studies)

15.30-
16.30 CET

1. **Martin Christie** (University of Ljubljana), *The role of paradiplomatic actors during times of geopolitical instability. The cases of Scotland and Flanders*
2. **Adem Beha** (University of Prishtina), *Subnational diplomacy in Kosovo - the role of cities and culture under conditions of contested statehood*
3. **Szymon Ostrowski** (Nicolaus Copernicus University), *Tokyo and Senkaku Islands dispute: study on role of city's official in city bypassing the central government*

Panel 3: Urban and regional actors in climate diplomacy

(moderator: Joanna Ciesielska-Klikowska, University of Lodz)

16.45-
17.45 CET

1. **Sandrina Antunes, Ana Dias** (University of Minho), *Climate paradiplomacy after Paris: A policy tool for subnational climate leadership*
2. **Marjolaine Lamontagne** (McGill University), **Charles Berthelet** (Université du Québec à Montréal & École des hautes études en sciences sociales), *Surpassing the State? A comparative analysis of the "contestation" paradiplomacy of Canadian and American subnational governments in global climate governance*
3. **Kim Noach** (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev), *How Tel Aviv-Yafo influences national climate policy through urban diplomacy - the municipal boomerang pattern in action*

Panel 4: Global human rights and democracy debates in local governments

(moderator: Jean-Michel De Waele, Université Libre de Bruxelles)

18.00-
19.15 CET

1. **Agnieszka Szpak** (Nicolaus Copernicus University), *Cities bypassing states in the areas of human rights and environmental law*
2. **Brett Manzer** (Laval University), *American local government resolutions on the Israel-Hamas war*
3. **Agata Rydzewska** (University of Warsaw), *Competing feminisms? Catalonia's feminist foreign policy and the challenge to Spain's central authority*
4. **Bastian Loges** (Technische Universität Braunschweig), *Defenders of an order in crisis? International city networks on LGBT+ rights and the contestation of liberal norms*

Closing remarks

19.15 CET

Jean-Michel De Waele, Joanna Ciesielska-Klikowska and Balázs Brucker