



Draft Minutes
Sub-Committee on Interregional & International Cooperation
Durrës, 2 April 2009

Chair : Paul KIRKMAN, County Councillor, Essex; representing Sub-Committee Chair Marie-Françoise MULLER

The following regions were represented:

Arad (RO), Békés (H), Busekerud (N), Devon (GB), Essex (GB), Hampshire (GB), Hedmark (N), Jämtland (S)

The following organisations were represented

Les Rencontres

1. Welcome

Paul KIRKMAN presented the apologies of Sub-Committee chair MULLER and welcomed the participants.

2. Adoption of the draft agenda

The draft agenda was unanimously adopted.

3. Approval of the minutes of the last meeting (St. Pölten, 11 September 2008)

The minutes of the meeting were unanimously adopted.

4. Cooperation and projects in collaboration with UNDP

Senior Policy coordinator Jascha SCHEELE informed the participants on the joint climate conference, AER and UNDP were organising at the same time in Limoges. 350 participants are expected. The conference has to be seen in the preparatory context of the Copenhagen climate summit in December and aims at raising and increasing awareness among the regions concerning the climate issue. A press release is already available, the conclusions will be made available later.

Another aspect in the collaboration with UNDP is the ART Gold programme, especially designed for the inclusion of regions. Field visits had taken place in Albania, Senegal, and Uruguay, others are to follow in the second quarter of 2009. The field visits had in

particular looked at transport systems, other infrastructures (schools, ...) and reducing the carbon footprint. Jascha SCHEELE stated that the money made available in the framework of the programme has not been used by the regions.

5. Report on AER's participation in FOGAR – report of the 1st working group session (23 February, Brussels)

Jascha SCHEELE explained briefly the context and history of the FOGAR initiative (Forum of Global Associations of Regions) which aims at promoting regional development in the global context. In order to decide whether the AER should become a member of FOGAR, a working group had been analysing the situation from three angles: technical, legal and content. Staying outside FOGAR may exclude AER from an interesting network, on the other hand the financial impact and the workload involved are currently difficult to evaluate. Disagreement also exists whether AER should involve itself more in international cooperation which may be to the detriment of European cooperation.

Even though critical of the possible additional work load, Cllr KIRKMAN was opposed to blocking the initiative from the beginning and hoped that the objectives of FOGAR will have been clarified by the next AER General Assembly in order for it to be able to decide.

Saxon SPENCE (Devon) said that, although FOGAR has been initiated by CPMR, opinions in CPMR concerning FOGAR are diverging.

Asked whether there could be a trial period, Jascha SCHEELE said that the current phase, in which AER had already participated in 3 or 4 meetings, had to be considered as such. If AER wants to continue to be admitted to the inner circle and the internal meetings, it has to become a member and should be ready to pay the membership fee (probably 10.000 Euros) from 2010 on. He informed the participants that a support structure (secretariat) will probably be set up in Geneva or Lisbon and that General Assemblies are only supposed to take place every two years.

The Sub-Committee unanimously decided to recommend a FOGAR trail membership to the AER Bureau.

6. Launch of a joint development cooperation platform and AER involvement in the European Development Days 2008 in Strasbourg

Jascha SCHEELE presented the characteristics of the platform as well as of the EDDs, the latter being one of the biggest EU events dedicated to development cooperation. AER had participated in the EDDs with a stand and had co-organised, in the framework of the platform, a side event conference.

The first meeting in March at the level of the platform had allowed for the platform members to better know each other and to decide the setting up of a platform website. The cooperation in the platform will also enable a better standing in funding applications concerning decentralised cooperation in general.



A new funding application for the period 2010/2011 has already been introduced at the European Commission in order to perpetuate the work of the platform.

In the framework of the platform, AER will organise a conference in 2010. To help the preparations, Regions are invited to inventory their involvement in development cooperation projects and to send them to the secretariat of Committee 3.

7. Engaging AER in the Union for the Mediterranean

Jascha SCHEELE explained that with the UFM the EU wishes to relaunch and dynamise the former Barcelona process. Whereas, in the beginning, regions had only been considered concerning the implementation of initiatives, AER's lobbying, together with the Committee of the regions had been successful and led to the creation of ARLEM.

ARLEM will be the representative body of Local and Regional authorities within the UFM, in which President MIKL-LEITNER will sit for the AER. A first meeting will take place in May. A secretariat which is supposed to be set up in Barcelona, will coordinate UFM's activities.

8. Any other business

Jascha SCHEELE informed the participants about the Euro-India Centre, an extensive network based in La Rochelle (F) which exists since 3 to 4 years and deals with issues such as transport, cultural tourism, decentralisation, housing, urban planning.

Initial prospects for cooperation had diminished as planned meetings in Europe had been replaced by conferences organised in India.

Another opportunity will probably present in October 2009 in Valladolid where they want to organise an event on cultural heritage. As they are looking for partners in Europe, it could be interesting to send a representative. The programme of the event will be disseminated as soon as available.

Cllr KIRKMAN stated his concerns that members participating in activities directed towards extra-European territories could be criticised for "jetsetting".

Chris Fegan (Essex) promised to inform the contacts they have in their region in the field of economic development in view of establishing contacts.

Strasbourg, 22 September 2009

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