



**Vice-Presidency**

**Michèle SABBAN**  
*For President of the  
Assembly of European Regions*

*Paris, October 24, 2008*

*Dear Mrs. President,  
Dear Mr. President,*

*The AER General Assembly will take place this year in Tampere, Finland, on November 13 and 14. On this occasion, our member regions will be invited to elect, for a two-year mandate, the new President of the Assembly of European Regions (AER).*

*President of the AER Observatory on Gender Issues since 2004 and AER 1st Vice-President since 2006, I took on the AER Presidency when Riccardo ILLY (Friuli-Venezia Giulia, IT) withdrew from politics last spring. I agreed to take up this challenge at Mr. ILLY's request and in accordance with our statutes.*

*It has been a great honor for me to chair our great Assembly of more than 270 regions from 33 countries since then. I was deeply aware of the importance of this responsibility, and I took every step that was necessary in order to make sure that business would go on as usual, standing in for Riccardo ILLY wherever he had agreed to represent AER, or promoting our organization's work and values to the European Institutions.*

*Over those past few months, boasting our values and our interregional co-operations, I have come to meet many of our European partners and got involved with our member regions, taking an active part in AER work.*

*I was able to witness how dynamic our young people are when I attended the AER Summer School last August, and I realized how useful a network such as Eurodyssey can be when it comes to help our youth effectively and get them a valuable professional experience. And I should not forget to mention our very own Observatory on Gender Issues, which we should be proud of for sparking lively debates and showcasing great European values such as cooperation and equal opportunities between women and men.*

*Our work program 2009-2010 needs to focus on the main issues our Regions are facing today: **climate change, demography, migration** or the **revision of the Common Agricultural Policy** are definitely issues that need to be tackled, but we should not overlook new challenges such as the **current economic and financial crisis**.*

**Conseil régional**

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*In this context, public authorities must enable the sustainable development of their territories and ensure employment opportunities for their citizens. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, both Regions and the European Union are among the main actors responsible for these issues.*

*I will therefore pay particular attention to the debates on the EU budget guidelines and on the future of the Cohesion Policy, which must imperatively be linked to all the other EU policies and serve our territories.*

*Together we will make sure that the political voice of the Regions remains center stage in Europe. We will establish trustful relations with the new leaders and representatives of the European institutions to be elected in 2009, and we shall work out a way of tightening collaboration with the rest of the organizations representing local and regional authorities in Europe and around the world.*

*We need to define together which will be the AER top priorities for the period to come, drawing on our political priorities 2007-2012. This is the first task our Bureau needs to tackle next time it meets.*

*We can be proud of the fact that our member regions are actively involved in the construction of Europe. The AER has made, over the years, a substantial contribution to the European Union's political acquis, such as the introduction of the principle of subsidiarity and the notion of territorial cohesion in the European Treaty. We now must go further and make it a reality for each and every one of our citizens.*

*Therefore, I hereby express my intent of becoming the next President of the Assembly of European Regions and invite you to take up with me the unfinished business of perfecting our organization and building a better Europe.*

*I am determined to serve the AER's best interests, and I pledge to you that I will place all my experience at your disposal in order to do so. I have been Vice-President of Ile-de-France for the last ten years now, and this attractive capital region - with more than 11 million people and located in the heart of Europe, halfway between the Azores and Moscow - faces many challenges: featuring both urban and rural areas, it has great potential for growth, yet suffers serious disparities. I will throw in as well all the experience in European and International affairs I acquired during my political career in local, regional and national politics as well as my professional life at the Ministry of Finance, where I worked with several ministers.*

*I am confident that together, with your support and the combined use of our skills, we can move forward and stimulate the dynamics our regions need to improve the lives of our citizens and contribute to the influence of our continent in the world.*

*You can count on me to follow an ambitious political guideline, useful for our regions and enhanced by the experience and opinions of all of you, the elected women and men who make up the strength of our great Assembly and are the driving force behind a successful European integration!*

*Yours sincerely,*

  
Michèle SABBAN